

BANNED BOOKS

LITERATURE SUPPRESSED
ON
SOCIAL GROUNDS

Revised Edition



DAWN B. SOVA

FACTS ON FILE LIBRARY OF WORLD LITERATURE



BANNED BOOKS



LITERATURE SUPPRESSED ON

Social Grounds

REVISED EDITION

DAWN B. SOVA

PREFACE BY

KEN WACHSBERGER

 **Facts On File**
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Banned Books: Literature Suppressed on Social Grounds, Revised Edition

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

*To my son, Robert Gregor,
and to all young people who will try
to make the world they have inherited a better place.*

*There is no freedom either in civil or ecclesiastical [affairs],
but where the liberty of the press is maintained.*

—Matthew Tindal

*If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person
were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified
in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power,
would be justified in silencing mankind.*

—John Stuart Mill

Dare to think for yourself.

—Voltaire

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments
vii

Preface
ix

Introduction
xi

Works Discussed in This Volume
xiii

LITERATURE SUPPRESSED ON SOCIAL GROUNDS 1

Biographical Profiles
305

Bibliography
328

Works Discussed in Other Volumes of This Series
348

Index
369

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The long history of censorship has created many heroes, both famous and obscure, who have dared to defy the restrictions of their times to write and publish the truth as they understood it. Some are discussed in this volume, but many others have been silenced, their works destroyed. To all, however, this book owes both life and purpose. Had they acquiesced to those who suppress, censor, and ban ideas or language that displeases powerful authorities, smug majorities, or vocal minorities, our intellectual universe would be significantly smaller.

I am grateful for my association with Bert Holtje of James Peter Associates, Inc., whose support and advice as both literary agent and friend helped me to maintain perspective throughout this lengthy project. His insight and literate commentary helped to resolve seemingly insurmountable problems.

My sincere gratitude also belongs to former Facts On File editors Gary M. Krebs, who saw potential in the idea and courageously proposed a censorship series, and Drew Silver, who provided substance and direction to the work. My greatest appreciation, however, goes to Jeff Soloway, who has made this revised edition a much better book.

Some of the works discussed in this volume have been difficult to locate. I would have been unable to locate this literature without the efforts of I. Macarthur Nickles, director of the Garfield (New Jersey) Library, a man whose professional expertise and insight have been invaluable. He has made certain that my sometimes obscure research requests have been satisfied and continues to introduce innovations in my hometown library. I am also grateful to reference experts Kathleen Zalenski and Karen Calandriello, who have tracked down unusual books, odd quotations, dates, and notes, always persevering long after I had given up the chase.

In my personal life, no one has meant more to me than my son, Rob Gregor, who helped me to organize my thoughts, contributed insights on various works, and kept me human. I appreciate greatly the continued support of my parents, my mother Violet Sova and my late father Emil Sova whose pride in my accomplishments and unwavering confidence in my abilities have always sustained me.

Finally, although I can never meet them, I appreciate the efforts of the many authors over centuries who risked their lives and livelihoods to stand against those who would oppress and silence them.

—D. B. S.

PREFACE

Americans are proud of their Constitution, especially its Bill of Rights. The First Amendment right to freedom of speech and religion has inspired dissenters and nonconformists everywhere. Censored writers such as Salman Rushdie, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn have looked to the United States's example for strength as they battled for their rights to express their own thoughts and for the rights of others to read them, even at the risk of their lives.

Yet censorship has been a major part of American history from the time of Roger Williams and other early colonial freethinkers. Many of our richest literary works—*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Color Purple*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Jungle*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Tropic of Cancer*—have been censored at one time or another. Even today school boards, local governments, religious organizations, and moral crusaders attempt to restrict our freedom to read. Advancing technology has provided more diverse targets—the record, film, and television industries and the Internet—for censors and would-be censors to aim at, as they work their strategies to restrict free expression and the freedom to read, watch, and listen, dumbing down the public in order to shield their children, and you, from original or disturbing thoughts.

Works considered in the past to be obscene fell into two broad categories, those considered erotic because of their graphic descriptions of the sexual act and those considered vulgar because of their depictions of race, sexual lifestyles, drug use, or social standing of the literary characters. In this second-edition volume of books censored for social reasons, Dawn Sova highlights, among others, several recent campaigns against books showing same-sex relationships even when no overt sex is included and even when the resulting relationships are healthy and loving. Obviously, many self-styled protectors of our sensibilities believe it is better to be straight and unhappy than queer and happy. New books in this edition include *Am I Blue?*, *Baby Be-Bop*, *The Drowning of Stephan Jones*, *King & King*, and *Unlived Affections*.

Fortunately, the United States has a strong tradition of fighting censorship. Groups such as the National Coalition Against Censorship, the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom, People For the American Way, the American Civil Liberties Union, the PEN American Center, and the National Writers Union exist to defend the First Amend-

ment and support independent writers, through legal action and by raising public awareness and improving conditions for workers. They deserve our moral, political, and financial support.

The first edition of the Facts On File Banned Books Series came out as a four-volume hardcover set in 1998. The four volumes in this revised and expanded collection add to our rich First Amendment tradition by spotlighting approximately 450 works that have been censored for their political, social, religious, or erotic content, in the United States and around the world, from biblical times to the present day. While many of these have been legally “banned,” or prohibited “as by official order,” all have been banned or censored in a broader sense: targeted for removal from school curricula or library shelves, condemned in churches and forbidden to the faithful, rejected or expurgated by publishers, challenged in court, even voluntarily rewritten by their authors. Censored authors have been verbally abused, physically attacked, shunned by their families and communities, excommunicated from their religious congregations, and shot, hanged, or burned at the stake by their enemies. Their works include novels, histories, biographies, children’s books, religious and philosophical treatises, dictionaries, poems, polemics, and every other form of written expression.

It is illuminating to discover in these histories that such cultural treasures as the Bible, the Koran, the Talmud, and the greatest classics of world literature have often been suppressed or censored for the same motives, and by similar forces, as those we see today seeking to censor such books as *Daddy’s Roommate* and *Heather Has Two Mommies*. All Americans reading these volumes will find in them books they love—and will undoubtedly be thankful that their authors’ freedom of expression and their own freedom to read are constitutionally protected. But at the same time, how many will be gratified by the cruel fate of books they detest? Reader-citizens capable of acknowledging their own contradictions will be grateful for the existence of the First Amendment and will thank its guardians, including the authors of this series, for protecting the reading public against its worst impulses. It is to Facts On File’s credit that it has published this new version of the original Banned Books series. May the day come when an expanded series is no longer necessary.

To prevent redundancy, works banned for multiple reasons appear in only one volume, based on the judgment of the editor and the volume authors. The alphabetical arrangement provides easy access to titles. Works whose title appears in SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS within an entry have entries of their own elsewhere in the same volume. Those whose titles appear in *ITALICIZED SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS* have entries in one of the other volumes of this series. In addition, each volume carries complete lists of the works discussed in the other volumes.

—Ken Wachsberger
Publisher, Azenphony Press

INTRODUCTION

The broad nature of obscenity laws has made possible a wide interpretation of what constitutes an essentially “obscene” literary work. The language of American law stresses work that “depicts or describes sexual conduct in a patently offensive manner.” The law also specifies that the “average person, taking contemporary community standards, would find that a work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest.” Often what this has meant in reality is that works containing words deemed “vulgar” by specific members of a community or presenting interracial or homosexual relationships that are unacceptable to the standards of a given community acquire the label “obscene.” These are social factors, the topic of this volume, and they are distinctly different from erotic, religious and political content.

Censors have so frequently applied such general guidelines to published writing that a wide range of literature has been declared “obscene.” This volume avoids such generalization. Instead, the books discussed in this volume are literary works 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. Thus Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is included, while D. H. Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* is not, even though both have been banned in the past for being “obscene”; the first has attracted the label because of its language and depiction of race while the second contains graphic sexual description and has been banned for its erotic content. The books discussed here have been censored because their subject matter and characters do not conform to the social, racial, or sexual standards of their censors.

There are currently no books in print that systematically examine and describe the content and controversy surrounding books that have been banned, censored, or challenged because they contain socially unacceptable ideas or speech. A survey of the literature on censorship reveals that many texts of the past that were condemned for “vulgar” and “offensive” language, portrayals of lesbian or homosexual relationships, racially volatile incidents or themes, or socially offensive behavior such as drug use were condemned under the broad laws governing obscenity. Thus, while their subject matter, intention, and presentation might differ substantially, such works as Ray

Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* and D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* were both condemned as obscene. This study separates the two.

To a great extent, existing books emphasize defining what is obscene and describing the litigation and court decisions, rather than examining the censored writings from a particular vantage point. Much commentary was published during or soon after the issuance in 1973 of the Report of the 1970 United States President's Commission on Obscenity or soon after the 1986 U.S. Attorney General's Commission on Pornography released its findings. Thus, books on the subject of pornography are plentiful. However, little attention has been paid to nonerotic books that have been censored as "obscene" and condemned under the same laws, for social factors characterized as "offensive" by individuals or communities.

The goal of this volume is to identify and discuss books that have been censored as obscene, in centuries past as well as the present day, either because the authors or the works did not conform to the social expectations of their censors or because they contain socially unacceptable ideas or speech. Several works, despite limited censorship histories, are included to exhibit the lengths to which censors' fears will take them, as in the case of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. Other works have extensive histories of censorship, exhibiting the multiplicity of reasons that motivate censors. Taken as a whole, the entries provide a fascinating view of socially motivated censorship.

NOTE ON THE REVISED EDITION

This new edition adds 14 new entries and many updates to the censorship histories of existing entries. Much of the material reflects a changed climate in censorship. Most books challenged for social reasons in the past century have suffered because of the language used or the racial relationships portrayed within. In contrast, the new definition of "obscene," which emerged in the last decade of the twentieth century and continues to the present, appears to emphasize the discussion or the depiction of homosexual relationships, minus any mention of sexual interaction. Such books as *Am I Blue?*, *Baby Be-Bop*, *King & King*, and *Unlived Affections* have experienced numerous challenges and requests for their removal from both public and school libraries because they depict same-sex relationships. Overt sexuality does not appear, no appeal is made for readers to enter the homosexual lifestyle, and nothing offensive in language or illustration is portrayed. For challengers, however, none of the preceding occurrences are needed. Rather, the mere suggestion that healthy relationships might be forged between partners of the same sex and that families might consist of something other than mother-father-child provokes many to challenge such books.

WORKS DISCUSSED IN THIS VOLUME

THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN

Mark Twain

THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER

Mark Twain

ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

Lewis Carroll

THE AMBOY DUKES

Irving Shulman

*THE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE*

AM I BLUE?

Marion Dane Bauer

AND STILL I RISE

Maya Angelou

ANNE FRANK: THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL

Anne Frank

ANNIE ON MY MIND

Nancy Garden

ANOTHER COUNTRY

James Baldwin

APHRODITE

Pierre Louÿs

APPOINTMENT IN SAMARRA

John O'Hara

AS I LAY DYING

William Faulkner

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Benjamin Franklin

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X

Malcolm X, with Alex Haley

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MISS JANE PITTMAN

Ernest J. Gaines

BABY BE-BOP

Francesca Lia Block

THE BASKETBALL DIARIES

Jim Carroll

BEING THERE

Jerzy Kosinski

THE BELL JAR

Sylvia Plath

THE BEST SHORT STORIES BY NEGRO WRITERS

Langston Hughes, ed.

BLACK LIKE ME

John Howard Griffin

BLESS THE BEASTS AND CHILDREN

Glendon Swarthout

BLUBBER

Judy Blume

BRAVE NEW WORLD

Aldous Huxley

BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

Katherine Paterson

CAIN'S BOOK

Alexander Trocchi

CAMILLE

Alexandre Dumas, Jr.

THE CANTERBURY TALES

Geoffrey Chaucer

CAPTAIN UNDERPANTS (SERIES)

Dav Pilkey

CATCH-22

Joseph Heller

THE CATCHER IN THE RYE

J. D. Salinger

THE CHOCOLATE WAR

Robert Cormier

A CLOCKWORK ORANGE

Anthony Burgess

THE COLOR PURPLE

Alice Walker

CUJO

Stephen King

DADDY'S ROOMMATE

Michael Willhoite

A DAY NO PIGS WOULD DIE

Robert Newton Peck

DELIVERANCE

James Dickey

A DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN SLANG

Harold Wentworth

DICTIONARY OF SLANG AND UNCONVENTIONAL ENGLISH

Eric Partridge

DOCTOR DOLITTLE (SERIES)

Hugh John Lofting

DOG DAY AFTERNOON

Patrick Mann

DOWN THESE MEAN STREETS

Piri Thomas

DRACULA

Bram Stoker

THE DROWNING OF STEPHAN JONES

Bette Greene

EAST OF EDEN

John Steinbeck

ELMER GANTRY

Sinclair Lewis

END AS A MAN

Calder Willingham

ESTHER WATERS

George Moore

FAHRENHEIT 451

Ray Bradbury

FALLEN ANGELS

Walter Dean Myers

A FAREWELL TO ARMS

Ernest Hemingway

FINAL EXIT

Derek Humphry

THE FIXER

Bernard Malamud

*FRUITS OF PHILOSOPHY: THE PRIVATE COMPANION OF
MARRIED COUPLES*

Charles Knowlton

GARGANTUA AND PANTAGRUEL

François Rabelais

GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT

Laura Z. Hobson

THE GIVER

Lois Lowry

GO ASK ALICE

Anonymous

GONE WITH THE WIND

Margaret Mitchell

GORILLAS IN THE MIST

Dian Fossey

GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

James Baldwin

GRENDDEL

John Gardner

HEATHER HAS TWO MOMMIES

Leslea Newman

A HERO AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT A SANDWICH

Alice Childress

HOWL AND OTHER POEMS

Allen Ginsberg

I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS

Maya Angelou

IN THE NIGHT KITCHEN

Maurice Sendak

INVISIBLE MAN

Ralph Ellison

JAKE AND HONEYBUNCH GO TO HEAVEN

Margot Zemach

JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH

Roald Dahl

JAWS

Peter Benchley

JUNKY

William S. Burroughs

KING & KING

Linda de Haan and Stern Nijland

KINGSBLOOD ROYAL

Sinclair Lewis

LAST EXIT TO BROOKLYN

Hubert Selby, Jr.

LEAVES OF GRASS

Walt Whitman

LITTLE BLACK SAMBO

Helen Bannerman

LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE

Laura Ingalls Wilder

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

Charles Perrault

LORD OF THE FLIES

William Golding

MANCHILD IN THE PROMISED LAND

Claude Brown

MARRIED LOVE

Marie Stopes

MY HOUSE

Nikki Giovanni

THE NAKED APE

Desmond Morris

NAKED LUNCH

William S. Burroughs

NANA

Émile Zola

NEVER LOVE A STRANGER

Harold Robbins

NEW DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN SLANG

Robert L. Chapman

(discussed with *A DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN SLANG*)

OF MICE AND MEN

John Steinbeck

OF TIME AND THE RIVER

Thomas Wolfe

ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST

Ken Kesey

ORDINARY PEOPLE

Judith Guest

THE OX-BOW INCIDENT

Walter Van Tilburg Clark

THE RED PONY

John Steinbeck

THE SCARLET LETTER

Nathaniel Hawthorne

A SEPARATE PEACE

John Knowles

SISTER CARRIE

Theodore Dreiser

SOUL ON ICE

Eldridge Cleaver

STEPPENWOLF

Hermann Hesse

STRANGE FRUIT

Lillian Smith

STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND

Robert A. Heinlein

THE SUN ALSO RISES

Ernest Hemingway

TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT

Ernest Hemingway

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

Harper Lee

UNLIVED AFFECTIONS

George Shannon

WE ALL FALL DOWN

Robert Cormier

WELCOME TO THE MONKEY HOUSE

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

THE WELL OF LONELINESS

Radclyffe Hall

WHALE TALK

Chris Cutcher

WOMAN IN THE MISTS

Farley Mowat

(discussed with *GORILLAS IN THE MIST*)

LITERATURE SUPPRESSED ON SOCIAL GROUNDS

*WORKING: PEOPLE TALK ABOUT WHAT THEY DO ALL DAY
AND HOW THEY FEEL ABOUT WHAT THEY DO*

Studs Terkel

A WORLD I NEVER MADE

James T. Farrell

LITERATURE SUPPRESSED ON SOCIAL GROUNDS



THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN

Author: Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens)

Original date and place of publication: 1884, London

Original publisher: Self-published

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

This novel relates the adventures and struggles of a rambunctious young southern boy in the early 19th century. Told from the first-person point of view, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* portrays river life in a developing America and young Huckleberry Finn's adventures while on the journey from boyhood to manhood. The story begins with Huck's escape from his brutal father and follows him up the Mississippi River as he and his slave friend Jim run from authorities and various other scoundrels.

As the novel opens, Huck reminds readers that many of his adventures have already been detailed in Mark Twain's *THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER*. He states that the \$12,000 that he and Tom had found in the previous novel was invested for them and was earning interest. Huck, who now lives with the Widow Douglas and Miss Watson, expresses annoyance with the amount of concern placed on making him conform to society. Huck sees no point in this lifestyle and yearns to be a rambunctious youth, as is his nature.

As the narrative progresses, Huck's father, the town drunk and a general burden on society, learns of Huck's recent wealth. He kidnaps Huck and holds him hostage in a shack in a remote area outside the town. While Huck waits to be either freed or rescued, his father repeatedly beats him, leaving Huck convinced that escape is the only feasible solution. To accomplish this, he conjures up a plan to make it appear that he has been murdered. Succeeding in his plan, Huck flees to safety on Jackson's Island, where he is reunited with Miss Watson's runaway slave, Jim. Jim is also hiding, fearful that he will be caught and punished for leaving his mistress. Huck agrees not to speak of Jim to anyone, and the two become partners. Aware that men are looking for Jim, the two decide to leave the island in search of adventure and the free states.

They board a raft that they found on the island and begin their journey. By day they hide on land, and by night they travel on the river. All goes well until one night when, during a violent storm, the raft is torn apart by an oncoming steamship. This experience not only almost ends Huck's young life, but it also separates him from Jim.

Huck swims to shore and finds himself in the midst of a feud between two families, the Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons, and he is immediately attacked by members of the Grangerford family. He states his name as George Jackson and explains quickly that he fell off a riverboat and was washed ashore. He stays with the family for a short time, enjoying their lifestyle and making new friends along the way, and he even manages to

be reunited with Jim. When the family feud escalates and Huck and Jim watch numerous members of both families die, they decide to resume their adventure on the river, where they meet two men known as the Duke and the King. The unscrupulous men specialize in robbery and deceit, and they do not hesitate to pose as a dead man's next of kin in order to receive a rather large inheritance. The innately moral Huck refuses to cooperate, and he reveals the Duke and the King's deceit. The scoundrels flee, but they first sell Jim to Silas Phelps.

Seeking to obtain Jim's freedom, Huck visits the Phelps farm, where he is mistaken for Tom Sawyer, who is expected to arrive the same day. Huck allows the deception to continue, then meets with the real Tom, who agrees that Huck will continue to pose as Tom, and Tom will pose as his brother Sid. The two also agree to free Jim as soon as possible. After many attempts, Jim finally escapes, but Tom is accidentally shot in the leg during the effort. Although Jim has been portrayed as ignorant throughout the novel, he is a morally decent man who temporarily puts aside his dreams of freedom to nurse Tom back to health.

The novel closes as Jim and the boys learn that Jim is already a free man, as decreed by the last will and testament of Miss Watson, his former owner. This puts an end to all escape plans and allows Jim to be the one thing that he has always wanted to be, free. Huck also decides to leave and wander on his own, convinced that the civilized world is no place for him.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel excited controversy from the outset, when Concord (Massachusetts) Public Library banned the book in 1885, charging that the novel was "trash suitable only for the slums." Conventional morality was offended by the street vernacular spoken by Jim and Huck, as well as by their coarse behavior. Denver Public Library banned the novel in 1902, and Brooklyn (New York) Public Library removed it from the children's room on the charge that "Huck not only itched but he scratched, and that he said sweat when he should have said perspiration." In 1930, Soviet border guards confiscated the novel, along with *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

In the United States, the furor quieted down for five decades, as the novel became an American classic and a mainstay of school reading lists. A new challenge emerged in 1957, when the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People protested the racist aspects of the book and demanded that it be removed from high schools in New York City. African-American author Ralph Ellison noted that Huck's friendship with Jim demeaned the stature of black males, because the adolescent Huck is portrayed as equal or superior to the adult Jim in decision-making capability. In 1969, Miami Dade (Florida) Junior College removed the novel from the required reading list, charging that the book inhibited learning in black students by creating an emotional block.

In 1973, the Scott, Foresman publishing company yielded to the demands of school officials in Tennessee and prepared a version of the novel that omitted material to which officials objected. The version omits the passage in Chapter 18 in which the young men of the Grangerford family toast their parents each morning with alcohol. It appears in *The United States in Literature*, a textbook distributed and used nationally.

The most frequent objection to the novel has been its language in reference to African Americans. Yielding to pressures from school districts across the nation, textbook publishers up to 1975 met challenges by substituting euphemisms for the term *nigger*. Scott, Foresman rewrote passages to eliminate the word, Singer replaced the term with *slave*, and McGraw-Hill replaced the term with *servant*. In a 1975 dissertation, Dorothy Weathersby found that Ginn and Company was the only textbook publisher to retain the word, but their textbook included an essay by Lionel Trilling to explain the need to include the word in the novel.

The novel has been frequently banned or challenged by school districts for its language, particularly its racial references and the use of the slur *nigger*. A significant number of such challenges have come from well-educated, middle-class, African-American parents who wish to prevent their children from exposure to such insulting references. The Winnetka (Illinois) school district challenged the novel as being racist in 1976, as did school districts in Warrington, Pennsylvania, in 1981; Davenport, Iowa, in 1981; Fairfax County, Virginia, in 1982; Houston, Texas, in 1982; State College, Pennsylvania, in 1983; Springfield, Illinois, in 1984; and Waukegan, Illinois, in 1984.

In 1988, Rockford (Illinois) public schools removed the book from their required reading list because it contained the word *nigger*. Berrien Springs (Michigan) High School challenged the novel that same year, while Caddo Parish (Louisiana) removed the novel from both its school libraries and required reading lists, charging that it contained racially offensive passages. The following year, the novel was challenged at Sevierville County (Tennessee) High School due to perceived racial slurs and the use of ungrammatical dialect.

The 1990s brought new challenges and continued antagonism to the novel. Citing derogatory references to African Americans, parents challenged its inclusion on the supplemental English reading list in Erie (Pennsylvania) High School in 1990. That same year, the novel was challenged as being racist in Plano (Texas) Independent School District.

In 1991, citing the repeated use of the word *nigger*, parents in Mesa (Arizona) Unified School District challenged inclusion of the novel in the curriculum and claimed that such language damaged the self-esteem of young African Americans. For the same reason, that year the novel was removed from the required reading list in the Terrebone Parish public schools in Houma, Louisiana. Also in 1991, it was temporarily removed from the

Portage (Michigan) curriculum after African-American parents charged that the portrayal of Jim and other African Americans made their children “uncomfortable.”

In 1992, the school superintendent of Kinston (North Carolina) School District removed the book from the middle school in the belief that the students were too young to read a work containing the word *nigger*. Concern with the same word, as well as additional “offensive and racist language,” motivated a 1992 challenge to including the novel on the required reading list in Modesto (California) High School. In 1993, challengers charged in the Carlisle (Pennsylvania) school system that the racial slurs in the novel were offensive to both African-American and Caucasian students. In contrast to other areas, the Lewisville (Texas) school board retained the novel on school reading lists in 1994, despite challenges of its racism. The most comprehensive objection to the novel regarded its use in English classes at Taylor County (Butler, Georgia) High School in 1994, when challengers not only claimed that it contained racial slurs and improper grammar, but it also did not reject slavery.

Also in 1994, in Enid, Oklahoma, a group called the Southern Heights Ministerial Alliance challenged the novel as required reading in American literature classes and brought the issue to the textbook review committee. The committee recommended that the book be restricted to students taking advanced-placement American Literature classes, a move that the school board soundly rejected in a 7-0 vote. Instead, the board passed a resolution to keep the book in the curriculum and enacted a measure to require teacher training to be led by Harvard professor and African-American Twain scholar Jocelyn Chadwick.

In 2002, an African-American student in Portland, Oregon, challenged the use of the novel as a required reading and claimed that he was offended by the use of ethnic slurs in the novel. The board considered the challenge and voted to retain the novel.

In 2003, parents of students in the Community High School in Normal, Illinois, sophomore literature class challenged use of the novel in the curriculum. They asserted that the novel is degrading to African Americans. The school board considered the challenge and decided to retain the novel in the curriculum and to offer students an alternative. Students who do not feel comfortable reading *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* are given the option of reading *The Chosen* by Chaim Potok.

In 2004, an African-American student in Renton, Washington, complained to school officials that the novel degraded her and her culture. The novel was not required reading in the school system, but it appeared on a supplemental list of approved books. School administrators ordered the book removed from the reading lists in the three high schools in Renton after receiving the complaint but decided to keep the book available for classroom use.

FURTHER READING

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THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

Author: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Original date and place of publication: 1892, United States

Original publisher: Harper & Row

Literary form: Short story collection

SUMMARY

The 12 short stories contained in the collection first appeared in *The Strand Magazine* during the 1880s: "A Scandal in Bohemia," "The Red-Headed League," "A Case of Identity," "The Boscombe Valley Mystery," "The Five Orange Pips," "The Man with the Twisted Lip," "The Blue Carbuncle," "The Adventure of the Speckled Band," "The Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb," "The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor," "The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet," and "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches." Narrated by John Watson, M.D., they relate the activities of Sherlock Holmes, who functions as a scientist of crime, approaching his adventures with the objectivity and caution of a man of science.

His creator, a physician like Watson, made Holmes the perfect Victorian hero who remains unmoved by emotion and invulnerable to passion. Single-minded in his devotion to the detection of crime, Holmes examines even the most minute piece of evidence, leaving nothing to chance. Thus he can tell by examining ashes the type of tobacco a man smoked, which leads to the place where such tobacco might be sold. Dust and soil particles at a crime site yield information about a region the criminal has recently visited. In his daily life, Holmes is condescending toward ordinary mortals, yet to carry out his investigations he often assumes disguises that allow him to appear among common men, as a tramp, opium addict, minister or other figure of daily life. A more damaging vice than condescension is Holmes's cocaine addiction, which he works hard to eliminate.

The main concern of many of the stories is to prevent scandal, an important preoccupation of Victorian England. All begin similarly, with Watson reminiscing about cases to date. Holmes may be performing chemical experiments or sitting in his study and smoking his pipe as he waits for the next client to appear. Once a client is shown to the rooms at 221B Baker Street, Holmes dazzles his visitor by using careful observations of the individual's clothing, speech, appearance and mannerisms to reveal aspects of the client's profession and personal background. The client then tells his story and Holmes gets to work.

The stories are influenced by the interests of their creator, and Doyle's early dabbling in spiritualism and interest in the occult enter several of the stories. These interests do not dominate the stories, but they become points of reference against which Holmes exhibits his own seemingly mysterious skills.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The censorship history of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* is brief, and it is not based upon the main character's cocaine addiction, as might be expected. Rather, in 1929, the USSR banned the short story collection because references to the occult and spiritualism are made in several of the stories. The Soviet authorities viewed such references as contradictory to their ban on religion and dangerous to maintaining order.

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THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER

Author: Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens)

Original date and place of publication: 1876, United States

Original publisher: Self-published

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

The novel is a first-person account of the life of young Tom Sawyer along the banks of the Mississippi before the Civil War.

When the novel begins, Tom is missing, and his Aunt Polly is worriedly searching for him. She is furious when she learns that he has been swimming all day instead of attending school. As punishment, Tom must whitewash a fence on Saturday, instead of playing as usual, but he tricks his friends into doing the job.

After Tom shows off “his” work on the fence, Aunt Polly agrees to let him play for the remainder of the day. Tom later spots Becky Thatcher and attracts her attention with flamboyant antics, earning a flower from her as his reward.

In catechism class the next morning, Tom receives a Bible for having enough tickets to indicate that he memorized 2,000 passages in the Bible. But Tom cheated and traded various items with friends in order to amass the correct number of tickets. When the Sunday School teacher asks him to answer a Scripture question, he is unable to do so. Later that morning, Tom creates chaos in church when his pinch bug attacks a wandering dog.

On Monday, Tom once again attempts to avoid school, but Aunt Polly forces him to go. On the way, Tom meets Huckleberry Finn, and the two plan to take the corpse of a cat to the cemetery at midnight in order to cure warts. Once Tom reaches school, he is automatically punished for his tardiness and made to sit in the female section of the schoolroom. Tom sits next to Becky, but she acts repelled by his presence. As soon as they can, Tom and Joe Harper leave and take the rest of the day off.

That night Huck and Tom go to the cemetery with the cat. While there, the two boys see Dr. Robinson, Injun Joe, and Muff Potter unearthing a recently interred body. The three men argue and struggle, leaving Muff Potter unconscious, after which Injun Joe stabs Dr. Robinson to death and leaves. The frightened boys swear never to tell anyone about the murder, even when they hear the next day that Injun Joe has named Muff Potter as Dr. Robinson’s slayer.

Tom, Huck, and Joe Harper decide to become pirates for a short while, so they run away to Jackson’s Island. Days go by, and the boys continue to enjoy their carefree, adventurous life, while the townspeople frantically search for them. After their efforts prove fruitless, the townspeople legally declare the boys dead and plan a memorial service. On a brief return to his house to leave

his Aunt Polly a note, Tom hears that there will be church services the following Sunday for the repose of the three boys' souls. The three guests of honor interrupt the services and casually stroll down the main aisle of the church.

The boys agree to retire from piracy and to return home. Back in school, Tom continues his courtship of Becky, finally winning her admiration by taking the blame and the punishment for something that she does. Tom and the others are able to have their revenge when, on the last day of school, Tom humiliates the schoolmaster by exposing his bald head to the entire school.

When Muff Potter is placed on trial for the murder of Dr. Robinson, Tom is called as a surprise witness. He tells the court that it was not Muff Potter but Injun Joe who ruthlessly murdered Dr. Robinson, and Injun Joe escapes the court and imprisonment by jumping through a window and fleeing.

Days later, Tom and Huck are exploring an abandoned house when two men enter, one of whom is Injun Joe disguised as a Spaniard. The men take gold and silver coins to use at a tavern, and the boys overhear Injun Joe state that he isn't going to leave the area until he can take revenge upon the boys.

At a picnic a few days later, Tom and Becky become lost in McDougal's cave. Later that night, Huck overhears Injun Joe plot to attack the Widow Douglas in retaliation for a whipping that he received from her late husband. After Huck informs Mr. Jones of the plot, Injun Joe and his companion are quickly driven off. Huck then becomes ill, but the Widow Douglas takes care of him.

The townspeople discover that Tom and Becky are missing and search for the two children. In the cave, Tom sees Injun Joe, who is in hiding. The two children finally find a back opening to the cave and return to town. After hearing about Tom and Becky's ordeal, Judge Thatcher orders the cave sealed, unintentionally trapping Injun Joe. When Tom learns that the cave has been sealed, he tells Judge Thatcher that Injun Joe is inside, and Injun Joe's body is later found near the cave entrance.

Tom and Huck return to the cave to recover \$12,000 of treasure, which is divided between the boys and invested for them. Tom returns to live with Aunt Polly, and Huck is taken into the Douglas home, to be educated in the moral lifestyle by the Widow Douglas. He agrees to this ordeal and seems placated as long as he can join Tom's newly established robber gang.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel was censored from its first publication, although it has not provoked as much controversy as Twain's later novel, *THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN*. In 1876, Brooklyn (New York) Public Library banned the book from the children's room; that same year, Denver (Colorado) Public Library removed it from the library shelves. Five decades later, in 1930, guards at the USSR border confiscated the novel, along with *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

The novel proceeded to earn a reputation as an American literary classic and remained unchallenged until 1985, when education officials in London

removed the novel from all school libraries after determining that the book was “racist” and “sexist.” In 1990, the novel was challenged, along with *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, as being racist in the Plano (Texas) Independent School District. In the O’Fallon (Illinois) schools in 1992, parents challenged the inclusion of the book on the required reading list and charged that the use of the word *nigger* was degrading and offensive to black students. They won the right to request that an alternative reading choice be offered. In 1994, parents of seventh-grade students in the West Chester (Pennsylvania) schools claimed that the book contained an abundance of racially charged language, and it was removed from the curriculum.

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ALICE’S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

Author: Lewis Carroll (Reverend Charles Dodgson)
Original date and place of publication: 1865, England
Original publisher: Macmillan
Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* began as an amusing story created especially for Alice Liddell, the young daughter of the author’s Oxford colleague, Henry Liddell; it first appeared as a handwritten manuscript entitled *Alice’s Adventures Under Ground*. Although the work is filled with numerous parodies of his age, puns, mathematical puzzles, and turns of phrase, contemporary interpretation has concerned psychoanalytic and allegorical meaning. In addition, much attention has been paid to the author’s numerous and intense friendships with young girls. The sequel, *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*, was published in 1871.

Set in Victorian England, the story relates the dream of a curious young girl named Alice who dozes off and, in her dream, catches sight of a white rabbit, whom she follows into the strange and exciting world of Wonderland. In this world, ordinary logic fails to apply, and Alice can find little pattern or order in the events that befall her. She finds a key to open a necessary door, but she is too large to fit through the doorway. A magic elixir in a bottle marked “Drink Me” shrinks her to the correct size, but she becomes

too small to reach the key. Alice consumes a cake marked “Eat Me,” hoping that it will make her grow a little. Instead, her neck grows until her head reaches the ceiling, as she cries large teardrops. As she attempts to come to terms with the chaotic environment, Alice converses with numerous animals. The White Rabbit reappears and drops his fan and gloves in fear, as Alice sits in a pool of her own tears and meets a parrot-like creature named a Lory, with whom she discusses the proper way to dry off. A mouse attempts to dry everyone off by interpreting a “dry” history of the Archduke of Canterbury, and the Dodo suggests that they have a Caucus-Race in which the contestants run for however long and far they wish, stop whenever they like, and all win.

The surroundings become even more chaotic as the White Rabbit reappears and orders Alice to retrieve a fan and pair of gloves from his home. Alice drinks from a bottle marked “Drink Me” and immediately grows to an enormous size, leading the White Rabbit to scold Alice and attempt to evict her from the house by ordering a serpent gardener to forcefully move her. The serpent and a lizard, the rabbit’s servant, hit Alice with pebbles, but the stones become cakes as they hit the ground. Alice eats one and shrinks, then runs off in fear and finds herself under a mushroom on which a caterpillar reclines. The caterpillar tells her the secret of the mushroom before she leaves, which is that one side will make her taller and the other, smaller. She nibbles the magic mushrooms for a while and learns to control their enlarging and reducing effects.

Alice next meets the Duchess, who is nursing an infant, and the famous Cheshire Cat. When Alice makes a snide comment that offends the Duchess, she sentences Alice to be beheaded. The Duchess tosses the baby to Alice, and the baby immediately is transformed into a pig, which runs off squealing. Alice focuses on the Cheshire Cat, but he appears to speak in riddles.

Alice wanders to the home of the March Hare, who is having a tea party with the Dormouse and Mad Hatter. The tea party is dominated by horrible puns and insane behavior, and Alice leaves, only to find herself in the original hallway with the glass table. She eats more of the mushrooms and shrinks to a size that allows her to enter a garden where she meets the King and Queen of Hearts, who look like oversize playing cards, playing croquet. Alice offends the Queen and is sentenced to death, along with many of the other cards. The Queen then orders all of the croquet players except Alice to be taken away and executed, thus leaving the King, herself, and Alice to play for the remainder of the afternoon.

The Knave of Hearts is brought before the Queen, accused of stealing tarts. After emphatically denying this heinous crime, he is proved guilty by “solid” evidence and executed. This upsets Alice, who pleads with the Queen, then suddenly finds herself back in her world, where she awakens and contemplates the dream of Wonderland.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Despite the concerns raised in the author's own time regarding his apparent lack of maturity and the questions of possible sexual impropriety, the novel has not been challenged for either of these reasons. The sole ban occurred in 1931, when the governor of Hunan Province in China ruled that the book was unacceptable because it portrayed animals using human language. The censors asserted that "it was disastrous to put animals and human beings on the same level," because it showed disrespect for humans.

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THE AMBOY DUKES

Author: Irving Shulman

Original date and place of publication: 1947, United States

Original publisher: Bantam Books

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

The novel, which gained a large following among high school students when it was first published, offers a sordid and realistic look at the sad and aimless lives of young men growing up in the slums of a big American city during World War II. Left largely to fend for themselves and to create their own moral code, as they see little of their parents who work in the large defense plants, the boys develop a herd instinct that leads them to form a gang, the Amboy Dukes. Although the novel was written in the mid-1940s, the bleak portrait of slum life and the pervading sense of hopelessness transcend the time period and apply as well to today. The actions of the members of the Dukes, and the reactions of others around them, make them the precursors of the highly popularized "juvenile delinquents" of books and movies of the 1950s.

The author explains the elements of gang life through each of his characters, and he portrays these unsupervised young misfits as being as much the victims of their environment and of society in general as they are of callous families and indifferent social institutions. To portray the gang members realistically, Shulman peppers their speech heavily with vulgarities. They use crude terminology in referring to relations with women. Their appearance and attitude are provocative, but the author also includes incidents in which individual adolescent gang members suffer harassment from the police as well as from school officials, with little hope of recourse. The lives of teenagers are presented in a sympathetic manner, with an attempt at gritty reality, and the author offers a strong indictment of the conditions that lead these boys to crime and brutality.

Despite his empathy with members of the Dukes, the author graphically portrays the toll of their abandonment by established society, and the subsequent formation of their own gang society, on both the boys and those with whom they come into contact. Robberies, fighting, muggings, and other crimes pervade the novel. In one episode, the gang members pay a girl to have sex with all of them, then forcibly try to take their money back from her. The novel ends with no solutions to the problems it exposes. There are no happy endings for members of the Amboy Dukes.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel was severely criticized from the outset and blamed for promoting delinquency among poor young slum dwellers. In 1949, the book was challenged as obscene in Brantford, Ontario (Canada), but Judge D. J. Cowan cleared the bookseller and the book of obscenity charges when the case came to trial. That same year, local authorities in Milwaukee, Detroit, and Newark (New Jersey) challenged sales of the book, claiming that it was obscene, but no formal charges were lodged.

In 1952, the Gathings Committee Report criticized the book for contributing to juvenile delinquency, a conclusion that made the novel a favorite target of attempted but unsuccessful censorship in the 1950s. In a statement to the Gathings Committee, Judge James V. Mulholland of the New York Domestic Relations Court supported restriction of the novel and stated that two recent cases involving juveniles, one a boy who viciously attacked several other children and the other a 14-year-old girl who had committed incest, could be directly linked to the influence of the book. In 1954, the novel was placed on the disapproved list of the National Organization of Decent Literature.

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THE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Author: American Heritage Publishing Company

Original date and place of publication: 1969, United States

Original publishers: American Heritage Publishing Company and Houghton Mifflin

Literary form: Dictionary

SUMMARY

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language is a comprehensive lexicon containing over 170,000 entries. The words defined range from the common and conventional to slang and technical jargon. Many of the entries give word origins, as well as meanings, along with sample phrases to show the different meanings in context. Entries seek to explain all connotations of the word.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

In June 1976, a group of parents who were members of People for Better Education complained that *The American Heritage Dictionary* was obscene and demanded that all copies be removed from classrooms in Anchorage, Alaska. They cited as offensive the entry for “bed,” defined as a noun meaning “a place for lovemaking” and “a marital relationship with its rights and intimacies,” and as a verb meaning “to have sexual intercourse with.” They also objected to “knocker,” “balls,” and “nuts” being defined with their slang meanings. The assistant superintendent headed a review committee that examined the dictionary and approved it unanimously. In reporting the committee findings, the assistant superintendent stated that the dictionary provided children with the opportunity to look up the designated words, which “helped diffuse excitement and curiosity about them.” The committee further defended *The American Heritage Dictionary* as being “an excellent reference for advanced students, especially for scientific terms.” The school board ignored the defense and, citing their list of definitions taken from the dictionary, voted to remove it from the schools.

In September 1976, parents in Cedar Lake, Indiana, complained that 70 or 80 words in the dictionary were obscene or otherwise inappropriate

for high school students to see, and they demanded that *The American Heritage Dictionary* be removed from the schools. The word “bed” was again the most frequently criticized entry. The school board voted to remove the dictionary from the high school, and the board president refused to listen to the protests of teachers, whom he characterized as “unqualified to select learning materials.” In mid-November 1976, the school board reversed its decision by a 3-2 vote and allowed the dictionary to be used in the senior English classrooms. This action was taken after counsel advised the board that the dictionary could not be considered obscene. In April 1977, 24 parents of junior high school students in Eldon, Missouri, signed a complaint in which they listed 39 words in *The American Heritage Dictionary* that were objectionable. One parent was quoted on page 1 of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* for April 18, 1977, as stating, “If people learn words like that it ought to be where you and I learned it—in the street and in the gutter.” The school board agreed with the parents and voted to remove the dictionary from the junior high school. In later cases, the school library in Folsom, California, removed the dictionary from its shelves after parents issued complaints, and the dictionary was challenged but retained in the Churchill County, Nevada, school libraries in 1993. That same year, the Washoe County, Nevada, school district removed the dictionary from classrooms, then reinstated it a short time later.

A more extensive case of dictionary censorship occurred in Texas in 1976. *The American Heritage Dictionary* was one of five dictionaries recommended by the State Textbook Committee that the Texas State Textbook Commission banned because they contained definitions that the commission viewed as obscene. The other four were *The Doubleday Dictionary*, *The Random House College Dictionary*, revised edition; *Webster’s New World Dictionary of the English Language*, college edition; and *Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*. The move was spearheaded by Mel and Norma Gabler, who operated Educational Research Analysts, a tax-exempt organization that initiated local censorship efforts and sent out textbook reviews pointing out what they viewed as questionable material. They had numerous supporters, among them the Texas Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, whose textbook chairperson stated in a Bill of Particulars to the Texas commissioner of education, “Reviewer is shocked that a supposedly reputable publisher would offer for adoption a book which is debasing the English language. Students need the basics rather than sub-standard language.” Her remarks were in reference to *Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language*. In addition to citing the obvious words, such as “cunnilingus,” “fart,” “fuck,” “piss,” “screw,” and “shit,” the report also noted that the following words in the five dictionaries were objectionable; the reason cited for the objection appears in parentheses: “across-the-board” (betting on horse racing in Texas was illegal); “Arab” (incomplete definition); “ass” (unnecessary); “attempt” (ties word into subject of murder); “banana republic” (insulting to Latins); “bawdy house” (unnecessary); “bed” (Why is sexual intercourse mentioned?); “the big house”

(slang, unnecessary); “block busting” (inaccurate and unnecessary); “boob” (a female breast); “brain” (denotes violence); “bucket” (slang for buttocks); “butt” (slang for the buttocks); “cherry” (the hymen; virginity); “clap” (slang for a brothel and gonorrhea); “coke” (slang for cocaine); “crooked” (slang for intoxicated); “deflower” (to cause loss of virginity); “dyke” (a female homosexual); “fag”/“faggot” (slang for male homosexual); “fairy” (slang for male homosexual); “gay” (slang for male homosexual); “G-string” (slang, unnecessary); “head” (slang for one who uses or is addicted to a drug); “hooker” (slang for prostitute); “horny” (slang for sexually excited); “hot” (slang for sexually excited); “john” (slang for a customer of a prostitute); “john” (slang for toilet); “keister”/“keaster” (slang for buttocks or rump); “kinky” (slang for sexually abnormal); “knock” (slang for to make pregnant); “queer” (homosexual; a contemptuous term); “rubber” (slang for a condom); “shack”/“shack up with” (slang for to share living quarters with one’s lover); “slut” (a dirty, untidy woman; slattern; a sexually immoral woman); “tail” (slang for the buttocks); “tit” (a breast). In efforts to sell their books, the publishers of the dictionaries wrote to the Texas commissioner of education to defend the inclusion of these words, citing their appearance in classic literature and the Bible, as well as highly reputable contemporary books and publications. Despite their efforts, the dictionaries were placed on the “no-purchase” list.

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AM I BLUE?

Editor: Marion Dane Bauer

Original date and place of publication: 1994, United States

Original publisher: HarperCollins

Literary form: Short story anthology

SUMMARY

Am I Blue? was the first anthology of young adult fiction to contain stories devoted solely to gay and lesbian themes. The 16 stories are all written

by notable young adult or children's fiction writers, and all feature at least one character who is gay or lesbian. The intention of the anthology was to provide adolescents with the realization that they are not alone, unique, or abnormal in their sexual orientation, and the works included all provide readers with positive and credible gay role models. The stories center on themes of coming to terms with homosexuality and, as such, contain diverse views of love, coming of age, adventure, and self-discovery. As editor Marion Dane Bauer writes in her introduction, while the stories will help those young people who are struggling with their sexual identity, they will also provide those who are firmly heterosexual with a means of understanding what others are going through. She writes, "The power of fiction is that it gives us, as readers, the opportunity to move inside another human being, to look out through that person's eyes, hear with her ears, think with his thoughts, feel with her feelings."

The stories in this anthology contain a fairy godfather ("Am I Blue?"), a gay father, and the tender awkwardness of teenage boys bonding ("Holding"), as well as a story that takes place in Vietnam ("In the Tunnels"), another that examines the world of 1951 ("Three Mondays in July"), and still another that takes place in a mythical kingdom called The Dales where women live together in communities ("Blood Sister"). The authors of the stories are homosexual and heterosexual, and their goals in writing these stories are to present realistic human beings experiencing life.

Included in this anthology are the following stories: "Am I Blue?" by Bruce Coville, "We Might as Well Be Strangers" by M. E. Kerr, "Winnie and Tommy" by Francesca Lia Block, "Slipping Away" by Jacqueline Woodson, "The Honorary Shepherds" by Gregory Maguire, "Running" by Ellen Howard, "Three Mondays in July" by James Cross Giblin, "Parents' Night" by Nancy Garden, "Michael's Little Sister" by C. S. Adler, "Supper" by Leslie Newman, "Holding" by Lois Lowry, "Blood Sister" by Jane Yolen, "Hands" by Jonathan London, "50% Chance of Lightning" by Cristina Salat, "In the Tunnels" by William Sleator, and "Dancing Backwards" by Marion Dane Bauer.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Am I Blue? became the source of controversy in 2004 in Solon, Iowa, after seven parents with children in the school district filed complaints about use of the book in the middle school classroom and demanded that middle school teacher Susan Protheroe cease using any books in her classroom that contain gay, lesbian, or transgender characters. Only one of the parents had a child in Protheroe's classroom, but the group complained that *Am I Blue?* "has no instructional value for her class" and asserted that "it is about controversial areas that should be discussed within families, and it is not appropriate for middle school-aged students." The parents also condemned the book as promoting bias and prejudice, arguing that the book "promotes intolerance

through use of slanderous and racist terms, perpetuates gay stereotypes, and promotes homosexuality.” One father told a reporter for the *Iowa City Press-Citizen* that “the material directly contradicts and undermines the beliefs and teachings of our faith. It introduces a very adult situation and mature subject to an inappropriately young audience. It is likely to introduce sexual confusion to a group of children who are just becoming sexually aware.”

During a meeting held in late October 2004, parents presented their complaints to the nine-member Materials Review Committee (MRC), which by school board policy has the function of reviewing materials that have met with objections from parents or from other school district residents. The meeting was attended by more than 100 people, mostly parents. As the local newspaper reported the next day, parents were extremely upset by the existence of the book in the curriculum. One parent accused the school district of being “disrespectful of parents” and condemned the school administration for not having told parents the content of the stories in the book. Another parent quoted by the local paper claimed that the stories in the book promote a “gay agenda” and that they “advocate promiscuity and gay fantasies.” Several former and current students of the Solon Middle School spoke in support of the book and requested that parents should have “respect for their innate intelligence to be able to deal with controversial material in a mature manner.” Eight of the nine committee members voted to retain the book in the eighth-grade curriculum, but the board as a whole also recommended that the district institute a policy of informing parents of controversial materials before each school year. The school board accepted the recommendations of the MRC, and one board member told parents who vowed they would appeal the decision: “If your goal out there is to take your personal views and instill them in your children and also force them on all children, then the road to the state school board is open to you in Des Moines.”

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AND STILL I RISE

Author: Maya Angelou (Marguerite Johnson)

Original date and place of publication: 1978, United States

Original publisher: Random House

Literary form: Poetry collection

SUMMARY

And Still I Rise is a collection of 31 autobiographical poems that celebrate life and the survival of the human spirit. The subject matter ranges from the author's proud examination of her powers to attract men, through references to the range of roles that women, especially African-American women, have been forced to assume throughout time. Angelou speaks in rhyme and rhythm as they suit the specific subject of a poem, and the diction ranges from the lofty speech of a sermon to the vernacular of a welfare mother challenging the system. She challenges readers in her references to rape as well as in her frank statements regarding exuberant sexuality.

In "Remembrance," the poet states that "mystery rapes my reason," and she speaks of feeling melancholy after a lover leaves her bed, "when only the smell of your love lingers between my breasts." The harshly analytical "Men" speaks of the "breasts of a young girl" and the betrayal of the young persona, "Fifteen years old and starving for them [men]," who learns that the soft romanticism of the initial encounter will result in her body being "slammed shut. Forever." The soft caresses give way to the unpleasant physical reality that "it is your juice that runs down their legs." In "Lady Luncheon Club," a male speaker at a woman's club attempts to relate to his bored audience as "he sighs for youthful death and rape at ten," while the mother in "Momma Welfare Roll" is "too fat to whore."

On a more positive note, Angelou celebrates her sexuality and that of all African-American women in "Through the Inner City to the Suburbs" as she speaks of "the juicy secrets of black thighs." This celebration of the self reaches its peak in "Still I Rise," in which the author challenges readers, "Does my sexiness upset you? / Does it come as a surprise / That I dance like I've got diamonds / At the meeting of my thighs?"

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

And Still I Rise has been challenged both for its language and for the "suggestive sexuality" contained in many of the poems. In 1982, parents at Northside High School in Lafayette, Louisiana, demanded that the book be withdrawn from the high school library because of its references to rape and sexual activity, but the book was retained. In 1987, a Wake County High School parent group approached the school board in Raleigh, North Carolina, and protested that the work was unsuitable to be required reading for junior-level English classes. Among their concerns were the mentions of rape and the references to

the breasts of young girls and to their sexual awareness. Critics also protested that several of the poems exhibited a “bitterness and hatred toward whites.” The board sided with the parents and removed the work from the required list. Protests by parents in Longview (Washington) School District in 1987 resulted in the temporary removal of the collection from high school reading lists until the school board could consider claims that “some students could be harmed by its graphic language.” The book was retained on the reading list, but students were provided numerous alternative reading choices.

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ANNE FRANK: THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL

Author: Anne Frank

Original date and place of publication: 1947, The Netherlands

Original publisher: Contact

Literary form: Diary

SUMMARY

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl is a compilation of the notebooks and papers left behind by a 15-year-old Jewish girl, Anne Frank, when she and her family were taken from their hiding place in Amsterdam by German soldiers during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands in World War II. The hiding place was a “secret annex,” a group of rooms at the top and back of a building that served as a warehouse and office for a Dutch-owned business. Those hiding remained quiet by day, while business was conducted in the lower part of the building, but they moved freely at night when the building was deserted. After the Frank family was taken, members of the Dutch family that had sheltered them gathered the papers and hid them in a desk without reading them. When Otto Frank, Anne’s father and the only one of the family to survive the war, returned from the death camps, he took the papers and sought to publish them. He would thus fulfill his late daughter’s dream for her work and make her live again through her writing.

The final published diary is the combination of Anne’s original text with the later edited version that she began, modifying her earlier, more childish phrasing. She also used pseudonyms for the other occupants of the annex, as

well as for their protectors, to prevent hurt feelings in instances in which she is critical of them. She writes at several points in the diary that she wants it to live on long after her death and would like it published as *Het Achterhuis* (The house behind), the title under which the work first appeared.

The small, red-checked diary, which Anne named “Kitty,” was a present from her father on her 13th birthday, June 12, 1942, less than a month before they would enter the annex. She began the diary on her birthday, writing in it and in notebooks for the family’s 25 months in hiding, from July 5, 1942, through August 1, 1944, three days before Gestapo sergeant Silverbauer and four soldiers broke in and took them away. In the diary, Anne followed the course of the war and recorded her hopes, dreams, fears, and desires, as well as her observations of daily life. The increasingly bad news brought by their protectors, as well as what they heard on the English radio, also prompted Anne’s reflections.

Anne’s observations about her family as well as the dentist, Mr. Dussel, and the Van Daan family (a father, mother, and 16-year-old son), who share the annex with the Franks, are followed in the diary. She irritably records Mrs. Van Daan’s attempts to flirt with Otto Frank, noting that “she strokes his face and hair, pulls her skirt right up, and makes so-called witty remarks,” and registers her relief that her father “doesn’t play ball.” She also records the idiosyncrasies of the other inhabitants, as well as her coldness toward her mother. The reader also learns that the three young people managed to read a lot during their stay and even completed a correspondence shorthand course. Anne also manages to maintain her sense of humor as conditions worsen, remarking at one point when food becomes scarce, “Whoever wants to follow a slimming course should stay in the ‘Secret Annexe’!”

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Censorship of *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* began with its initial publication in the Netherlands. Anxious to spare the feelings of their protectors and the memory of the other occupants, Otto Frank excised details of the squabbling among the occupants of the annex and sections in which Anne complained about the selfishness or insensitivity of others. Because she viewed the diary as her private writing, Anne frequently expressed unadorned thoughts and concerns and used the diary as a means of venting her frustrations with the situation. Her father removed such passages without changing significantly the overall representations of the others or their relationships.

Once Otto Frank sought a publisher, additional censorship was required. The Dutch publisher, Contact, required the removal of certain passages that the editors viewed as “tasteless” or “unseemly.” These included Anne’s references to her and her sister’s menstruation. Anne’s growing sexual curiosity was also deemed unacceptable, despite the naturalness of such curiosity in an adolescent. Therefore, a passage in which she recalls a friend’s developing breasts and muses about wanting to touch them was removed. The publisher

also asked that Otto Frank delete all “offensive” remarks made by Anne about her mother.

In 1950, the German publishing firm of Lambert Schneider commissioned a German translation, and additional censorship occurred. The Critical Edition notes that material that would have been especially offensive to German readers was removed. One such passage written by Anne related the rule in the annex that everyone was required “to speak softly at all times, in any civilized language, therefore not in German,” which Lambert Schneider changed to “All civilized languages . . . but softly.”

The 1952 publication of the diary in England restored most of the excised material. More recent challenges have focused on Anne’s growing sexual awareness. In a January 5, 1944, entry Anne recollects sleeping with a girlfriend and having “a strong desire to kiss her,” which she did. She states further that she was terribly curious about the other girl’s body, “for she had always kept it hidden from me. I asked her whether, as proof of our friendship, we should feel one another’s breasts, but she refused. I go into ecstasies every time I see the naked figure of a woman, such as Venus, for example. . . . If only I had a girl friend!” At the same time, she develops a crush on Peter Van Daan, who shows her “the male organs” of a cat, and with whom she experiences her first ardent kiss on the mouth, questioning if she “should have yielded so soon.” She also observes increased flirting between the dentist and Mrs. Van Daan and notes that “Dussel is beginning to get longings for women.”

In 1982, parents in Wise County, Virginia, challenged the use of the book in school and asserted that Anne’s discussion of sexual matters was “inappropriate” and “offensive” and that the criticism of her mother and of the other adults “undermines adult authority.” Others have objected to the discussion of “the mistreatment of the Jewish people,” and one parent of Arab ancestry objected to the portrayal of a Jewish girl. In 1983, four members of the Alabama Textbook Commission wanted to reject the title for use in the schools because it was “a real downer.”

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ANNIE ON MY MIND

Author: Nancy Garden

Original date and place of publication: 1982, United States

Original publisher: Farrar, Straus & Giroux

Literary form: Young adult novel

SUMMARY

Annie on My Mind details what happens to two teenage girls who recognize that they love each other. Students at different schools who start out as friends, Annie and Liza meet at a museum and share a common interest in art and the Middle Ages. Annie is the daughter of minimally educated Italian immigrant parents and attends an inner-city school. In contrast, Liza is from an affluent family. Her parents are professionals, and she attends Foster Academy, a private school where she is student council president.

The main setting of the book is Foster Academy, run by a headmistress who demands that even minor infractions of rules be disciplined. The academy is in financial trouble, and a fund drive is in progress, a complication that requires that all hint of scandal be eliminated or the academy will suffer.

The love between Annie and Liza develops gradually. They have difficulty admitting their feelings because of the stigma attached to their love, and there is no place for them to become physically intimate. When two of the academy's best-liked teachers, Ms. Widmer and Ms. Stephenson, who share a house, go on vacation, Liza offers to care for their cats, then realizes that she and Annie can be alone there. Liza also discovers that the two teachers are lovers when she explores the empty house, sees books about lesbians in the master bedroom and notices the bedroom furnishings. During that spring vacation, Liza and Annie meet at the house and explore their sexual relationship. They are discovered by another student and a nosy school secretary who tells the headmistress and exposes the two teachers as well.

Liza is suspended from school and required to attend a disciplinary meeting of the school's board of trustees, who will decide if the incident should be placed on her permanent record and if the board should inform the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which has accepted Liza as an architectural student. Annie attends another school, so she is spared the humiliation and her parents never learn about the incident. The academy board takes no disciplinary action, but Liza must bear nasty remarks and whispering when she returns to school. The two teachers, however, lose their jobs because the school mistakenly believes that they influenced the girls.

Annie attends the University of California at Berkeley on the West Coast, while Liza remains on the East Coast and attends MIT in the fall. Annie writes Liza a letter, but Liza does not answer it. Finally, after realizing that she does love Annie, Liza telephones her, and they decide to get together during Christmas vacation.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel has frequently been attacked on the grounds that it promotes, idealizes, or encourages homosexuality. Challengers who have not read the book mistakenly charge that it contains explicit sex. Other critics cannot accept the positive portrayal of the gay characters, who are not psychological

misfits, nor are they condemned. Yet the book makes a compelling point that homosexual behavior risks harsh consequences and may often result in pain and suffering for individuals who dare to challenge the majority.

In 1988, patrons of Cedar Mill Community Library in Portland, Oregon, challenged the book because it portrays lesbian love and sex as being normal. The book was removed temporarily from shelves, then returned. In 1990, a parent in Sedgwick, Maine, became upset when she learned that the novel was included in the seventh- and eighth-grade library. She objected to the lesbian relationship portrayed. The matter was referred to the school board because the school district did not have a complaint policy in place. The board created a review committee consisting of board members, educators, and parents, who voted to retain the book in the library.

In 1991, *Annie on My Mind* disappeared mysteriously from two high school libraries in San Ramon, California. The librarians later discovered that the vice principals of the two high schools had taken the book from the libraries, claiming to want to examine them. The copies had been donated by a community member, who publicly accused the vice principals of censorship and stated, "They might as well burn the books; clearly the intent is to deny students books having a gay or lesbian theme." Although the vice principals denied censoring the books, a representative of the American Civil Liberties Union determined that this had been the intent and stated that "a school district cannot exclude the topic of homosexuality from a school library."

In 1992, librarians at Colony (Texas) Public Library received numerous requests to remove the novel because "it promotes and encourages the gay lifestyle." After receiving the first complaint, the library board members voted unanimously to retain the book in the library and issued a statement that it was not the job of the library to tell children what they could read, "it is the parents' job." The board maintained that position when other complaints followed and encouraged parents to evaluate the materials to which their children were exposed.

In 1993, parents of students at Bend (Oregon) High School challenged the book in their school library because it "encourages and condones" homosexuality. The school board considered the complaints and voted to retain the book. That same year the book was also challenged but retained in the Lapeer (Michigan) West High School library. Several Kansas school districts also experienced challenges in 1993 after the schools received a donation of library copies of the novel from a national group that sought to give young adults "fair, accurate, and inclusive images of lesbians and gay men." The book was first removed, then returned to general circulation in the library in Shawnee Mission School District. Copies of the book were doused with gasoline and burned by a minister and his followers in the Kansas City School District, but a copy of the novel was retained in the high school library, and the school district donated the novel to the city's public library.

In 1994, the novel was banned from the libraries of five junior high and three senior high schools in Olathe, Kansas, by the superintendent of schools with the backing of the school board. When the district refused to return the book to the school libraries, six students and their families contacted the American Civil Liberties Union and filed a lawsuit against the school. The case was decided in December 1995, when a U.S. district judge ruled that the school board and superintendent had violated the First Amendment of the United States Constitution by removing the novel from the school libraries. The judge ordered the district to return copies of the novel to the school libraries and to pay legal fees and expenses for the plaintiffs.

The novel was also removed from the Chanute (Kansas) High School library in 1994, after parents challenged the work. Librarians returned the book to a limited-access shelf and made it available only to those who had written parental permission.

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ANOTHER COUNTRY

Author: James Baldwin

Original date and place of publication: 1962, United States

Original publisher: Dial Press

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

The novel is set in New York City and moves freely from Greenwich Village to Harlem, as it recounts a year in the lives of the seven major characters. *Another Country* spotlights the interrelationships and artistic careers of African-American jazz drummer Rufus and his sister Ida, a singer, with those of five white characters: Vivaldo, Ida's lover and a would-be writer; Yves, a young Frenchman, and his lover, Eric, an actor; Richard, a pulp novelist, and his wife, Cass. Through the often complex interaction of the characters of both races set in the period of the mid-1950s, the author investigates the deep racial wounds suffered by both groups. He experiments with the concept of

equality by placing his characters on roughly similar levels, then examines the reasons for their failure to remain at these levels. Baldwin seeks to shatter prevailing social concepts as he erases established color and sex lines and bends social expectations of the period by the freedom with which he writes of interracial sex and homosexuality.

Written in social-realist style, the novel examines the lives of its characters at a specific moment in time; in so doing, it successfully re-creates the people, streets, stores, apartments, and sounds of the city, its glory, as well as its more sordid aspects. In keeping with the stress on reality, the characters speak as their real-life counterparts speak, expressing their fears, frustrations, desires, and emotions in street vernacular and sprinkling their conversations with obscenities. White characters are sexually attracted to African-American characters, men are drawn to men, and the surrounding city casts a squalid gloom on all their lives.

From the outset, despite their efforts, the characters are doomed to succumb to a fate beyond their control. Rufus Scott, a talented and successful musician, internalizes the low opinion of African-American men held by the society of his time. When his white lover, Leona, professes her love and seeks his approval, his lack of self-esteem and inability to overcome the pain of former rejections prevent him from returning her love. Instead, he labels her “white trash” for loving a black man, physically abuses her, and accuses her of sneaking out with his male friends. Unable to deal with the hopelessness of his fate, Rufus, the most fully developed character in the novel, commits suicide by jumping off the George Washington Bridge in the first fifth of the novel. In the remaining four-fifths, the rest of the characters cope with their loss, recalling from their unique perspectives their relationships with Rufus and their own frustrations in life.

Although reviewers criticized his unconventional sexual pairings in the novel, the public made it a success, and *Another Country* became the second-best-selling novel of the year when it came out in paperback in 1963.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Upon publication in 1962, the novel caught the attention of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which viewed it as being similar in many ways to Henry Miller’s *TROPIC OF CANCER* and *TROPIC OF CAPRICORN*. The novel was considered of sufficient importance by the bureau that it warranted a separate file, *FBI HO 145-2625*, apart from their main file on Baldwin. On September 19, 1962, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover sent the novel to the FBI laboratory to be “examined,” expressing particular concern regarding its interracial and homosexual sex scenes. The General Crimes Section returned an unexpected decision, declaring that the novel “contains literary merit and may be of value to students of psychology and social behavior.”

In 1963, a New Orleans bookseller was arrested for stocking copies of the novel in violation of city ordinances related to the sale of obscene litera-

ture, but the Louisiana district attorney dropped the case. That same year, the New Orleans Public Library asserted that the novel was obscene and banned it. The case went to court and, after a year of litigation, the book was restored.

In 1965, the FBI received a letter from a Fort Worth (Texas) citizen, claiming that the novel contained “sex perversion at its vilest” and demanding action to curtail the sale of the novel, which was available at stores throughout the city. Hoover replied to the writer, assuring him that the FBI appreciated his concern but stated that the author had not yet broken any federal laws. The air of tolerance is subverted by an entry made in the 1969 FBI summary on the author, which included the suggestion of an informant that Ku Klux Klansmen obtain copies of the novel “to determine whether it is suitable reading for college students.”

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APHRODITE

Author: Pierre Louÿs

Original date and place of publication: 1896, France

Original publisher: Privately published

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Aphrodite, a novel set in Alexandria, Egypt, in 57 B.C., recounts the adventures of a courtesan in the pagan, decadent society that preceded the reign of Cleopatra. Chrysis, one of 1,400 courtesans in the city, relentlessly pursues sensual pleasures that include orgies, lesbian encounters, and “all dangerous feats of passion before which the living recoil.” The novel also includes instances of extreme cruelty, including a crucifixion.

Chrysis attracts the attention of Demetrios, a sculptor who is also the lover of Queen Berenice. Before she will promise to spend the night with him, Chrysis demands that he exact revenge for her by stealing three treasures: a rare silver mirror from a courtesan named Bacchis who recently took away an admirer, a precious comb from the wife of the high priest, and

a necklace made of seven strands of pearls from the statue of the goddess Aphrodite. Demetrios carries out her wishes, and his acts help to reveal the inhumane and unfeeling nature of Chrysis, as well as his obsession with her. When a young and beautiful slave who is supposed to be freed is accused of stealing the mirror, Chrysis fails to correct the error and allows the girl to be crucified for the crime. The comb can only be obtained by cutting off the hair of the high priest's wife, and Chrysis knows that Demetrios must first stab the woman to death to accomplish this. Obtaining the necklace requires that Demetrios desecrate the temple of Aphrodite.

The novel includes several types of exotic sexual behavior. Hermaphrodites guard the temple, Scythian courtesans who couple "only in the attitude of the beasts" are discussed, and gay and lesbian relationships are identified. While he is obtaining the articles, Demetrios visits a 10-year-old courtesan who professes to know all of the arts of love, and Chrysis romps in bed with two adolescent lesbian companions. When the philosopher Naucrates visits Chrysis to invite her to Bacchis's feast, he finds her naked and in bed with the two young girls and protests that too many women have been taking girl lovers. He notes, "Already a great many women achieve perfect pleasure only with their own sex. Soon you will refuse to receive us entirely, even as a makeshift." Chrysis informs him, "Only a woman knows how to love. Only a woman knows how to be loved. Therefore, an amorous couple made up of two women is perfect; if there is only one woman, it is only half as good; and if there is no woman it is perfectly idiotic."

After meeting Chrysis's demands, Demetrios realizes the gravity of what he has done and grows to hate Chrysis. As he coldly rejects her, Chrysis protests wildly that she really loves him and wants him to stay with her forever. To prove her love, she dresses herself in the stolen items and appears to the throng of people gathered at the temple of Aphrodite. Chrysis is charged with the crimes and sentenced to die. In her jail cell awaiting her death by poison, the courtesan begins to chant half-remembered prayers from her childhood in Galilee, verses from the Old Testament. Demetrios visits her and watches her drink the cup of hemlock, then later poses her body and makes a clay model of it. At the end, Chrysis's two young lesbian lovers claim the body and bury it.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Aphrodite, along with Louÿs's *The Songs of Bilitis* and *The Twilights of the Nymphs*, was banned in 1929 by the United States Customs Bureau for being lewd, lascivious, corrupting, and obscene. Although none of the three books contains explicit sexual content, all three portray lesbian relationships and advocate an unrestricted sensuality among women and, to a lesser degree, between women and men. In the preface to the original work, Louÿs asserts that "it is, then, by conscious and willful fraud that modern educators from the time of the Renaissance to the present day have presented ancient ethics

as the inspiration of their narrow virtues.” He declares, instead, that “there is nothing under the sun more sacred than physical love, nor more beautiful than the human body.” In this spirit, Louÿs aims to return with his reader in *Aphrodite* to “a time when the most sensual love, the divine love of which we are born, was without blemish, without shame, and without sin.”

The first English translation was made in 1925 and published in an edition limited to 1,000 copies in the United States and 500 copies in Great Britain. In 1930, John S. Sumner, secretary of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, seized 54 copies of the book from New York book dealer Earl Marks and filed a complaint against Marks and his distribution company, the Mutual Circulation Company. The New York City magistrate who bound Marks over for trial claimed to have read *Aphrodite* and declared it to be “filthy” and too obscene for his daughter to ever read. The case was heard in June 1930 before three Special Sessions judges who refused to concur with Marks’s defense that the book was a recognized classic and, as such, could not be viewed as obscene. Marks lost the case and paid a fine of \$250 for violating state laws against objectionable literature, but he was spared the 60-day jail sentence. Marks immediately found a position as circulation manager for *The American Hebrew*, and his probation officer Jacob Lichter reported that Marks had held jobs successfully for 19 years with various magazines.

Two years later, the Liveright Publishing Corporation included the 1925 translation in its *Collected Works of Pierre Louÿs* without challenge. In 1933, the Modern Library edition translated by Lewis Galantiere appeared and also remained unchallenged, but U.S. Customs prevented attempts to import a deluxe edition in 1935. At the time of the ban, however, the novel was freely advertised in the *New York Times Book Review* for 49 cents per copy, with mail delivery anywhere in the United States for only an additional 10 cents. As recently as 1954, the novel was condemned by the National Organization for Decent Literature and placed on its blacklist, where it remains.

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APPOINTMENT IN SAMARRA

Author: John O’Hara

Original date and place of publication: 1934, United States

Original publisher: Harcourt, Brace Publishing

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Appointment in Samarra, O'Hara's first novel after the successful publication of short stories, covers three days during the Prohibition era in the lives of the country club set in the fictional town of Gibbsville, Pennsylvania. The characters are driven by money, status, and sex, and they worry continuously about which clubs, prep schools, colleges, and other associations bring high social status.

The main plot concerns the social and moral disintegration of Julian English, son of a woman of means and a respected physician who heads the staff of the Gibbsville Hospital. Wealthy from childhood and well liked by women, Julian is married to Caroline Walker, to all appearances the ideal wife, but their marriage is strained by Julian's drinking and womanizing. The seemingly prosperous head of a Cadillac automobile dealership, Julian has mismanaged funds and must borrow \$20,000 from a newly rich member of the country club, Harry Reilly. Resentful of the obligation and drinking heavily one evening, Julian throws a drink in Harry's face, blackening his eye with an ice cube. Rebuffed when he tries to apologize the next day, Julian then drinks even more heavily and commits suicide by sitting in his car in a closed garage with the motor running. Survivors are mystified because they cannot see that Julian was any more unhappy than they.

Although no graphic sex scenes occur, sexual references are made and offensive ethnic comments appear throughout the novel. A character kids his wife that the newspaper reports that straitlaced Mervyn Schwartz has been "shot in a whorehouse last night." He then teases her that he plans to take his six-and-a-half-year-old son "out and get him laid tonight" and brags "when I was Teddy's age I had four girls knocked up." When a young woman rejects Julian's sexual advances, he has the desire "to call her all kinds of bitches." Throughout the novel, characters drink liquor heavily, and there are numerous instances in which they are drunk. The mobsters in the town are of Italian background, and they are also grade-school dropouts with long arrest records.

Anti-Semitism is even more pronounced. A character awakens on Christmas morning, thinks disparagingly about Mrs. Bromberg across the street, feels momentarily guilty, then reminds herself that "Jews do not observe Christmas, except to make more money out of Christians, so you do not have to treat Jews any different on Christmas than on any other day." She considers that having the Bromberg family on their street has "hurt real estate values" and expresses concern that others will move into the neighborhood. "Pretty soon there would be a whole colony of Jews in the neighborhood, and the Flieglers and all the other nice children in the neighborhood would grow up with Jewish accents." At the hearing where Julian's death is ruled a suicide by the coroner, Dr. Moskowitz, Julian's father sees the verdict as revenge for having excluded Moskowitz from a dinner at the country club for the County Medical Society and thinks, "let the little kike quack Moskowitz have his revenge."

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Appointment in Samarra aroused criticism when it was first published from those who believed that it contained “thoroughgoing vulgarity . . . an insufferable vulgarity, which has crept into many of our supposedly advanced novels that someone not squeamish, nor unread in earlier literatures, must protest against. . . .” Aside from sporadic and weakly enforced pressure placed by the Watch and Ward Society on Boston booksellers to curtail sales of the novel because of its risqué language and situations, *Appointment in Samarra* was openly sold for nearly seven years without major protest.

In 1941, the novel was declared notailable because of “obscene language,” after the solicitor to the U.S. Department of the Post Office reviewed a copy of the novel. He then advised O’Hara’s publisher of the ban, the impetus for which was a complaint brought by the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice that charged the book with being “of an obscene character” because of its sexual references and slurs on various ethnic groups. The post office department would not permit the work to be mailed, and the publisher was told that copies of the book would be confiscated. The novel remained on the U.S. Post Office’s index of banned books through the mid-1950s.

The novel also attracted the attention of the National Organization for Decent Literature (NODL), a Roman Catholic organization that identified “objectionable” literature and advised members against reading “offensive” and “obscene” novels. In 1953, NODL found the novel to be “objectionable” and placed it with O’Hara’s *TEN NORTH FREDERICK* on their list of blacklisted books. The list was then sent to cooperating book dealers who agreed to remove the book from their racks. Such NODL blacklists resulted in elaborate collegial pressure among booksellers, although not legal enforcement against the work. Instead, the organization supplied cooperating booksellers with a certificate to display, containing the following notice: “This store has satisfactorily complied with the request of the Committee [the local committee of the NODL] to remove all publications listed as ‘OBJECTIONABLE’ by the National Organization for Decent Literature from its racks during the above month.” As a result of NODL action, the work was banned from sale in St. Cloud, Minnesota; Port Huron, St. Clair County, Michigan; and Detroit. Sales were limited in numerous other cities, through the efforts of local chapters, until the demise of the organization in the late 1950s.

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AS I LAY DYING

Author: William Faulkner

Original date and place of publication: 1930, United States

Original publisher: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith, Inc.

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

The novel tells the story of a poor, white Mississippi farm family, the Bundrens, in which the mother, Addie, is dying. Using multiple points of view and short, quick-paced chapters, the author chronicles and examines the feelings and reactions of each character to her dying as well as to the death itself. The feelings portrayed are raw and often selfish, as Faulkner uses regional dialect, stream-of-consciousness, and interior monologue to provide a realistic view of a family in crisis. As the novel progresses, ensuing sections reveal the basic selfish feelings of the family members, including those of the dying woman, and of others who make up this microcosm.

Surviving family members consist of Addie's husband, Anse, her four sons, and one daughter who must all deal with the struggle between their self-centered natures and their obligations to fulfill their late mother's final wish to be buried in the family cemetery in Jefferson. The cemetery is a day's ride from their farm, and several seasonal obstacles must be overcome. Heavy rains and an overflowing river upset their wagon and drown their mules. In the process, the coffin containing Addie falls off the wagon and nearly washes down the river. After substantial frustration and significant effort on the part of all family members, Addie's final wish is granted, and she is buried in the family cemetery. By the time the process is complete, Addie has been dead for 10 days, and the decaying body has become odorous in the Mississippi heat, a fact that the author notes frequently.

Throughout the story, each character reflects upon his or her past, using occasional epithets in realistically portrayed inner monologues. Addie is revealed to be a former schoolteacher, whose married life and drudgery made her an embittered and controlling woman even to the end. Her son Cash builds the coffin outside his dying mother's window, because she wants to make certain of the quality of the finished product. That same son appears to be more interested in crafting a perfect coffin than in grieving for his mother. Addie's daughter eagerly supports the trip to Jefferson to bury her mother, despite the effort and sacrifice, because she is secretly pregnant and the town of Jefferson will offer the opportunity for an abortion. Anse, Addie's husband,

professes great love and devotion to his late wife, but he is more interested in going to Jefferson to be fitted for false teeth. Addie's other children recall their own fears, doubts, and anxieties, at times questioning the mercy of God for allowing suffering, both their mother's and theirs. At the end of the novel, only a short while after the decomposed body has finally been buried, Anse marches toward his children, with newly bought false teeth in his mouth and the next Mrs. Bundren following close behind.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

In 1986, Graves County School District, in Mayfield, Kentucky, banned the novel from the school classrooms and libraries, charging that it used "offensive and obscene passages referring to abortion and used God's name in vain." The ban was heartily supported by the Graves County Baptist Association, an organization that represented the 41 Baptist churches in the county. Two weeks later, after the story of the ban had been in numerous newspapers and the American Civil Liberties Union had intervened, the school board reversed the decision, and the novel returned to the curriculum.

The following year, parents challenged the inclusion of the novel as required reading in the advanced English class at Pulaski County High School in Somerset, Kentucky. They claimed that the book was inappropriate because of its profanity and the contemplation of masturbation by one character. The book was retained. It was also challenged and then retained in the Carroll County, Maryland, school district, where in 1991 two school board members expressed concern regarding the use of coarse language and uneducated southern dialect by the characters, despite the realism of the portrayals.

In 1994, the novel was banned for a few months by officials at Central High School, in Louisville, Kentucky, due to its profanity and the questions that various characters express regarding the existence of God.

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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Author: Benjamin Franklin

Original date and place of publication: 1791, France

Original publisher: Buisson

Literary form: Autobiography

SUMMARY

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin is an honest and sometimes lusty chronicle of a man who lived life fully. Franklin originally began to write his memoirs for his son, William Franklin, from whom he later became estranged. The *Autobiography* relates the author's rise from poverty as the youngest of 17 children of a soap and candle maker through his apprenticeship as a printer and to his role as Pennsylvania's agent in England in 1757. Franklin provides details regarding his constant struggle to improve himself in education and in business and explains his passion for improvement, of both self and the public. The *Autobiography* ends when Franklin's activities reach an international scope, and he becomes a truly public figure.

Despite the emphasis upon moral improvement in much of the *Autobiography*, Franklin also admits to human failings. He acknowledges that the "hard-to-be-governed passion of youth had hurried me frequently into intrigues with low women that fell in my way, which were attended with some expense and great inconvenience, besides a continual risk to my health by a distemper." He also admits that he has been the victim of passionate bouts of indulgence and that he has not always stood by his beliefs. Instead, he changed "opinions which I had thought right but found otherwise."

In one episode, Franklin speaks of his hasty departure from Boston in 1723 and writes that he left people to speculate that his exit was because he "got a naughty Girl with Child." In a later episode, Franklin recounts the incident that caused a breach with a friend named James Ralph, who left behind a wife and child when he traveled to England with Franklin to find work. Ralph began an affair with a young Englishwoman, Mrs. T., and they had a child. Unable to find work teaching in London, Ralph left to teach in a country school and asked Franklin to look after Mrs. T. Franklin lent her money and responded to her frequent calls for assistance. On one of those visits, he "attempted familiarities, which she repulsed with proper resentment," and later told Ralph.

The *Autobiography* presents a very human view of a well-known historical figure.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Franklin's *Autobiography* is one of the most frequently expurgated books ever published in America, and it was censored from its first publication. In 1789, Franklin sent copies of the manuscript to friends Benjamin Vaughn and Guillaume Le Veillard, the mayor of Passy, France, asking for their advice. After Franklin died in 1790, a pirated edition of the book appeared in France. With the goal of publishing a more "acceptable" version, Franklin's grandson, William Temple Franklin, edited the French version, which he published in 1818 as part of the comprehensive *Works*. This edition made 1,200 changes in the phrasing of the original *Autobiography*, with the expressed aim of modernizing the language for the 19th century. Instead, the changes altered Benjamin Franklin's sometimes salty tone and word choice, providing a vastly different view.

In 1886, Houghton Mifflin published an edition of the *Autobiography* that included the story of James Ralph's affair with the young woman but removed Franklin's admission of a sexual advance. Instead, the editor inserted this explanation of the strained relationship between the old friends: "In the mean time other circumstances made a breach." In 1888, Ginn & Company removed the entire episode. Houghton Mifflin retained the expurgated account in its 1892 edition, but the editor, Middlebury College professor Julian Abernethy, changed the substituted statement to read, "In the mean time another matter which gave offense made a breach." The publishers justified these and similar changes in nearly a dozen editions on the grounds that they were meant for high school students, who must be protected.

Franklin published more overtly bawdy works that earned the approval of his peers but which are not frequently found among suggested readings. In his "Advice to a Young Man on the Choice of a Mistress," Franklin suggests that more pleasure can be found with an older woman than with a younger because "regarding what is below the Girdle, it is impossible of two Women to tell an old one from a young one" and "They [old women] are so grateful!" In "Polly Baker's Speech," printed in *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1747, he purports to speak as a New England woman who defends herself for being brought to trial, yet again, for having another illegitimate child. Franklin takes flatulence as his subject in "To the Royal Academy at Brussels," in which he parodies scientific reports in the suggestion that chemical additives to food might make "Wind from bowels" less offensive and puns using the slang term *fart*.

As Chief Judge Clarke noted in *Roth v. United States*, 345 U.S. 476 (1957), the discussed works by Franklin "which a jury could reasonably find 'obscene,' according to the judge's instructions in the case at bar" would also have subjected a person to prosecution if sent through the mails in 1957 and "to punishment under the federal obscenity statute." The judge further noted that Thomas Jefferson wrote approvingly of "Polly Baker's Speech" and that James Madison not only praised Franklin's humor but also wrote similarly Rabelaisian anecdotes. That Franklin is popularly known as "the father of the

Post Office” (he was designated postmaster general by the First Continental Congress) is ironic, because his own works, with their tongue-in-cheek sexual references, would have been considered too obscene to mail according to federal statutes such as the Comstock Act, which applied to such matters until recent years.

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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X

Author: Malcolm X, with Alex Haley
Original date and place of publication: 1965, United States
Original publisher: Grove Press
Literary form: Autobiography

SUMMARY

The autobiography articulates the anger, the struggle, and the beliefs not only of Malcolm X but also of many African Americans during the 1960s. The work charts the development of the African-American leader from his birth as Malcolm Little in 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska, to his assassination in New York City in 1965. Throughout, he uses fiery rhetoric to preach revolution to African Americans as the only means by which they can achieve full social equality.

As background to his beliefs, he relates the main abuses that occurred in his own life. He recalls his father's adherence to the philosophy of black separatist Marcus Garvey and relates the threats he and his seven siblings endured because of his father's fiery preaching. The work not only chronicles the author's life, but it also presents a sociological examination of the changing roles and growing social and political awareness of African Americans in the United States over four decades.

Particular bitterness is aimed at the welfare system, with its white case-workers, which strikes a final blow against his family. After their father is murdered, his mother is left a widow with eight children to support, and she works hard at whatever jobs are available to keep the family together. Yet intrusive

caseworkers keep a constant watch on the Little home, finally placing the children in foster care and committing Mrs. Little to the state mental hospital at Kalamazoo, Michigan, after she has a mental breakdown when her children are removed. Such images stayed with the author, despite his early efforts to be a “good Negro” and to play the role that white society expected of him.

The autobiography candidly admits that he “tried to be white,” like many other lighter-skinned African Americans of his day. From having his hair “conked” (straightened) to buying a “zoot suit,” to conducting a five-year affair with a blonde white woman, he allows himself to be “brainwashed.” He becomes involved in substantial illegal activity, from running a numbers racket to pimping, selling drugs, and committing robberies. When caught, he claims that he received a much longer jail term than usual because he was involved with a white woman.

At the age of 21, he begins serving seven years in jail, where he learns about the Nation of Islam and becomes a member of the Black Muslim faith. After his conversion and release from prison, the author drops the name Little, his “slave name,” and takes “X” to denote an unknown quantity as his last name.

The second half of the autobiography relates the author’s efforts to advance the Black Muslim cause, his gradual disillusionment with Black Muslim leader Elijah Muhammad, and his eventual expulsion from the Nation of Islam. He describes his experiences in visiting Africa as well as in the United States, speaking frequently at college campuses and influencing new converts. He also relates the betrayal that he experienced when rumors of an assassination plot surfaced from within the Nation of Islam.

The final three chapters of the work detail the reasons why Malcolm X left the Nation of Islam to form his own organization, Muslim Mosque, Inc. Later called the Organization of Afro-American Unity, its tone was one of militant black nationalism. As threats on his life occurred, the author became certain that the Nation of Islam was the source of the various attacks and threats. In the Epilogue, Alex Haley notes that Malcolm X became convinced that he would be murdered and felt that he would be a martyr “in the cause of brotherhood.” His final hope for the autobiography was that it would motivate social action.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The Autobiography of Malcolm X was deliberately kept out of classrooms and school libraries when it first appeared because the work openly criticized the role of white society in restricting the achievements and accomplishments of African Americans in the United States. Parents complained that the language was “filthy” and “racist,” and the work was viewed for years largely as a radical text that had no place in the high school curriculum, although it enjoyed substantial popularity on college campuses during the 1960s and 1970s. Librarians used “selection” as the criterion for excluding the work from public libraries in predominantly white communities. By the 1980s, the work had come to be viewed as a historical work, and the language and situations, including those in which Malcolm X uses street vernacular and

candidly describes the illegal and immoral activities of his early life, seemed commonplace. The 1992 film, *Malcolm X*, directed by Spike Lee, reawakened interest in the book, and high schools added it to their reading lists.

In 1993, parents in the Duval County (Florida) public schools challenged the use of this book in the curriculum, charging that the anti-white racism and the violence espoused by the assassinated Black Muslims leader were disruptive of racial harmony. Citing passages from the book, the parents identified “vulgar” language and “criminal” acts that they felt did not provide decent models for their children to emulate.

The Jacksonville (Florida) school district restricted the availability of the book in the middle school libraries in 1994, after parents complained to the school board that the book was a “how-to” manual for crime and that it represented white people as racist in their views. Only students who had notes from their parents were allowed to take out the book.

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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MISS JANE PITTMAN

Author: Ernest J. Gaines

Original date and place of publication: 1971, United States

Original publisher: Bantam Books

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Written from the point of view of a 110-year-old former slave, *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* is a novel that celebrates the life of a woman from her birth into slavery to the beginning of the civil rights movement in the United States. Divided into parts entitled “The War Years,” “Reconstruction,” “The Plantation,” and “The Quarters,” the episodic novel is structured as an oral history project undertaken by an African-American history teacher interviewing Miss Jane, whose voice and personality direct the story.

The novel opens with a young Jane, still bearing her slave name Ticey, serving water to a Yankee soldier on a Louisiana plantation near the end of the Civil War. The soldier tells her that she should replace the name Ticey

with the more attractive Jane, which she does and for which she later suffers a beating from her mistress, who tries to force Jane to respond to the old slave name. The change of name corresponds to a change of attitude as the formerly mischievous slave girl becomes self-reliant and assumes responsibility for herself as well as for young Ned Douglass, whose mother is beaten to death by racist vigilantes. Hoping for a better life, she flees to the North with the child but finds the promised land to be only an illusion. Jane returns to Louisiana, where she meets and falls in love with horse trainer Joe Pittman, whose name she takes when they live together. The two are happy together for seven years despite Jane's inability to have children, but Joe is killed trying to tame a wild black stallion.

In the years that follow, Jane experiences the dehumanizing effects of institutionalized racism and loses her beloved Ned, who is murdered by white racists after he begins speaking out about racial dignity and assertiveness. A half century passes and the civil rights movement erupts in Louisiana, led by young civil rights worker Jimmy Aaron, who is following the example of Dr. Martin Luther King. Successful in mobilizing African-American citizens in a nearby town, Jimmy becomes a threat and is also murdered by white racists. The novel ends with the 110-year-old Jane Pittman preparing to go into town to lend her support to the civil rights movement by attempting to drink from a "whites-only" water fountain.

The novel contains numerous instances of language unfavorable to African Americans, spoken by both races. As Miss Jane herself says approvingly of Louisiana governor Huey Long at one point, "When he said nigger he said, 'Here a book, nigger. Go read your name.' When the other ones said nigger, they said, 'Here a sack, nigger. Go pick that cotton.' " The offensive term and other words of derision are spoken by white characters who aim insults at African Americans. In addition, characters of both races use a range of slang terms and insults.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel has frequently been the source of complaints from both white and African-American parents and students who charge that *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* contains obscene and inappropriate language as well as incidents that promote immoral behavior. The complaints range from the frequency with which both African-American and white characters use the racial slur *nigger* to charges of stereotyping and improper references in the text. Early in the book, a "slow wit" who has taken the free name of Brown is described as "opening and closing his mouth like a baby after his mama's titty." The behavior of characters has also motivated complaints. Parents have voiced objections to the positive manner in which Gaines portrays the relationship of Miss Jane with Joe Pittman, a seven-year live-in relationship during which they fail to marry even though she takes his name.

Objections have also been raised in regard to the section entitled "Plantation," in which a young mixed-race woman employed on the plantation as a

teacher for the workers' children is said to have been "ravished" by the son of the white plantation owner. Although the most frequently voiced concern is the reference to violent sexual activity, a small number of white parents contend that the portrayal of the white man as the ravisher perpetuates unfavorable stereotypes. Beyond these aspects of the book, the use of dialect by the African-American characters has also raised concerns, because such use of language makes the characters appear ignorant.

Gaines has been told that his book is unacceptable in many schools for even stranger reasons. The author spoke, in an interview, of "a white teacher in Mississippi at one time who told me that black students didn't want to read the book because of certain terms used." That same teacher told him that white students also did not want to read it "because they felt that the black characters in the book were all angels."

In January 1995, parents in Conroe (Texas) Independent School District complained that the book contained racial slurs and demanded that it be withdrawn from a junior high school course in racial tolerance. A school spokesperson stated that the parents "'expressed concerns that the students were made uncomfortable when passages from this book were read aloud prior to discussion of the passage.'" A school committee determined that the novel was not appropriate for use, and the school board ordered the book withdrawn from the classroom.

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BABY BE-BOP

Author: Francesca Lia Block

Original date and place of publication: 1995, United States

Original publisher: HarperCollins

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Baby Be-Bop is a young adult novel that relates the struggles of 15-year-old Dirk McDonald coming to terms with the realization that he is gay, some-

thing he has always known about himself but has been afraid to reveal to others, especially to his beloved Grandma Fifi, who raised him. The story is told in two parts. Part I reveals Dirk's life in the present with his grandmother. The two live in a cottage in Hollywood, where Fifi once worked as a movie studio animator; their garden is filled with flowers, butterflies, seven stone dwarves, and lush plants. Despite his fears, Dirk has hinted about his secret to his grandmother. He has a recurring dream of being on a train filled only with fathers who are standing in showers, "all naked and cookie-colored. There under the blasts of warm water spurting from the walls as the train moved slick through the land. All the bunching calf muscles dripping water and biceps full of power comforted Dirk." When younger, he would pretend the scene was taking place on the toy train as he played, and he told Grandma Fifi. He later heard her speaking to their parakeet, stating that it is "just a phase."

Dirk is terrified that others will learn his secret, and he works hard to avoid the appearance of weakness. He fears becoming sad and hurt like Martin and Merlin, two gay longtime friends of Fifi who "had been hurt because of who they were." In contrast to their pale softness, Dirk wants to become strong and "to meet any gaze . . . never hide." He works hard to earn high grades, to excel in athletics, and to become physically dominant, so that the bullies who prey on weak boys will leave him alone. He also prays for this "phase" to end, but it does not.

When Dirk meets Pup Lambert, he feels as if he has met his soul mate. The two boys engage in minor mischief, such as playing basketball on someone else's property and swimming in pools without the owner's permission, and they surf, ride skateboards and bikes, and share confidences, but Dirk cannot reveal his dark secret. Pup's mother is an alcoholic who has had a series of abusive boyfriends, and Pup is grateful for Fifi's generous hospitality. Each day, she packs two lunches for Dirk, which he shares with Pup, saving his friend's pride by complaining that Fifi never listens when he asks for less food. Occasionally the eyes of the two boys connect and a glance is held a moment too long, but neither discusses their growing attraction. One evening they hitchhike home from the beach and are picked up by Tracey and Nancy, two girls who attend their high school. The girls invite them to drink and to relax in the Jacuzzi, where Pup begins to embrace Tracey and respond to her groping hands. Dirk awkwardly submits to Nancy's kisses, but in one brief moment when his eyes meet Pup's, he realizes that Pup is struggling. From that night, their friendship begins to wane, as Pup spends greater amounts of time with Tracey. In one last effort to make Pup understand his feelings, Dirk asks him to meet under the tree where they first met. Afterward they walk to Dirk's house, where he tells Pup he has been pretending all his life. Pup tells him not to say anything: "I can't handle it, man. . . . I love you, Dirk. But I can't handle it."

Pup's rejection makes Dirk decide to change his appearance. He shaves the sides of his head to create a mohawk, which he dyes black, begins to

wear big boots, and tries to create a fearsome image that will hide his secret. On his 16th birthday, Fifi gives him her red-and-white 1955 Pontiac with a small gold lantern on the hood, to which Fifi says he can tell his story: “You can talk about Pup—anything you want to say. Secrets. Things you can’t tell anyone.” He denies he has a story. The car allows Dirk to go out to dangerous punk rock clubs. To bolster his image, he adds a black leather jacket with zippers and chains to his outfit. At one club, his self-loathing leads him to start a fight with three skinheads who have swastika tattoos. They follow him into the parking lot and beat him severely, leaving him bleeding profusely. Dirk manages to stagger to the car and drives home slowly, stopping periodically as he feels faint. Once home, Dirk takes the lantern into his room, cleans as much blood as he can off his face, then falls into bed.

Part II is told in a surreal style. Dirk’s great-grandmother, grandfather, mother, and father all appear in his room to tell him their story and to make him understand the lives that they lived, which have culminated in his birth. Great-grandmother Gazelle tells him the story of her unhappy girlhood and of the wonderful birth of his grandmother, Fifi, who was fathered by a mystery man. He learns of Fifi’s love of dance and her early association with Martin and Merlin in an acrobatic act, as well as the tragic young death of his grandfather, Derwood McDonald, an entomologist.

When his poet father, Dirby McDonald, and mother, Just Silver, appear, Dirk finally understands how his parents died, not in an accident but in an apparent suicide. They tell him of their early poetry, dance, and love. His father was nicknamed Be-Bop because of the rhythmic nature of his poetry, and his mother calls Dirk “Baby Be-bop” when she urges him to tell his story. His father refers to the night he died as “the night we gave up on life” and tells Dirk that “it was all too much for us—this world,” but he urges Dirk to be different: “I want you to fight. I love you, buddy. I want you not to be afraid.”

The surreal sequence also presents a view of Dirk’s future, supplied by a genie who emerges from the lamp to show him a young man named Duck, also fearful of his gay nature, who has sought relief in anonymous encounters but who will someday become Dirk’s one true love.

This part ends as Dirk awakens in a hospital bed, with Fifi at his side. She tells him, “We have been telling each other stories, you and I, Baby Be-Bop. Past, present, future. Body, mind, soul.” Dirk realizes that she knows his secret and loves him. He also realizes that “any love that is love is right.”

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Baby Be-Bop has been challenged for its portrayal of a teenager coming to terms with his homosexuality, as well as for containing offensive language and for portraying an unconventional family.

In April 1998, Karen Williams, the parent of a former student at Barron Area School District High School in Wisconsin, filed a complaint with the school district to challenge the presence in the high school library of four books with gay-related themes: *Baby Be-Bop*, *THE DROWNING OF STEPHAN JONES*, *Two Teenagers in Twenty*, and *When Someone You Know Is Gay*. On August 13, 1998, the district Reconsideration Committee, made up of parents and teachers, met to review the complaint and voted to retain the four books in the library. Williams appealed the decision, and on August 24, 1998, the district administrator defendant, Vita M. Sherry, reversed the decision of the committee to retain *Baby Be-Bop* and *When Someone You Know Is Gay* and wrote that the books do “a disservice to Barron’s religious community.” On September 21, 1998, after Williams appealed to the district board of education, members voted to remove the remaining two books as well. Students and parents in the district contacted the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Wisconsin, which on October 12, 1998, urged the school district to reconsider the decision and to reshelve the books in the library. The request was ignored, and on December 22, 1998, the ACLU announced plans to sue the school district for censoring gay-themed books, after the board made the ban on *Baby Be-Bop* permanent immediately and returned the other three books to the shelves for 90 days until replacements would be found and the three books removed. On February 16, 1999, the ACLU filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of three minor students and their parents and three 18-year-old students; the complaint was filed in Madison Federal District Court, Western District of Wisconsin. Federal District Court judge Barbara Crabb received the case, *Christenson, et al. v. Barron Area School District, et al.* The defendants were named as the Barron Area School District, the board of education, and Vita Sherry, the district administrator. The school board attorney, William Thiel, stated in an Associated Press article that the books were removed because they contained “pervasive vulgarity and obsessive obscenities.”

The plaintiffs in the case alleged that the decision of the defendants to remove the books from the library violated the free speech provision of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. On February 26, 1999, the school district and the ACLU entered into an agreement that Judge Crabb approved; the agreement stipulated the school district would return *Baby Be-Bop* and *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* to the library shelves until the lawsuit was resolved. In an interview published in the *Duluth News Tribune* on March 2, 1999, district officials said they had agreed to reshelve the books only “to avoid unnecessary litigation and not as a concession to the people who have sued.” In response, the ACLU said “the district moves were an indication of how strong the lawsuit against the district is.” After eight months, the lawsuit was settled on October 8, 1999, with district officials agreeing to retain the four gay-themed books in the high school library. The executive director of the ACLU of Wisconsin, Chris Ahmuty, concluded, “This settlement restores

not only the books to the library shelves, but also the district's credibility and good name."

In February 2000, school officials of the Bonsall Union School District in California removed *Baby Be-Bop*, *Question Quest*, and *Just Friends* from the school library. The books were part of a mandatory reading program at the Norman L. Sullivan Middle School. The officials charged that the books contained sexually explicit material unsuitable for children 11 and 12 years old. The superintendent of schools, John Heckman, removed the books after receiving complaints from parents that the books contain language that "if children used, they would be kicked out of school." Heckman also stated in an interview with the *North Country Times* that parents found the sexual content "amoral, demeaning or just inappropriate" for fifth-grade students. The district claimed that it was unfamiliar with the content of the books, and it believed that the books were screened by the company that created the accelerated reading program, Advantage Learning Systems. A representative of the company stated that the books were screened only to identify grade-level reading difficulty, not for content, which is left to the school district.

At a March 8, 2000, meeting, school board members and parents debated the decision to remove the three books from the library, and many parents supported the decision because the books were part of a mandatory literacy program in the district. The board promised parents that school trustees would create a set of standards to determine which books are suitable for children and that the library staff would be more thorough in reviewing books bought by the district. School board president Richard Olson stated in an interview in the *North Country Times*, "There are going to be books that this board will not allow in the program. If it has the 'F-word' 63 times in the first two sentences . . . it won't be here." The school board decided at the May 10, 2000, meeting to abandon the idea of creating a list of vulgar or obscene words and subjects to use in determining if a book is appropriate for adoption. Instead, with the support of parents, the board instituted a policy requiring children to obtain written permission from their parents to check out any young adult book from the library.

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THE BASKETBALL DIARIES

Author: Jim Carroll

Original date and place of publication: 1978, United States

Original publisher: Tombouctou Books

Literary form: Autobiography

SUMMARY

The publication of Jim Carroll's diary, entitled *The Basketball Diaries: Age Twelve to Fifteen* (1978), had been eagerly awaited. The book, which is generally referred to by its main title alone, had started appearing in excerpt form throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s in various literary publications. Carroll claimed that the diaries were written at the time in which the events related took place. However, some critics wondered how much the diaries were edited before publication, especially since the book includes many outrageous incidents. Regardless of its authenticity, the book made a statement when it was published, because Carroll's gritty diary was explicit, and it took readers inside the real world of drug addiction, male prostitution, and crime in 1960s New York. *The Basketball Diaries* has become Carroll's best-known work, especially after the release of a 1995 film adaptation starring Leonardo DiCaprio. In 1987, Carroll published a sequel, *Forced Entries: The Downtown Diaries, 1971–73*.

In the first entries, Carroll is a 13-year-old who has had limited experience with sex, drugs, and crime. He is also a novice basketball player in his first organized league. All of these aspects of his life change rapidly. He becomes a star basketball player, winning a scholarship to a rich private school, then becomes heavily involved in heterosexual experiences and hard drugs. His heroin addiction starts out small, and he lies to himself about being able to control it. However, as his addiction grows, it changes the quality of every other aspect of his life. He starts committing crimes, including stealing cars, in order to finance his drug habit. In addition, he makes money by selling his body to homosexuals and older women. His increased heroin use is supplemented by other drugs, including various kinds of pills, methadone, cocaine, and LSD. His massive drug use destroys his dream of playing professional basketball and eventually lands him in juvenile prison. Carroll tries to give up heroin abruptly several times and describes his withdrawal

symptoms in detail, but each time he returns to using. In the last diary entry, Carroll surfaces from a four-day heroin high and laments about how low he has sunk in life. He says that he only wants to be pure.

Over the course of the diaries, Carroll is exposed to several cultural and political issues. He makes scathing attacks on hypocrisy and condemns the U.S. use of the communist scare as a justification for building more nuclear weapons and engaging in the Vietnam War. He bemoans the reality that poor junkies do not have the same treatment programs or escape options as middle-class or rich junkies, and he exposes the hypocrisy of narcotics police, whom he claims keep confiscated drugs for themselves—to sell on the streets. Ultimately, he predicts the publication of *The Basketball Diaries*, in which he intends to expose these views and facts.

The Basketball Diaries is composed of 10 sections, one for each season—in some cases two seasons—from fall 1963 to summer 1966. Each section is composed of five to 26 separate entries, and, collectively, these entries describe Carroll's coming-of-age transformation, from a healthy, relatively naive juvenile delinquent into a strung-out, culturally aware, heroin-addicted criminal.

The Basketball Diaries is conspicuous for its graphic profanity, used to describe sexual acts and for emphasis, even when describing relatively normal events. Carroll also includes a lot of slang; he refers to sexual intercourse as “nooky,” calls condoms “scumbags,” and refers to breasts as “knocks.” Marijuana is “weed” or “grass,” while heroin is “scag.” A “spiller” is someone who acts like he has drunk more than he has, and someone who is drunk is “smashed.”

The imagery in the diaries is violent and explicit. Carroll describes his sexual experiences in detail. For example, as he is about to say good-bye to his girlfriend before basketball practice one day, he states that she “socks her tongue in my mouth and grinds her sweet bottom up against me.” Since Carroll has forgotten to wear a jock strap that day, his resulting erection makes it look “like [he] was shoplifting bananas.” Drug imagery is also graphic, particularly the images associated with shooting up heroin. On one occasion, Carroll describes what it looks like when he shoots up: “Just such a pleasure to tie up above that mainline with a woman’s silk stocking and hit the mark and watch the blood rise into the dropper like a certain desert lily.”

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The Basketball Diaries has earned negative criticism because of the book's striking depictions of sex, violence, and drug use. On June 8, 1998, the Gwinnett County Library Board in Georgia, with one member out of town, voted 2-1 to remove the book from library shelves “until a legal determination could be made of whether the book is harmful to minors under state law.” The board asked the county solicitor Gerald Blaney to make a determination. The

board also voted to create a parental advisory section in the library and to place *The Basketball Diaries* into that section if the book was not determined to be harmful to minors. The call for a ban was initiated by parents who were members of Citizens for Family Friendly Libraries, the Gwinnett affiliate of a national group. Judy Craft, cofounder of the local group, told a reporter for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, “I think it was a good decision made for the families of Gwinnett County and for the well-being of our children.”

The two board members who voted to ban the novel were Jennifer Toombs, a cofounder of Citizens for Family Friendly Libraries, and Ann MacLeod, owner of a Christian bookstore, who called the book “porno” and told a reporter, “It’s filthy.” Local citizens who were in favor of keeping the book were disappointed because the absent board member would have made the vote a 2-2 tie, and the chairman, Andy Touchier, was expected to have broken the tie in favor of keeping the book on library shelves.

In August 1998, Blaney told the library board that the state law standard for determining whether a book is harmful to minors—if it appeals to lewd interest, is offensive to most adults, and lacks artistic merit—applies only to booksellers and not libraries. He recommended that the library should have better procedures for dealing with controversial materials, “particularly books that fall in the grey areas, like *The Basketball Diaries*.” The book has remained in circulation during the controversy. MacLeod, one of the board members who voted in favor of the ban, said that she is satisfied whatever the outcome of future votes because parents have been made aware of the book and “The message has already been sent.”

The 1995 film version of *The Basketball Diaries*, starring Leonardo DiCaprio, ignited controversy in 1997. In the novel, Carroll writes in the “Winter ’65” and the “Winter ’66” entries about his fantasy to randomly shoot people in his school. He fantasizes that he will get to class early in the morning and “take a machine gun and start firing like mad toward my right side . . . my fantasy that always creeps up my back when I’m sitting there each morning . . . just wanting to whip out a tommy gun and blast away (Nothing less will do, no pistols, nothing else but rat-a-tat-tat, dig?).” The movie version depicts these actions as a dream sequence and makes clear that Carroll is not actually carrying out the action, simply fantasizing. In 1997, 14-year-old Michael Carneal of Paducah, Kentucky, opened fire in his school lobby, killing three female classmates and wounding five other students; he claimed that he had been influenced by the movie. Parents of the girls subsequently sued the makers of the film. On April 20, 1999, two teenage students, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, carried out a shooting rampage at Columbine High School in Colorado, killing 12 students and one teacher and wounding 24 others, before committing suicide. Harris and Klebold had left notes about having seen the movie. The family of Dave Sanders, a teacher who was killed that day, sued the filmmakers, but U.S. district judge Lewis Babcock dismissed the lawsuit in 2002, stating that the two gunmen were responsible for the deaths.

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BEING THERE

Author: Jerzy Kosinski

Original date and place of publication: 1970, United States

Original publisher: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Being There is a cynical look at the American political and intellectual scene as viewed through the eyes of Chance, a man whose whole life has been spent in tending a garden and passively watching television. He is a man without a past whose identity is formed by circumstances, and his perceptions of the world and of others reflect what he has seen on television. When he is forced to leave his home and to navigate the modern world, his simple answers related to gardening are taken by statesmen, financiers, and the news media to be brilliant assessments of the political and economic scene. Within four days of leaving his anonymous existence, he is considered as a candidate for vice president of the United States.

At the outset, Chance maintains the garden and grounds for a wealthy patron called simply Old Man. An orphan, his mother died when he was born, and he never learns the identity of his father. Chance cannot read or write and brain damage from birth has limited him to life in his quarters and the garden. He must do exactly as told or risk being sent to a home for the insane where, as the Old Man tells him, he would be locked in a cell. Thus,

his only contact with the outside world is through the large color television in his room. In this surreal world, Chance controls life by rapidly turning the television dial to make images flip past each other and raising and lowering the volume at will.

Once the Old Man dies, estate lawyers determine that no record of Chance exists. He has no birth certificate, and he has never paid taxes, served in the army, or visited a doctor or dentist. Forced to leave his home, Chance dresses in one of his late employer's expensive suits, packs an expensive leather suitcase, and steps into the street, where he is promptly hit by the luxurious limousine of wealthy Elizabeth Eve Rand. Married to the much older, ailing Benjamin Rand, EE, as she is called in the novel, insists that "Chance, the former gardener," whose name she misinterprets to be Chauncey Gardiner, go home with her to receive medical attention and to have a place to recuperate. Her husband is a close adviser to the president of the United States, who visits the day after Chance arrives. When both men invite Chance to air his views regarding the nation's economy, he responds in terms of gardening with what appear to be highly appropriate metaphors to the two powerhouses. The president later quotes Chance in a televised speech, and the media mistakenly assume that he is a major financier, statesman, and presidential adviser. Asked to escort EE, head of a major United Nations committee, to a United Nations function, Chance attracts the attention of the Russian ambassador, who mistakenly believes that he not only speaks Russian but is pro-Soviet in his political and economic sympathies. The ambassador also quotes Chance in a televised speech.

As Chance hobnobs with important people, his physical attractiveness draws both male and female admirers. At one official reception, a well-dressed, silver-haired man suggests a sexual encounter, but Chance does not understand what he means because nothing of the sort has ever appeared on television. Thus, he tells the man that he chooses to watch, not participate. As they ride in the elevator, the man "thrust his hand into Chance's groin." Chance remains the spectator, watching as the man "cupped his own flesh in a hand, groaning and jerking and trembling as he did so . . . the erect extended part grew stiffer . . . a white substance coursed forth in short spurts." Chance also tells EE that he wants to watch when she approaches him for sex, and she masturbates as he watches her writhing with pleasure. Afterward, she compliments him for uncoiling her wants, for with him "desires flow within me. . . . You make me free." At one point, Chance examines his body to see how his sexual organ compares with those pictured in the pornography that a maintenance man had once shown him, but finds that "his organ was small and limp; it did not protrude in the slightest Though Chance prodded and massaged his organ, he felt nothing . . . his organ refused to stiffen out; it gave him no pleasure at all."

As Chance's detached attitude in his sexual encounters passes for experience, his lack of involvement and total obliviousness to the prevailing political and social realities pass for wisdom. At the end of the novel, the president decides to choose Chance as his running mate because the lack of any past makes him the perfect candidate with no sins to live down.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Being There has been challenged in high schools for containing “inappropriate images” and for its depiction of masturbation and the homosexual near-experience of the main character. Critics have charged that the book is “sex-oriented” and that the sexual content and “suggestive language” are unsuitable for high school students.

Parents of students attending Crete (Nebraska) High School in 1989 criticized the inclusion of the book as a reading assignment for the 11th-grade English class and requested that the requirement be changed. School board officials determined that the book should remain as one of several choices of reading assignment, with suitable alternatives provided to those who preferred not to read it. Also in 1989, parental objections to the homosexual encounter of the main character resulted in the removal of the book from Mifflinburg (Pennsylvania) High School classes. After reconsideration of the text and the removal of the book from the recommended list, the book was reinstated for use as an alternative reading choice.

In 1993, parents of students enrolled in a senior advanced English course in the Davenport, Iowa, high school challenged the inclusion of the work as a required reading, claiming that the description of masturbation was too graphic and unnecessary to the text. After reconsideration, school board officials reversed themselves, and the teacher removed it from the required list.

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THE BELL JAR

Author: Sylvia Plath

Original date and place of publication: 1963, United Kingdom

Original publisher: William Heinemann Ltd.

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

The Bell Jar, first published under the pseudonym of Victoria Lucas, is a thinly veiled autobiographical account of the inner conflict, mental breakdown, and later recovery of a female college student in the 1950s. The

novel covers approximately eight months in the life of Esther Greenwood, the 19-year-old narrator, and the plot is divided into three parts. In the first part, Esther embarks on a one-month residence in New York City as a guest editor for the college issue of a fashion magazine. Once in the city, she recalls key incidents from the past, exhibiting her emotional and mental disintegration as the recollections become more real and meaning-filled to her than incidents in her daily life. Her unsatisfactory relationships with men dominate her thoughts, and the reader learns of her disappointing date with Constantin, who makes no attempt to seduce her; the brutal and woman-hating Marco, who beats her up; and her conventional and ordinary college boyfriend Buddy Willard, who wants marriage and a traditional life. At the end of the first part, her last night in New York, Esther throws all her clothes off the hotel roof in a mock ceremony that reveals her disorientation.

In the second part, covering chapters 10 through 13, Esther's psychological deterioration continues as she returns home to see the "white, shining, identical clap-board houses with their interstices of well-groomed green [that] proceeded past, one bar after another in a large but escape-proof cage." Increasingly depressed, Esther cannot work or sleep, and she refuses to wash her hair or to change her clothes. Shock treatments deepen her depression and increase her obsession with death and suicide. At the end of this part, Esther visits her father's grave, then crawls beneath her house and consumes sleeping pills until she becomes unconscious.

The third section of the novel, chapters 14 through 20, details Esther's slow and painful recovery after the suicide attempt. She resists all efforts to help her when first hospitalized in the psychiatric ward of a public facility, but her move to a private mental hospital produces great progress. During short leaves from the hospital, she goes to Boston and obtains a diaphragm, then experiences her first sexual encounter, a wholly unpleasant experience. Despite this disillusionment, and despite the death of Joan, another mental patient to whom she has become close, Esther looks forward to leaving the mental asylum and returning to college. Yet she remains unsure if she will have another breakdown: "How did I know that someday—at college, in Europe, somewhere, anywhere—the bell jar, with its stifling distortions, wouldn't descend again?"

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The Bell Jar has been challenged for its characters' discussions of sexuality and because it advocates an "objectionable" lifestyle. In one instance, the main character observes that her boyfriend's genitals are disappointing because they remind her of "turkey neck and turkey gizzards." The young college women yearn for sexual experience, and the main character purchases a diaphragm and seeks an anonymous sexual encounter. Beyond perceived obscenity, the novel aroused challenges because it openly rejects traditional marriage

and motherhood. Characterizing marriage as a prison of dull domestic duties, Plath describes mothers as drudges with dirty, demanding children, while wives are subservient and inferior to their husbands.

In 1977, in Warsaw, Indiana, Teresa Burnau, a first-year English teacher at Warsaw Community High School, was assigned to teach an elective course entitled "Women in Literature" using texts that had previously been approved and ordered for the course. Before school began in September, the principal ordered Burnau to remove the literary anthology *Growing up Female in America* and the novel *The Stepford Wives* from the reading list. The books were removed because "someone in the community might be offended by their criticism of traditional roles for women." By mid-October, the principal demanded that *GO ASK ALICE* also be removed from the list because it contained "dirty" words. In November, the principal directed that Burnau remove *The Bell Jar* from her list, after reviewing the book and determining that it was "inappropriate" because it spoke of a birth control device (the diaphragm) and used "profanity." Burnau's written protest brought the warning that she would be dismissed for insubordination if she included that book. Although Burnau complied with the demand and dropped the book, the principal later wrote in her evaluation that she exhibited "resentment and a poor attitude" when told not to use *The Bell Jar*. The school board did not rehire Burnau, giving only the reason that she failed to meet her responsibilities and displayed "a poor attitude."

A 17-year-old Warsaw Community High School student and her family challenged the decision of the board. In early 1979, Brooke Zykan, her brother Blair, and her parents became the plaintiffs in a suit that charged the school district with violating the First and Fourteenth Amendment rights of students and called for the court to reverse the school board decision to remove the books, which also included *The Feminine Plural: Stories by Women about Growing Up* and *The New Women: A Motive Anthology of Women's Liberation*. A group called People Who Care was formed to deal with the controversy and to further the aim of removing "filthy" material from the classroom and to press their agenda. One member stated, "School decisions should be based on the absolutes of Christian behavior." In *Zykan v. Warsaw (IN) Community School Corporation and Warsaw School Board of Trustees (1980)*, the plaintiffs claimed that the school board had removed the books from classrooms because "words in the books offended social, political, and moral tastes and not because the books, taken as a whole, were lacking in educational value."

The American Civil Liberties Union attorney associated with the case hoped that the state would recognize academic freedom as a First Amendment right. The suit charged that the school officials had violated students' "right to know" and the constitutional guarantee of academic freedom, but on December 3, 1979, the Indiana District Court rejected these claims and dismissed the suit. The plaintiffs appealed the decision, but the Court of Appeals sided with the school board and proclaimed that the school board

had not violated anyone's constitutional rights because the right of "academic freedom" is limited at the secondary school level. On August 22, 1980, Judge Walter J. Cummings of the Seventh Circuit Court determined that "the student's right to and need for such freedom is bounded by the level of his or her intellectual development" and noted that the local school board has many powers to regulate high school classrooms. This case further strengthened the authority of school boards to select and remove books from school libraries and classrooms and provided warning to individuals who sought academic freedom within the school structure.

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THE BEST SHORT STORIES BY NEGRO WRITERS

Editor: Langston Hughes
Original date and place of publication: 1967, United States
Original publisher: Little, Brown & Company
Literary form: Short story collection

SUMMARY

The work is a collection of 47 short stories, which form a comprehensive anthology of writings by African Americans, ranging in time from the first well-known writers Charles W. Chesnutt and Paul Laurence Dunbar through such popular writers of the 1960s as Ronald Milner, Robert Boles, and Alice Walker. Also included are works by such noted African Americans as Jean Toomer, Richard Wright, Zora Neale Hurston, Ralph Ellison, Willard Motley, John A. Williams, Frank Yerby, and James Baldwin.

The subject matter of the stories ranges widely, from the fears, violence, and lynchings experienced in the Deep South to the glittering interracial parties in the North during the Harlem Renaissance. They contain characters as diverse as the tragically overworked sharecroppers and the well-dressed, glamorous Harlem dancers. Characters in these stories exhibit the range of African-American experience in the United States over seven decades. The settings are equally diverse, including as they do the South, North, East, West, Panama Canal Zone, Chicago Loop, and Harlem. The writers use dialect and realistic dialogue to provide a true-to-life portrayal

of African Americans whose lives cover time periods from the Reconstruction through the Harlem Renaissance, the Depression, World War II, and the 1960s.

In faithful renderings, the writers also reveal society across time without a polite veneer to soften the criticism. White Americans are not spared their criticism but neither are African Americans. People are portrayed both in their ordinary, day-to-day pursuits and in pursuits that are unique to their history. Several of the stories present light-skinned characters who “pass” to avoid discrimination and to gain a toehold in white society, but stories also appear whose characters wear their color proudly.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

In 1976, the school board of Island Trees (New York) Union Free District removed the short story collection from the junior and senior high school libraries along with *BLACK BOY*, *THE FIXER*, *GO ASK ALICE*, *SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE*, *DOWN THESE MEAN STREETS*, *A HERO AIN'T NO THIN' BUT A SANDWICH*, *LAUGHING BOY*, *THE NAKED APE*, *SOUL ON ICE*, and *A Reader for Writers*. The books were charged by complainants with being immoral, anti-American, anti-Christian, or “just plain filthy.” As entered in the court record, the specific objections to *The Best Short Stories by Negro Writers* concerned the use of street vernacular, as well as such allegedly obscene passages as the following: “You need some pussy. Come on, let’s go up to the whore house on the hill.” “She first became aware of the warm tense nipples on her breasts. Her hands went up gently to calm them.” “In profile, his penis hung like a stout tassel. She could even tell that he was circumcised.”

The books had been removed after several board members attended a conference of a group called Parents of New York United, in Watkins Glen, New York. When parents and students opposed the move, school board members returned *Laughing Boy* by Oliver LaFarge and *Black Boy* by Richard Wright to the libraries. In March 1976, a group of residents of the Island Trees School District joined to write a letter to protest the action to New York State Education Commissioner Ewald B. Nyquist.

In deference to the protests of parents and students, the school board appointed a committee made up of parents and teachers to review the books and to determine which, if any, of the books had merit. The committee recommended that seven of the books be returned to the library shelves, that two be placed on restricted shelves, and that two be removed from the library, but the school board ignored these recommendations and voted to keep all but one of the books off the shelves.

Five students challenged this censorship, claiming that the school board had violated their constitutional rights under the guise of protecting their social and moral welfare. On January 4, 1977, they filed a lawsuit against the Island Trees School Board to have the books returned to the bookshelves. The suit, filed on behalf of the students with the state supreme

court in Mineola by the New York Civil Liberties Union, maintained that the ban violated their freedom of speech and academic freedom. The executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union called the Island Trees action “part of a recent epidemic of book censorship in New York” and other states initiated by “self-appointed vigilantes who do not have the insight to understand their educational mission.” The United Teachers of Island Trees also filed a grievance with the state, asserting that the academic freedom of the teachers had been violated. The case, *Board of Education v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 853, 102 S.Ct. 2799, 73 L.Ed.2s 435 (1982), was heard before a federal district court, which ruled in favor of the school board. The court declared that the Island Trees School Board did not violate the First Amendment of the United States Constitution by banning books from its libraries. In a 25-page decision rendered in Westbury, U.S. district court judge George C. Pratt determined that removal of the books “fell within the broad range of discretion to educational officials who are elected by the community.” He wrote, “While removal of such books from a school library may, indeed, in this court’s view, reflect a misguided educational philosophy, it does not constitute a sharp and direct infringement of any First Amendment right.”

The students appealed the decision, and the appellate court remanded the case for trial before the U.S. Supreme Court, which determined that the district court had acted without authority in rendering a summary decision against the students. The justices were sharply divided and, in a 5-4 decision, upheld the right of the students to challenge the board’s actions. The majority decision determined that a school board had the right to use its discretion in deciding issues within its district, but such decisions must be made within the boundaries of the First Amendment. In announcing the decision, Justice William J. Brennan wrote, “Local school boards have broad discretion in the management of school affairs but this discretion must be exercised in a manner that comports with the transcendent imperatives of the First Amendment; the First Amendment rights of students may be directly and sharply implicated by the removal of books from the shelves of a school library; and local school boards may not remove books from school library shelves simply because they dislike the ideas contained in those books.”

In their dissenting opinion, Chief Justice Warren Burger and Justices Sandra D. O’Connor, Lewis Powell, and William H. Rehnquist issued a warning as to the role of the Supreme Court in making local censorship decisions: “If the plurality’s view were to become the law, the court would come perilously close to becoming a ‘super censor’ of school board library decisions and the Constitution does not dictate that judges, rather than parents, teachers, and local school boards, must determine how the standards of morality and vulgarity are to be treated in the classroom.” Thus, in their reluctance to place the Supreme Court in the position of local censor, the conservative justices recommended that the task of setting local community standards remain in local hands.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled against the school board on June 25, 1982, in *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico*, and the books were returned to the libraries.

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BLACK LIKE ME

Author: John Howard Griffin

Original date and place of publication: 1961, United States

Original publisher: Houghton Mifflin

Literary form: Journal

SUMMARY

Written in journal form, the personal narrative presents an introspective look at racism, examining its consequences in a chronicle of the experiences of a Caucasian social scientist who darkens his skin, shaves his head and assumes the life of an African-American man in the Deep South in 1959. The author acknowledges that as the result of this experiment his life and his views of both races must change forever. Griffin learns that, after having immersed himself in black culture and dealt with the white world as an African American, he can never again live completely as a Caucasian, for his views regarding his own race have changed.

In the opening pages of the work, the author identifies the background of his study and explains his reasons for concern with skin pigmentation. He rationalizes that, even though he is considered to be an expert on racial issues, he has no real idea of what it is like to be an African American and to live in the Deep South. After arranging funding with the magazine *Sepia*, the author travels to New Orleans, where he locates a doctor and begins to undergo the skin-darkening treatments that will change his racial appearance.

Griffin examines his anxiety once the dosage is stabilized and he completes his transformation. Wandering the New Orleans streets, he talks to people with whom he had spoken when he was white and observes a difference in their response now that he approaches them as an African American. He identifies the issues and problems that come with his new, nonwhite identity. First and foremost is the unwritten line between the black and the white races that he violates when he mistakenly allows a white woman to sit near his fellow blacks on a bus. His efforts to deal with the sometimes confusing segregation laws involving restrooms and restaurants offer a strong indictment against a society that rigidly controlled the access of African Americans to necessities that white Americans could take for granted. In contrast, Griffin enjoys the acceptance of his newly adopted race when the one man in whom he confides his secret eases the transition by teaching him the informal rules of "Negro" behavior.

The author observes that life as an African American is difficult and that security and the respect of others are determined by skin color. As an African American, he is a more frequent target of violence and looked upon as little more than trash by society as a whole. By day he hunts for the jobs available to him as a black man and for a semblance of humanity from the society in which he lives. By night, he roams the New Orleans pavements, falling deeper and deeper into his blackness. The author finds that other blacks treat him with a great deal of respect and kindness, more so than when he was white. But he also finds that white individuals have lost the humanity and respect they showed when he was white.

Griffin's divergent experiences lead him to postulate that the problem of the "Negro" is twofold. African Americans confront the racism and prejudice of white society, and they must also deal with self-hatred, low self-esteem, and loss of pride. He suggests that the two races will be able to live in harmony only when these two ills are eradicated from society.

Griffin reports both blatant and subtle differences in the way that white society in New Orleans treats each race. In one instance, a woman who had conversed with him pleasantly when he was white refuses to cash a traveler's check for him when he is black, even though the transaction involves no financial risk. He observes that instances such as this are common for the black man and learns that most cafés and bathrooms become off-limits to him due to his dark skin color.

In order to widen the significance of the study, Griffin extended the setting to other cities in the South. His reported observations show that the response to his new identity remained relatively consistent. Griffin records that he was addressed by whites as “boy” or “nigger” and that the actions of whites grew increasingly difficult to tolerate as he experienced the persecution and bigotry of segregation and racism. In Mobile, Alabama, white men demanded to know his business in the area and threatened him with death should he cause trouble.

Griffin reports that the way in which the threats were expressed strongly suggested that, if he were murdered, nothing would be done to identify his killers because of his race.

Shortly before terminating his one-month odyssey, the author experienced a revealing incident regarding the nature of white liberalism. Griffin visited the Tuskegee Institute for a day and met a visiting white academic who insisted on proving that he was a trustworthy white whom blacks should not fear. Despite good intentions, his ingrained prejudice emerged all too clearly when he suggested that a black man who was legitimately selling turkeys on the street might have stolen them.

The author reports in the final entries of the work that his experiment elicited hostility from people all over the country. He and his family received death threats and were forced to leave their home.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The book has been one of the 30 most frequently attacked books in the United States since its first, partial appearance in 1960 as an article in *Sepia* magazine and its publication as a book in 1961. The principal charge, in most challenges, has been obscenity. Researchers, however, postulate that more likely the truth is that those who challenge the book are opposed to books about African Americans or other minorities. One teacher stated in a 1982 nationwide survey conducted by Lee Burrell, “In a rural community, people don’t care to have their children read about Negroes.” This position is supported by an examination of the 20 most frequently attacked titles between 1965 and 1977. One-third depict individuals belonging to a minority group in strong protest against racism.

In 1966, the paperback edition of the novel was widely attacked as being unfit for children to read. In Wisconsin, a man sued the local school board, claiming that the book contained obscene language, that it was integration-centered, vulgar, filthy, and unsuitable for any age level. He further charged that his child was damaged by having read the book as an assignment in English class. The court dismissed the case.

In 1967, the parent of an Arizona high school student challenged the use of the book in the classroom because of its obscene and vulgar language and the situations depicted. The school board removed the book from the classroom. Language, particularly “four-letter words,” was the charge leveled in

1977 by a Pennsylvania parent and a clergyman, but the challenge was denied. An objection to the subject matter was similarly denied in a 1982 challenge of the book in Illinois. In Missouri in 1982, however, the material was placed on a closed shelf when a parent challenged the book on the grounds that it was obscene and vulgar and “because of black people being in the book.”

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BLESS THE BEASTS AND CHILDREN

Author: Glendon Swarthout

Original date and place of publication: 1970, United States

Original publisher: Doubleday & Company

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Swarthout’s *Bless the Beasts and Children* is a novel that identifies the fears of six boys, ages 13 through 17, and examines how they bond to face these fears. The story takes place in the Box Canyon Boys Camp, a dumping ground for the misfit children of wealthy parents who are too busy with their own lives to give their own children attention, and describes how six losers become winners on one supreme mission of peace and love.

The novel begins on a warm summer night, as Cotton, the leader of a group called the Bedwetters, is awakened by a bad dream in which he imagines the boys as hunted animals. He learns that one of the boys, Lally 2, is missing, so he awakens Lally 1, the missing boy’s brother, and the rest of the Bedwetters.

Cotton informs the others that Lally 2 is missing, and the group leaves camp to find him. When they find Lally 2 near the main road, he refuses to go back with Cotton because of what he and the others had seen earlier that day. The reader is not yet made aware of the incident.

Cotton and the boys discuss breaking camp and completing a life-or-death mission. They vote, and the decision to go on with the mission is unanimous. Cotton gives the boys five minutes to return to the tent and pack for the long

trip. They then push one of the trucks out of camp for Teft to hotwire but abandon this scheme when the incline becomes too steep. Instead, they ride horses into town, where Teft hotwires a pickup truck that they steal.

On the road, the six boys, none of whom possesses a driver's license, fear the police and keep a low profile to avoid arousing suspicion. They stop to eat at an all-night diner, where they are harassed by a couple of cowboys who joke about their ages. To avoid trouble, the boys return to the truck and drive off, but the two cowboys follow them. The two men run the pickup truck off the road and taunt the boys until Teft takes out a rifle and shoots the tires of the cowboys' car. This silences the two men and allows the boys to exit the scene with a modicum of pride.

As they near their destination, the pickup truck runs out of gas. Cotton tells them that they have an important decision to make. If they continue by foot and succeed at their mission, they will be found truant from camp and incarcerated. However, if they head back to camp, there is a good chance that they will not get caught. This is when the reader learns the purpose of the mission and the horror the boys had seen on the previous day. While returning from a camping excursion, they had gone to view some buffalo, but, to their utter dismay, it was slaughtering day for the poor beasts. People had been randomly chosen to kill the animals. This sent terror through the boys' hearts and motivated them to rescue the remaining buffalo.

Cotton votes to go back, but the rest of the boys vote to persevere and save the beasts, so Cotton joins them. They reach the buffalo preserve where, after a failed rescue attempt that almost kills five of the boys, Cotton devises a plan that will save the buffalo.

Teft will drive a game preserve truck through the field while several of the boys throw hay to entice the buffalo out of the pen. The buffalo will follow along while eating until they reach the distant fence that separates them from freedom and capture. This plan is automatically implemented, but the fence proves too strong for them to break through.

The boys also hear vehicles in the distance. Cotton orders Teft to fire the rifle at these vehicles in order to buy him some time. As Teft complies, Cotton boards the truck and revs the engine. Then, followed by about 40 buffalo, he crashes the truck into the fence, knocking it down and freeing the buffalo. He does not stop but continues along at full speed until the truck overturns and he is killed. The other vehicles arrive at the scene to find the buffalo free and the five boys crying.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The ingenuity and independence of the boys have motivated parents and school officials to charge that the book is critical of parents and that it encourages critical attitudes toward authority. In addition, parents have charged that the book contains questionable subject matter, regarding the issues of bed-wetting and running away, as well as "objectionable" language.

In 1978, parents in Waukesha, Wisconsin, complained that the novel was “psychopathically sick” and should not be required reading for students in the course entitled “Perspectives on Death and Aggression.” The issue was heard by the school board, one member of which stated that endorsing the novel would be akin to “putting a rubber stamp” on violence. Although the boys are on a quest to save the buffalo from needless slaughter, the board member cited the descriptions of the slaughter and the boys’ plan to rescue the buffalo as being unnecessarily “graphic.” The school board voted to allow the course to continue but determined not to buy enough copies of the book for all enrolled students, so the teacher could not assign it to the class as a whole. Thus, while the board agreed that existing copies of the book would remain available for use by students in the course, their decision not to purchase enough books effectively prevented the entire class from discussing it.

In 1987, parents in Dupree, South Dakota, complained to the school board that the novel should not be allowed in the classroom because of its violent descriptions and obscene language. After considering the complaint, the school board banned the novel from all high school English classes, charging that it contained “offensive language and vulgarity.”

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BLUBBER

Author: Judy Blume

Original date and place of publication: 1974, United States

Original publisher: Bradbury Press

Literary form: Young adult novel

SUMMARY

Blubber teaches a lesson to all those children who take pleasure in tormenting an easy victim, by showing them that today’s tormentor can easily become tomorrow’s tormented. The novel opens in a fifth-grade classroom as students take turns giving oral reports on mammals. Students sitting in their seats pass around notes and pictures, look at the clock, and yawn openly while Mrs. Minnish, the teacher, tries hard to look interested. Linda Fischer, “the pudgiest girl in our class, but not in our grade,” is the last to report, and her study is about whales. She covers the topic methodically, then speaks about the removal and uses of whale blubber and shows the class a picture of blubber.

This gives her classmate Wendy an idea. She writes “Blubber is a good name for her” on a scrap of paper and passes it to Caroline, who then passes it to Jill Brenner. The note soon makes its way halfway around the class, creating a disruption as Linda tries valiantly to finish her report. On the bus after school, Jill and the other students tease Linda, calling her “Blubber,” taking her jacket, and covering her hair with spit balls.

Halloween is near, and Jill decides to be a “flenser,” a person who strips the blubber off whales, a term that she learned from Linda’s report. The students wear their costumes to school, and when Jill, Caroline, and Wendy encounter Linda in the girls’ room they strip off her costume cape and threaten to strip her entirely because Jill is dressed as a flenser “and the flenser’s the one who strips the blubber.” They rip open her blouse and pull up her skirt. Then Wendy, dressed as a queen, commands Linda to kiss her sneaker. The frightened and crying girl obeys. That night, the girls wind toilet paper through the trees of the Fischer house, spray plastic string on the house, and write “Blubber lives here” in blue chalk on the sidewalk.

At school, the fifth-grade students blame Linda for everything bad that happens to them, from low grades to being punished for talking. The abuse escalates until the class, usually left unmonitored in their room during lunch, decides to place Linda on trial. Wendy declares herself the judge and demands that Linda not have a lawyer. Jill, whose father is a lawyer, protests the “legality” of the trial and, with a sudden feeling of fair play, releases Linda from a locked closet.

The following day, Jill learns that Wendy has retaliated by declaring that she and Linda are now “best friends,” and Jill becomes the class scapegoat. Labeled “B.B.” for “Baby Brenner” because she refused to participate in the terrorizing, she is ostracized and mocked. Although despondent at first, Jill eventually resumes friendships with some of her less popular classmates.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Blubber is one of many books written by Judy Blume that have been challenged in schools and libraries. Some of the challenges, notably those regarding *FOREVER*, *Deenie*, and *THEN AGAIN, MAYBE I WON’T*, have resulted in restrictions and banning because of their sexual content that mirrors the realistic thoughts and actions of teenagers. Other books by Blume, such as *It’s Not the End of the World*, *Starring Sally Freedman as Herself*, *Superfudge*, and *Tiger Eyes*, have been challenged and banned because they contain what one community or another deems to be “objectionable” or “indecent or inappropriate” language or because the characters do not exhibit model behavior. *Blubber* is in the second category. Challenges to this novel have arisen, in part, because of the determined nastiness of the characters and the unwillingness of adults to stand up to these nasty children. Many people who have challenged the book also admit to having “a problem with the language.”

In 1980, *Blubber* was removed from all of the elementary school libraries in Montgomery County, Maryland, and in 1981, the novel was temporarily banned in Sunizona, Arizona. In 1983, parents of students in the Des Moines, Iowa, schools challenged the book because of “objectionable” language, the same year that parents of students at Smith Elementary School in Del Valle, Texas, challenged the book because it contained the words *damn* and *bitch*. They further complained that the book sets a bad example because it shows children cruelly teasing a classmate. The book was retained in both districts. Also in 1983, parents of students in the Xenia (Ohio) School District called for the removal of the novel from the school libraries, claiming that it “undermines authority since the word ‘bitch’ is used in connection with a teacher.” It was also challenged in the Akron (Ohio) School District, where parents requested its removal from the school libraries. It was retained in both cases.

The novel was placed in “restricted areas” of the elementary school libraries in Lindenwold, New Jersey, in 1984, because of “a problem with language.” In the same year, parents of students in the Peoria (Illinois) School District complained that the novel contains “strong sexual content” and “obscene language” and cited its alleged “lack of social or literary value” in requesting its removal from the school libraries. After the book was considered by a specially created review committee, the school board voted to restrict it to students whose parents had given them written permission to take out the book.

In another 1984 incident, the novel was removed from Hanover (Pennsylvania) School District elementary and secondary school libraries, after parents challenged the book as being “indecent and inappropriate.” The school board considered the book and decided to authorize its placement on the “restricted shelf.” That same year, the book was also challenged but retained in the Casper, Wyoming, school libraries. In 1985, *Blubber* was challenged as “profane, immoral, and offensive” but retained in the Bozeman, Montana, school libraries.

In 1986, parents of students in Muskego (Wisconsin) Elementary School asked to have the book removed from the reading list because “the characters curse and the leader of the taunting [of an overweight girl] is never punished for her cruelty.” A similar complaint was voiced in 1991 by parents of students at the Perry Township, Ohio, elementary schools who demanded the removal of the book from the school libraries; they claimed that the book contained no moral message. “Bad is never punished. Good never comes to the fore. Evil is triumphant.” In both cases, the school boards decided that the book should remain.

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BRAVE NEW WORLD

Author: Aldous Huxley

Original date and place of publication: 1932, England

Original publisher: Chatto & Windus Collins

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Brave New World is a satire in which science, sex, and drugs have replaced human reason and human emotion in the "perfect" society to which Huxley gives the name "Utopia." The novel depicts an orderly society in which scientifically sophisticated genetics and pharmacology combine to produce a perfectly controlled population whose entire existence is dedicated to maintaining the stability of society. People are genetically engineered to satisfy the regulated needs of the government in regard to specific mental and physical sizes and types. Sexual promiscuity is demanded by the state for the sake of pleasure, not procreation, and women are equipped with contraceptive cartridge belts to avoid pregnancy. The only respectable way to enter the world is through incubation in a bottle—people are decanted rather than born—and learning occurs through preconditioning.

Inhabitants are created and conditioned to fit into specific social slots. Thus, in the Hatchery and Conditioning Center, varying amounts of alcohol are placed into the decanting bottles that contain the embryos to stunt mental growth and create a hierarchy of genetic classes.

Those who will be conditioned to do the monotonous and hard labor of this society receive the highest doses of alcohol to create a low mentality. Labeled in descending order of intelligence as Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons, they are the most numerous and are produced by subjecting the fertilized egg to the Bokanovsky Process, a budding procedure that enables division of the egg into as many as 96 identical beings from one egg and up to 15,000 brothers and sisters from a single ovary. The Alphas and Betas, who carry out the work of the government, remain individualized, yet they, too, are manipu-

lated through early conditioning. The concept of family is unknown, and the words *mother* and *father* are viewed as smut. In this systematically promiscuous world, men and women are encouraged to experience many sexual partners to avoid the development of intimate emotional relationships that might threaten their obsessive loyalty to the state.

The expected ills of human life have all been eliminated, and inhabitants of this brave new world have been freed of the worries of disease, pain, unhappiness, old age, and death. Disease has been eradicated through sterilization, and pain and unhappiness are easily banished by liberal doses of *soma*, a drug that provides a high without side effects. Smaller dosages are used to counteract depression, while larger dosages are taken to provide a long-term sense of euphoria, described by one character as a two-week vacation. Blind happiness is necessary for social stability, so all emotions are dulled. Even death takes on a new appearance. People are given treatments that keep them youthful-looking until they near the age of 60, at which time their bodies are allowed to experience a brief, soma-controlled period of aging before they disappear into the prominently placed crematoria that turn human bodies into phosphorus to be used in fertilizer.

Huxley exhibits the undesirable aspects of such a world through the characters of the Alpha-class misfit Bernard Marx and the savage John, who lives on the Savage Reservation, a pre-civilized region that has been preserved for study. John is the son of the director of Hatcheries and Conditioning (DHC) and a Beta woman who was left on the reservation by the DHC. Taken to England by Marx, John is highly uncomfortable in the emotionless and intellectually vacuous Utopia. He wants love and rejects the promiscuity of Lenina Crowne, a Utopian woman to whom he is sexually attracted but whose morals are repugnant to him. Treated as a curiosity by Utopians who clamor to see him and who gawk at him, John finds only misery in this brave new world and decides that suicide is his only solution.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Brave New World has evoked a range of responses from those who are made uncomfortable by Huxley's satire of society. The novel has been charged with being sordid, immoral, and obscene, and it has been condemned for vilifying the family, for giving too much attention to sex, and for encouraging illegal drug use. Many cite the sexual promiscuity of the Utopians, as did the Board of Censors of Ireland when it banned the novel in 1932, yet the novel contains no graphic scenes of sexual behavior. For the most part, people who seek to ban the novel believe that *Brave New World* is "depressing, fatalistic, and negative, and that it encourages students to adopt a lifestyle of drugs, sex and conformity, reinforcing helpless feelings that they can do nothing to make an impact on their world."

The novel has been frequently challenged in schools throughout the United States. In 1965, a teacher of English in Maryland claimed that the local school board had violated his First Amendment rights by firing him after he assigned *Brave New World* as a required reading in his class. The district court ruled against the teacher in *Parker v. Board of Education*, 237 F. Supp. 222 (D.Md) and refused his request for reinstatement in the teaching position. When the case was later heard by the circuit court, *Parker v. Board of Education*, 348 F.2d 464 (4th Cir. 1965), the presiding judge affirmed the ruling of the lower court and included in the determination the opinion that the nontenured status of the teacher accounted for the firing and not the assignment of a particular book.

In 1979, a high school principal in Matthews County, Virginia, requested that a history teacher in the high school withdraw an assignment that included *Brave New World*. The teacher assigned it anyway, and the school board terminated the teacher's contract. No further actions were taken by either party.

Use of the novel in the classroom was challenged in 1980 in Miller, Missouri, where it was removed from the curriculum, and in 1988, parents of students at Yukon (Oklahoma) High School demanded the removal of the book as a required reading because of its "language and moral content." In 1993, parents challenged the novel as a required reading in Corona-Norco (California) Unified School District based on charges that it "centered around negative activity." After consideration by the school board, the book was retained on the list, but students who objected to the novel were given alternative choices.

In September 2000, the *Mobile Register* reported that *Brave New World* was removed from the Foley High School Library after parent Kathleen Stone complained. Stone asserted that the novel, which was assigned reading in one 11th-grade English class, showed contempt for marriage and family values. High school officials removed the book from the library pending review and, as the newsletter *Intellectual Freedom* reports, emphasized that the book was not banned, but removed.

In 2003, parents of students attending a summer science academy in the South Texas Independent School District in Mercedes, Texas, challenged the use of this novel and *STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND* by Robert Heinlein in the curriculum. They objected specifically to the themes of sexuality, drugs, and suicide in the novels and asserted that such adult themes were inappropriate for students. School officials retained the novels in the summer curriculum. The school board considered the matter further and voted to require school principals to automatically offer an alternative to any challenged books in order to provide parents with greater control over their children's readings.

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BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

Author: Katherine Paterson

Original date and place of publication: 1977, United States

Original publisher: Thomas Y. Crowell Company

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Bridge to Terabithia is a Newbery Award-winning novel that relates the adventures and tragedy of a 10-year-old farm boy in contemporary rural Virginia who makes an unexpected new friend, then loses her to a drowning death for which he blames himself. The fastest runner in the fifth grade, Jesse Aarons has a lively imagination and loves to draw. Leslie Burke, the new girl in school, shares his imaginative view of life and challenges his position as the fastest runner in the fifth grade. She and her parents have moved from the city, hoping to find tranquillity in rural life. Despite the taunting of his schoolmates, Jesse becomes friends with the unusual newcomer who prefers to wear sneakers and blue jeans and who has a firm and extensive knowledge of literature. Her parents, whom she calls by their first names, are writers who have moved to the country because they are "reassessing their value structure." For them and for Leslie, that means a simplified life that excludes television but includes an expensive stereo set and a small, expensive Italian sports car. The two friends find a secret hiding place, where they create their imaginary world of Terabithia. To inform Jesse of the way a magic kingdom runs and how rulers behave, Leslie lends Jesse her books about Narnia. Later, Leslie tells Jesse stories that she has read in the numerous literary works owned by her parents. When a seventh-grade girl steals Twinkies from Jesse's little sister May Belle, Leslie devises a suitably sneaky revenge to humiliate the older girl.

Terabithia becomes a haven for Leslie and Jesse, and they build a bridge of tree branches to cross the creek into their secret world. On Easter morn-

ing, after heavy rains, Jesse heads for Terabithia to meet Leslie, but he turns back after he sees that the creek is nearly overflowing its banks. Later that day, he learns that Leslie has drowned in the creek after the rope on which she was swinging broke. He runs away as guilt and anger overwhelm him, but his father finds him and makes him return. Weeks later, he takes May Belle to the site and she nearly falls into the creek while trying to cross the fragile bridge. Jesse rescues her and later builds a sturdy bridge over the creek with lumber that Leslie's parents buy for him. He also vows to share the magic of Terabithia with May Belle.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Bridge to Terabithia was challenged in 1986 as recommended reading for the sixth-grade curriculum in the Lincoln, Nebraska, schools because it contained "profanities" and unsuitable expletives. In 1990, the parent of a Burlington, North Carolina, fifth-grade student demanded that the book be removed from the reading list, alleging that it contained profanities, violence, and disrespect for authority. When school officials offered an alternative selection, the parent declined, stating, "We care about not only what our daughter reads, but what other children read as well." Other parents called for the creation of a review committee to systematically review books in the school curriculum to root out "anything that in any way seeks to erode traditional, moral values," but the school denied their request.

The same year, parents of children in Harwinton, Connecticut, challenged the use of *Bridge to Terabithia* and other books in the classroom, claiming that they offered a negative view of life to impressionable students and that their language and subject matter set bad examples for young people. A review committee disagreed, and the books were retained. Vulgar language was similarly the basis for a 1991 challenge in Apple Valley (California) Unified School District. A district review committee recommended that the novel be retained, citing its literary value and the strong interest in it by parents and students. The district board of trustees refused to ban the novel and, instead, offered students an alternative selection.

In 1992, parents in the Mechanicsburg (Pennsylvania) Area School District requested that the novel be removed from the school library because it contained offensive language and encouraged a morbid fascination with death. One objector cited four instances in which "damn" is used, two of "hell" and one of "bitched," and several objectors demanded that all material in the library should reflect the opinions of parents. The superintendent agreed with an especially formed review committee which decided unanimously that the novel should be retained and defended the language, stating that it was not meant to be disrespectful and that it was integral to the purpose of the story. That same year, parents in the Cleburne (Texas) Independent School District cited the profane language in the book and demanded

that it be removed from the school libraries. The novel was retained in the libraries but removed from the required reading list.

Parent concerns in 1993 regarding alleged “obscenities” in the novel led the Oskaloosa (Kansas) school district board of education to enact a new policy regarding the assignment of books in the curriculum. Teachers were made responsible for examining each of the required texts used in their classes to determine the number of profanities included in each. They must now list each profanity and the number of times that it appears in the book, then send the list home for parents to review. Before any given book can be used in the classroom, parents must provide written permission for their children to read it. Parents in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, also challenged use of the book in 1993, voicing a similar concern for the use of offensive language by characters in this book and in *Jacob Have I Loved*, by the same author.

In 2002, parents of students attending a middle school in Cromwell, Connecticut, challenged use of the book in the middle school curriculum. They expressed concern that the book “promotes witchcraft and violence.” The matter was reviewed by a district committee, which voted to retain the book.

FURTHER READING

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People For the American Way. *Attacks on the Freedom to Learn: 1990–1991 Report*. Washington, D.C.: People For the American Way, 1991.

CAIN'S BOOK

Author: Alexander Trocchi

Original date and place of publication: 1960, United States

Original publisher: Grove Press

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Cain's Book recounts in journal form the sordid activities of a heroin addict who lives on a garbage scow on the Hudson River in New York. The preface disclaims any association between the author's life and the narrator's heroin use and illegal adventures, but Trocchi permits his narrator a family that resembles his own. In addition, like the narrator of the novel, Trocchi had also served in the Royal Navy and had a more than passing familiarity with Edinburgh and Paris.

The first chapter opens with the words “Half an hour ago I gave myself a fix” and proceeds in a prose style that seeks to mimic the musings of a

man whose mind is unhinged by the effects of hard drugs. In language that is sometimes philosophical but more often anarchical, Cain rants and raves about a system that condemns his heroin use. He states broadly, "I say it is impertinent, insolent and presumptuous of any person or group of persons to impose their unexamined moral prohibitions on me." To those who would deny him or anyone else access to the drug, Cain angrily issues the challenge, "To think that a man should be allowed a gun and not a drug. . . . I demand that these laws be changed."

The narrator relates what led him to his present drug-addicted life, including memories of his adventures as a seaman during World War II. In one particularly bleak passage, Cain describes his first sexual experience with a prostitute, which took place on the stone steps of an air raid shelter during a wartime blackout in Edinburgh. Devoid of any attempt at erotic arousal on the part of the reader, the incident is presented in stark naturalistic detail in which the narrator observes of his sexual companion, "I had never seen such ugly thighs nor ever imagined it like that, exposed for me in matchlight, the flaccid buttocks like pale meat on the stone stairs" His account and others throughout the book punctuate the journal and his continuing defense of his drug use.

The novel also incorporates the author's defense of art. The narrator muses that art should be free of prohibitions, and he expresses the essential value of drugs in stimulating creativity in the artist. Overall, the narrator is not remorseful about his addiction nor does he speak against the use of heroin. Instead, Cain's journal is a polemic that condemns the prohibitions that society places both on the artist in society and on the individual who makes a conscious choice to use hard drugs and who rejects all efforts to rehabilitate him and to deny him the right of his addiction.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The censorship of *Cain's Book* is significant because the judge's 1964 decision that the book was obscene marked the first time a judgment of obscenity had been made based not on the vulgar language, depiction of sexual activity, or depravity in a work but on the lifestyle it advocated. The novel was published in the United States by Grove Press in 1960, but the little-read author stimulated only minimal interest with it. By 1963, when John Calder issued *Cain's Book* under his imprint, Trocchi had gained a following in the United Kingdom as a poet and a leading figure of the beat movement. At first little known for his fiction, Trocchi became well known after his highly publicized argument with Scottish poet Hugh MacDiarmid at the 1962 Edinburgh Festival Writers' Conference. The younger poet's arguments against Scottish chauvinism brought international attention and resulted in the publication of *Cain's Book* in the United Kingdom.

The publisher limited distribution of the book to established bookstores, in an effort to avoid the crackdown on books that had followed earlier con-

victions for the sale of *FANNY HILL*. The novel was kept out of less reputable stores that dealt in sexy photographs, condoms, and pornography to avoid its being scooped up in police raids, but the effort failed. In February 1964, police in Sheffield, England, raided a number of bookstores and confiscated *Cain's Book* along with numerous other novels and magazines. Police defended their seizure of the novel on the grounds that it "seems to advocate the use of drugs in schools so that children should have a clearer conception of art."

In the subsequent trial, which began in April 1964, the publisher defended the literary merit of the novel. Calder stated to the jury that the novel was "one of the most important books written by a British author that has an affinity with the beat movement which is a revolt against conventional values." The prosecution claimed that the book was obscene. Among the witnesses for the prosecution was the Sheffield city librarian, who testified that the library owned 20 copies of *Cain's Book*, "kept in a reserve category available only for adults." After only 45 minutes of deliberation, the jury gave its verdict that the book was obscene and that it was too offensive to remain available to citizens. All copies of *Cain's Book* in Sheffield were ordered confiscated. At the Edinburgh Festival in September 1964, Trocchi and his supporters devised a protest against the verdict, a public burning of copies of *Cain's Book* in a large bonfire to which were added fireworks.

An appeal filed later in 1964 was unsuccessful, and the judge dismissed the case with costs going against the publisher. In rendering his decision in December 1964, Lord Chief Justice Parker determined that the narrator's heroin addiction was the reason for censoring the book. He stated "... the book, highlighting as it were the favourable effects of drug taking, so far from condemning it, advocates it and ... there is a real danger that those into whose hands the book comes might be tempted, at any rate, to experiment with drugs and get the favourable sensations highlighted by the book."

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CAMILLE

Author: Alexandre Dumas, Jr.

Original date and place of publication: 1848, Brussels

Original publisher: Meline, Cans

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Known by the title *La Dame aux camélias* when originally published, the novel is a sensitive and sympathetic portrayal of Marguerite Gautier, a French courtesan who dies young of consumption. The work gained early notoriety because it is drawn from life and features a main character who is the thinly veiled fictional version of an actual courtesan named Marie Duplessis. Her lavish lifestyle and many relationships with men are presented in the nonjudgmental narration of her life and death. Dumas purifies the courtesan's image and plays down her true-life desire to accumulate wealth and jewels. As such, it offered for its time a new treatment of social and moral problems.

Marguerite is so sensitive that she cannot even endure the scent of flowers; thus, for her adornment she selects the lush yet delicate camellia, which has no scent. This theme of simple yet lavish beauty characterizes Marguerite, with whom the 25-year-old Armand Duval remains deeply in love, even after her death at the age of 23.

The novel is framed as a story being told to the narrator by Duval, a now-impooverished former lover of the high-living courtesan. Dumas does not glorify her life; rather, he exhibits her effect upon others, especially her negative effect upon Duval. Of all her many lovers, Duval is the only one who places flowers (camellias) on her grave, even after she has ruined him financially. He is also the only person who seeks to move her body from its place in a cemetery plot with only a five-year lease to a large plot having a perpetual lease. When Duval becomes seriously ill with "brain fever," the narrator nurses him and, thus, learns the entire story as Duval narrates it to him.

Mingled with accounts of Marguerite's frivolous life and conspicuous luxury is the poignance of her realization that being a courtesan makes her of interest to others only as long as she can "serve the vanity or the pleasure of . . . lovers." She warns her young admirer Duval at the outset of their acquaintance that her lavish lifestyle is expensive to maintain and that she must continue her liaisons with older rich men in order to survive. Soon after they meet, Duval learns that Marguerite has been coughing up blood, yet she continues to meet and to fascinate her wealthy lovers. He becomes obsessed with her. He learns that she is 40,000 francs in debt and spends hundreds of thousands of francs annually. As his own health deteriorates, Duval is also drawn into debt as he borrows money and gambles to try to pay Marguerite's debts. After enduring months of working to convince

the courtesan to give up her wealthy suitors and lavish lifestyle, Duval is successful, and they go to live in the country in a home that was purchased for her by a wealthy and elderly duke. Duval and Marguerite live together openly, supported by the profits from the sale of her numerous jewels and possessions.

After four months of remaining faithful to her young lover, Marguerite returns to her old life, more ill with consumption than before yet still able to attract a wealthy count who buys back for her the horses, carriage, and jewels that she had pawned. In revenge, Duval takes a new mistress, upon whom he lavishes money and jewels to make Marguerite jealous, thus driving himself even further into debt. When Marguerite dies, Duval is devastated and becomes ill shortly thereafter.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel has drawn criticism as much for its sympathetic portrayal of a courtesan as for the wisdom that Dumas expresses through the character of Armand Duval: "To be loved by a pure young girl . . . is the simplest thing in the world. But to be really loved by a courtesan, that is a victory of infinitely greater difficulty." Duval refers casually to Marguerite as "a kept woman," and he has Marguerite solemnly swear to him, "I gave myself sooner to you than I ever did to any man."

In 1850, the performance of the opera *La Traviata*, based on the novel, was permitted, but the translation of the text as a libretto was forbidden. In France, from 1849 through 1852, the play *La Dame aux camélias*, based on the novel, was forbidden on the Paris stage. Finally, in 1852, an influential government minister in the cabinet of Napoleon III intervened, and the play was produced.

The novel was singled out in 1857 by Lord Campbell, the lord chief justice of England, when he introduced to the House of Lords a bill that was aimed at strengthening the law of obscenity and made books liable to destruction by the magistrates. He assured his peers that the law was aimed at eliminating those works "written for the single purpose of corrupting the morals of youth and of a nature calculated to shock the common feelings of decency in a well-regulated mind." As he presented his arguments, he held a copy of *Camille* in his hands and referred to it with horror as an example of literary works of a polluting character that must be stopped. The bill became the Obscene Publications Act of 1857.

In 1863, all of Dumas's works were placed on the Vatican's list of forbidden books, and he was identified as one of only 11 authors whose total works had been condemned by the Roman Catholic church for emphasizing the treatment of impure love. As recently as 1948, all of Dumas's works were listed in the Vatican's *Index librorum prohibitorum* and declared to be forbidden to Catholics throughout the world and in every translation.

FURTHER READING

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THE CANTERBURY TALES

Author: Geoffrey Chaucer

Original date and place of publication: 1387–1400, England

Original publisher: Unknown

Literary form: Short story collection

SUMMARY

The Canterbury Tales is a group of stories, mostly in verse, written in the closing years of the 14th century. Chaucer establishes the framework for the book in a lengthy prologue, in which he describes the 29 individuals who meet with their host at the Tabard Inn in preparation for a pilgrimage to the popular shrine of Thomas à Becket at the Canterbury Cathedral. They agree that, to pass the time on the journey, each pilgrim will tell four stories, two on the way to the shrine and two on the way home. The host will judge the best tale, and the winner will receive a sumptuous feast at the inn. Chaucer originally planned a book of 120 tales but died in 1400 before completing the work. Only 24 of the tales remain. Of these, 20 are complete, two are deliberately left incomplete because the pilgrims demand that the tellers cease, and two others were left unfinished by Chaucer's death.

The pilgrims extend across all levels of 14th-century English society, from the nobly born Knight, Squire, and Prioress to the low-born Miller, Cook, and Yeoman. None are spared Chaucer's critical examination of the human condition as he uses his characters and their tales to expose the absurdities and inadequacies of all levels of society. The travelers quarrel, interrupt, and criticize each other; become drunk; and provoke commentary. Members of the religious hierarchy are shown to be corrupt, women are lusty, and the dark underbelly of society is exposed. The tales reflect the tellers, from the gentle Knight, "modest as a maid," who describes an abstraction of womanhood in his pure Emily, to the bawdy Miller, who describes his Alison as a highly provocative physical object.

Risqué language and sexual innuendo pervade most of the tales. "The Cook's Tale" describes "a wife [who] whored to get her sustenance." In "Introduction to the Lawyer's Prologue," provocative images of incest emerge in "Canace, who loved her own blood brother sinfully" and "wicked king Antio-

chus [who] bereft his daughter of her maidenhead.” “The Reeve’s Tale” tells of a miller named Simpkin whose wife “was a dirty bitch” and whose daughter was “with buttocks broad and round breasts full and high.” “The Wife of Bath’s Tale,” one of the two most commonly anthologized of all the tales, offers an extraordinary view of women and sexuality. Described in the prologue as having had five husbands, “not counting other company in her youth,” the Wife of Bath questions the concern over virginity and asks “Tell me also to what purpose or end the genitals have been made?” She lustily promises, “In wifehood I will use my instrument as freely as my Maker has sent it.”

The second of the two most popularly anthologized stories is “The Miller’s Tale,” a story about adultery. Alison, an 18-year-old woman married to a middle-age miller, is courted by Absalom the parish clerk, but she is already having an affair with the boarder, a student named Nicholas. Absalom serenades her outside her window and promises to leave her alone only if she will let him kiss her. She agrees and, when he arrives at her window in the dark, she offers “her naked arse,” which he kisses. He soon realizes the trick, for “it seem somehow amiss, for well he knew a woman has no beard; he’d felt a thing all rough and longish-haired.” Seeking revenge, Absalom returns to the Miller’s house carrying a red-hot poker from the fireplace and calls to Alison for another kiss. This time Nicholas, who “had risen for a piss,” decides “to have his arse kissed” to carry on the joke. And, “showing the whole bum,” he is shocked when Absalom “was ready with his iron hot and Nicholas right in the arse he got.” Later, John, the other student boarder, mistakenly climbs into bed with Alison, who thinks it is Nicholas, and he “pricked her hard and deep, like one gone mad.”

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Canterbury Tales has been expurgated since its first appearance in the United States in 1908 in the Everyman’s Library edition. Seventeen of the tales were translated into modern English with extensive expurgation, and seven were left intact but in the original Middle English language. In 1953, the tales were innocent victims of the “Red Scare,” when critics approached the Texas State Textbook Commission and demanded that the commission bar the Garden City editions of *Canterbury Tales* and *Moby-Dick* from their schools. The two works were illustrated by Rockwell Kent, charged by critics with being a communist.

For the most part, however, the off-color references of the original text and blunt “Anglo-Saxon” terms related to the anatomy or to bodily functions have raised concerns among parents and those who select textbooks. Thus, they are routinely omitted from most editions, as are curses or oaths uttered by characters in the original tales. Editing has led to such absurdities as “He caught her by the queynte” being transformed into “He slipped his hand intimately between her legs.” Challenges to the inclusion of “The Miller’s Tale,” “The Wife of Bath’s Tale,” and even the “Prologue” have sought to remove

the readings from classrooms because of the “unhealthy characters” and the “nasty words” of the text. Risqué language and characters have made the tales a ready target for textbook evaluators and community and school watchdogs.

In 1986, a lengthy case arose over the use of a textbook that included “The Miller’s Tale” and Aristophanes’ play *Lysistrata* in an elective humanities course for Columbia County High School students in Lake City, Florida. The tale appeared in *The Humanities: Cultural Roots and Continuities Volume I*, a state-approved textbook that had been used for 10 years without incident. In 1985, the daughter of a fundamentalist minister had enrolled in the course and objected to the two selections, even though they were not assigned readings but portions referred to and read aloud by the teacher. In lodging a formal complaint, the minister identified “sexual explicitness,” “vulgar language,” and “the promotion of women’s lib” as his reasons for demanding that the text be withdrawn from use. His specific objections identified concern over the inclusion of the terms “ass” and “fart” in “The Miller’s Tale,” as well as the jocular way in which adultery appears to be treated. An advisory textbook committee made up of Columbia County High School teachers read and discussed the two selections, then recommended that the textbooks be retained and that the two selections not be assigned. The school board rejected their suggestions and voted to confiscate all copies of the book and to lock them in the book room. Anxious to avoid the charge of censorship, board members also voted to allow a copy to remain in the high school library, but it was placed on “the mature shelf.”

In 1988, the American Civil Liberties Union submitted an initial brief against the school board in *Virgil v. School Board of Columbia County*, 677 F. Supp. 1547, 1551-51 (M.D. Fla. 1988) and argued that the actions of the board in removing the textbook from the classroom suppressed the free thought and free speech of students. The ACLU based its arguments on decisions made in *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 853, 102 S.Ct. 2799, 73 L.Ed.2d 435 (1982), in which the court decided that school boards violate the First Amendment rights of students when they arbitrarily remove books. (See *BLACK BOY*) The defense attorney for the school board relied on *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*, 484 U.S. 260, 108 S.Ct. 562, 98 L.Ed.2d 592 (1988) in presenting the case, although the case applied to the right of school administrators to censor articles in a school newspaper that was produced as part of a high school journalism class.

The case went to court, and in deciding *Virgil v. School Board of Columbia County*, 862 F.2d 1517, 1525 (11th Cir. 1989), the judge determined that the *Hazelwood* case was the relevant precedent. The limited scope of that case in interpreting the First Amendment rights of students influenced the court to decide in favor of the school board. In the *Virgil* decision, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit concluded that no constitutional violation had occurred and the school board could decide to remove books from the classroom provided that the removal was “reasonably related” to the “legitimate

pedagogical concern” of denying students exposure to “potentially sensitive topics.” The written contention of the board that the two selections contained “explicit sexuality” and “excessive vulgarity” was judged to be a sufficient basis for the removal of *The Humanities: Cultural Roots and Continuities* from the classroom. The plaintiffs decided to appeal the case to the United States Supreme Court and directed the ACLU attorney to file a Petition for Writ of Certiorari in 1988. After more than a year passed, the plaintiffs learned that the Supreme Court had never received the petition because a secretary newly hired in April 1989 by the office of the ACLU attorney had never sent it out. The plaintiffs decided not to pursue the matter because the changed character of the higher court did not promise success even if the motion to argue the case were approved.

In September 1995, parents of seniors in the Eureka, Illinois, High School complained to the Eureka School Board that parts of this classic are “too racy.” Board members directed the teacher, Nancy Quinn, to stop teaching the work until the board could review the material further. School Board president Eric Franz stated that the parents were particularly concerned with classroom discussions about marriage and adultery that were prompted by the tales. He characterized the action of the board as “about education, not censorship” and said that the board had to determine “whether the community’s standards are violated by any particular piece of literature.” The board voted to ban the full version of *The Canterbury Tales* and to replace it with an expurgated version, which they described as “annotated.”

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CAPTAIN UNDERPANTS (SERIES)

Author: Dav Pilkey

Original date and place of publication: 1997, United States

Original publisher: Scholastic Books

Literary form: Illustrated children’s book

SUMMARY

The *Captain Underpants* series consists of eight books aimed at a readership of children ages eight to 12. Librarians and the publisher report that boys are

the major fans of the books. The heavily illustrated books are divided into short chapters and contain pages that are half text and half cartoon. Most also include a “Flip-O-Rama” section of successive pages that create a rough impression of action when the reader flips them back and forth. The series plays to an interest in scatological humor, and the text and cartoon balloons contain such terms as *barf*, *pee-pee*, *butt*, and *poopy*, as well as sections devoted to “boogers,” “wedgies,” and flying excrement. The books contain names such as Ivana Goda de Bafroom and Pippy P. Poopypants, and villains are said to be able to “leap tall buildings with the gassy aftereffects of their ‘Texas-style’ three-bean chili con carne.”

The premise for the series is that George Beard and Harold Hutchins, two rambunctious fourth-grade students who are enrolled in a “remedial” physical education class and who draw comic books about epic adventures, accidentally make their school principal, Mr. Krupp, into a superhero, whose adventures they then chronicle. Mr. Krupp is a crabby bureaucrat whose frequent disciplining of the boys finally moves them to obtain “a magic 3-D Hypno-Ring,” which they use to hypnotize him into believing he is a superhero named “Captain Underpants” who wears cotton briefs and a red cape and whose motto is “Truth, Justice, and all that is Pre-shrunk and Cottony.” A snap of anyone’s fingers turns Krupp into the superhero and leads him to champion justice in seven books: *The Adventures of Captain Underpants*; *Captain Underpants and the Talking Toilets*; *Captain Underpants and the Invasion of the Incredibly Naughty Cafeteria Ladies from Outer Space (and the Subsequent Assault of the Equally Evil Lunchroom Zombie Nerds)*; *Captain Underpants and the Perilous Plot of Professor Poopypants*; *Captain Underpants and the Wrath of the Wicked Wedgie Woman*; *Captain Underpants and the Big, Bad Battle of the Bionic Booger Boy: Part I: The Night of the Nasty Nostril Nuggets*; and *Captain Underpants and the Big, Bad Battle of the Bionic Booger Boy: Part II: The Revenge of the Ridiculous Robo-Boogers*. The superhero persona fades and Mr. Krupp returns when even a small amount of water falls on his head. Also part of the series is *The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby*, which is presented as one of the comic books written and drawn by George and Harold.

Throughout the books, teachers, school secretaries, and other adults suffer disgusting experiences. Miss Anthrope, school secretary, is “covered in snot”; Mr. Meaner, a sadistic physical education teacher, is swallowed by a talking toilet; and Miss Singerbrains, the school librarian, finds a “purple potty” in her library. George and Harold play numerous pranks and generally take every opportunity to torment the adults in their lives, but every action is epic in proportion, if ridiculous. To make certain that readers are aware of the mock epic intent of each novel, each book contains a clear label at the bottom of the cover: “The First Epic Novel,” “The Second Epic Novel,” and so on.

Although the books contain silly illustrations and plots and scatological terms, they also function as an effective learning tool. Pilkey uses such vocabulary words as *merciless*, *gullible*, *hideous*, and others throughout the series, and the works contain compound sentences and significant use of synonyms and

alliteration. In addition, the popularity of the books has motivated interest among many formerly reluctant readers.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The *Captain Underpants* series has evoked ardent proponents and opponents. Many librarians and parents have defended the books, echoing the opinion expressed by one mother in an interview conducted by CNN: “‘The content IS sometimes vulgar, scatological, rude—but so are 9-year-old boys,’ said Mary Jo Dickerson, whose son Ian reads the books out loud to her. ‘I say any book that encourages my son to read is worth its weight in gold.’”

Opponents of the book are equally ardent. In 2000, Principal Rebecca Sciacc, of the Maple Hill School in Naugatuck, Connecticut, removed *The Adventures of Captain Underpants* from the elementary school library. Superintendent of schools Alice Carolan supported the decision and noted in an interview, “These Captain Underpants books are clearly inappropriate for an elementary school library. All of their humor comes from the bathroom and bodily functions. There’s a fine line between censorship and selection. It comes down to what you think. I call this selection, you might consider it censorship.”

In 2002, Dawn Ihry, a parent and former teacher, in Page, North Dakota, submitted a formal complaint to the school board of the Hope-Page Consolidated School District requesting that the school remove *Captain Underpants* and *the Perilous Plot of Professor Poopypants* from the Page elementary school library. In the complaint, Ihry wrote, “I didn’t care for the language. I didn’t care for the innuendo.” The district materials-review committee rejected the challenge but offered Ihry a compromise that would have allowed the book to be retained in the library placed on a “restricted” shelf and available only to older students. Ihry rejected the offer, and the issue went to the district school board, which voted to uphold the challenge and to remove the book from the school library. The controversy motivated the school board to examine the district selection policy. On March 11, 2002, the board approved a policy requiring that the consolidated school board approve all library purchases and allowing them to reject materials “that label or characterize undeserving individuals in a derogatory manner.”

In 2003, Pam Santi, a businesswoman and grandmother raising four grandchildren, filed a complaint with the Riverside (California) Unified School District calling for the removal of *The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby* from the Madison Elementary School library. She became upset when she found her grandson drawing a picture of one of the characters, Deputy Doo-Doo: “He was drawing a piece of poop.” In her complaint, Santi charged that the 125-page book also shows “irreverence to authority,” contains a large number of intentional misspellings, and offers a 12-point lesson on how to draw Deputy Doo-Doo, “sheriff’s hat and all.” She

also asserted, “There’s just no moral value to that poop character.” The complaint was submitted for a decision to the materials review committee, a seven-member committee composed of parents, teachers, and administrators chaired by district librarian Christine Allen. The committee rejected the challenge in a 5-2 vote. One of the committee members, Linda Wallis, a second-grade teacher at Madison, who voted in favor of the ban, stated in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*: “There is not one teacher I know who wants [*Super Diaper Baby*] out there . . . This is not the type of humor we promote at school. It’s putting down kids to say this is what they like to read.”

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CATCH-22

Author: Joseph Heller

Original date and place of publication: 1961, United States

Original publisher: Simon & Schuster

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Catch-22 is a comic novel about World War II that literary critics have described as among the best to have come out of that era. The novel concerns the efforts of Capt. John Yossarian, a bombardier with the 256th U.S. Air Force Squadron, to be removed from combat duty after he witnesses numerous friends being killed in action. He acts insane to achieve his goal, but his efforts are thwarted by military regulation number 22, which states that no sane person would willingly go into combat. Thus, anyone who seeks to avoid combat duty must be considered sane.

Set on the fictional Mediterranean island of Pianosa, from which the squadron makes regular bombing runs to southern France and to Italy, the novel contains graphic descriptions of sex and violence and exhibits strong rebellion against authority. Yossarian lies, sabotages military procedures, and exhibits gross irresponsibility. He also walks around naked for a few days, even when he is being awarded a medal. Given light duty censoring letters written by enlisted men, Yossarian plays games and blacks out words randomly, sometimes adding the chaplain's signature to romantic letters home. The unpleasant experience of his tent mate Orr in a brothel is carefully detailed, as the "whore" beats him with her high-heeled shoe. Readers learn that the two are naked and of "her wondrously full breasts soaring all over the place like billowing pennants in a strong wind and her buttocks and strong thighs shim-sham-shimmying this way and that way." Another character visits a brothel in the Eternal City, then kills the prostitute because she might damage his reputation should she tell others about their encounter. Throughout the novel, the men casually refer to and address each other as "son of a bitch," "prick," or "bastard." At one point, Yossarian loses his temper and rants, "That dirty goddam midget-assed, apple-cheeked, goggle-eyed, undersized, bucktoothed, grinning, crazy sonofabitchinbastard!"

The women in the novel are largely stereotypes to whom other characters refer as "whore." The woman whom "he had longed for and idolized for months" is "perfect for Yossarian, a debauched, coarse, vulgar, amoral, appetizing slattern . . . She was interested in fornication." However, he also hopes that "Nately's whore" will find him a woman who is just as eager for sex as she. At the end of the novel, as Yossarian leaves the base to run off to Sweden, "Nately's whore was hiding out just outside the door." She attempts to kill him, but he escapes.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Catch-22 is part of the school censorship case that set precedent by supporting the student's right to know. In 1972, the Strongsville, Ohio, board of education used its discretionary power over textbook selection to disapprove purchase of *Catch-22* and Kurt Vonnegut's *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*, despite faculty recommendation. The board refused to allow teachers to use the books as part of the English curriculum, charging that they were "completely sick" and "garbage." The board then ordered the two books and *CAT'S CRADLE*, also by Vonnegut, removed from the high school library and "all copies disposed of in accordance with statutory procedure."

Five high school students and their families brought a class-action suit against the school district, the school superintendent, and the board of education, claiming that their rights under the First and Fourteenth Amendments had been violated. The families argued that the board had not followed proper procedure and had not given good reason for rejecting the novels. In 1974, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio ruled that the board did not violate First Amendment rights because it had followed the law. Ohio law granted school boards the authority to select textbooks, and the board had held open meetings and consulted enough teachers, administrators, and citizens to make a reasonable decision. The judge dismissed the complaint of the families regarding the removal of the books from the school library.

The case was then heard in 1976 by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, and a different decision emerged. The court upheld the right of the school board to determine the choice of textbooks, but it stood firmly against the right of the school board to remove already purchased books from the school library.

A public school library is also a valuable adjunct to classroom discussions. If one of the English teachers considered Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* to be one of the more important modern American novels (as, indeed, at least one did), we assume that no one would dispute that the First Amendment's protection of academic freedom would protect both his right to say so in class and his students' right to hear him and to find and read the book. Obviously, the students' success in this last endeavor would be greatly hindered by the fact that the book sought had been removed from a school library.

The court also chastised the school board for withdrawing books from the school library. Stating in the decision that "a library is a storehouse of knowledge," the presiding judge warned that libraries are created by the state for the benefit of students in the schools. As such, they are "not subject to being withdrawn by succeeding school boards whose members might desire to 'winnow' the library for books the content of which occasioned their displeasure or disapproval." The judge ordered the Strongsville school board to replace the books in the school library. In response,

the school district appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, but the court refused to hear the case.

The use of the word *whore* at several places in the novel to refer to women resulted in challenges in the Dallas (Texas) Independent School District in 1974, where parents demanded that the novel be removed from all of the high school libraries. The same objection motivated a challenge in the Snoqualmie Valley (Washington) School District in 1979. Critics observed that the use of *whore* and Heller's failure to name one woman, calling her only "Nately's whore," represented a stereotyping of women that was harmful to students. In attempts to remove the novel from use in the school system as well as from the Mount Si High School library, critics also cited the "overly descriptive passages of violence" and the increasingly bizarre threats by squadron members against each other. The efforts to remove *Catch-22* were unsuccessful.

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THE CATCHER IN THE RYE

Author: J. D. Salinger

Original date and place of publication: 1951, United States

Original publisher: Little, Brown and Company

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

The Catcher in the Rye tells the story of a middle-class, urban, late-adolescent boy in the 1950s who confronts crisis in his own life by escaping into the disordered and chaotic adult world. The story, told from the first-person point of view of Holden Caulfield, details 48 hours in his life and describes how he views and feels about society and the world in which he lives. As Holden

experiences his misadventures, he muses about sex, society, and American values. He seeks to remain idealistic, but he is confronted at every turn by the phoniness of society.

Holden narrates his story while in a rest home in California, and the reader becomes aware that he is relating a story from his recent past. He flashes back to his school days, in particular to Pencey Prep, where he was a student until his expulsion. It is just after this expulsion that the action takes place. For most of the novel, Holden appears to search for someone or something in which to believe, but he finds that his generally pessimistic view of human nature and human values is reinforced rather than refuted.

Before Holden makes the decision to leave school, he visits his history teacher for one last time and receives a lecture regarding his lack of motivation and poor scholarship. Mr. Spencer even goes so far as to read Holden the last examination he took. The disappointments accrue, as Holden returns to his room in the dormitory and learns that his roommate, Ward, has a date with a girl whom Holden had wanted to date. To compound the pain, Ward asks Holden to write a composition, which he later criticizes severely. After an ensuing physical fight, Holden packs a bag and leaves the campus.

Holden boards a train bound for New York City and registers at a hotel upon arrival. When loneliness sets in, he makes several telephone calls without success, then visits a crowded nightclub, but he still cannot fill the void he feels inside. When Holden returns to the hotel, he asks the doorman to arrange for a prostitute, but he sends her away unpaid because he is too scared and too depressed to enjoy her. The doorman and prostitute later awaken him and demand the five dollars, and the doorman beats Holden to obtain payment.

After meeting a friend at a bar and indulging in underage drinking, Holden sneaks into his family's apartment to see his younger sister, Phoebe, with whom he discusses his fears that he may "disappear" into himself. He tells her that he has a mission in this world: "I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all . . . And I'm standing by on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff." In his further idealism, he becomes upset when he finds "Fuck You" scrawled on the walls of Phoebe's elementary school and on the wall of the museum where Phoebe will meet him.

Holden plans to hitchhike to the West but changes his mind and agrees to return home when Phoebe packs a suitcase and insists on going with him. He later watches Phoebe ride the carousel in Central Park and realizes that he really cannot protect her from all of the world's abuses and that he has to let her take chances without interfering.

By the end of the novel, after fending off the advances of a male former English teacher and reviewing his disappointments with the adult world, Holden appears resigned in the rest home and predicts that he will soon be returning to school.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel has long ignited disapproval, and it was the most frequently banned book in schools between 1966 and 1975. Even before that time, however, the work was a favorite target of censors. In 1957, Australian Customs seized a shipment of the novels that had been presented as a gift to the government by the U.S. ambassador. The books were later released, but Customs had made its point that the book contained obscene language and actions that were not appropriate behavior for an adolescent. In 1960, a teacher in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was fired for assigning the book to an 11th-grade English class. The teacher appealed and was reinstated by the school board, but the book was removed from use in the school.

The following year in Oklahoma City, the novel became the focus of a legislative hearing in which a locally organized censorship group sought to stop the Mid-Continent News Company, a book wholesaler, from carrying the novel. Members of the group parked a “Smutmobile” outside the capital building during the hearing and displayed the novel with others. As a result of public pressure, the wholesaler dropped the criticized novels from its inventory. In 1963, a delegation of parents of high school students in Columbus, Ohio, asked the school board to ban *Catcher in the Rye*, *BRAVE NEW WORLD*, and *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD* for being “anti-white” and “obscene.” The superintendent of schools and the school board refused the request and expressed confidence in the ability of their teachers and librarians to choose reading material for the school system.

After a decade of quiet, objections again arose in 1975 in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, and the novel was removed from the suggested reading list for an elective course entitled “Searching for Values and Identity Through Literature.” Based on parents’ objections to the language and content of the book, the school board voted 5-4 to ban the book. The book was later reinstated in the curriculum when the board learned that the vote was illegal because a two-thirds vote was needed for removal of the text.

In 1977, parents in Pittsgrove Township, New Jersey, challenged the assignment of the novel in an American literature class. They charged that the book included considerable profanity and “filthy and profane” language that promoted premarital sex, homosexuality, and perversion, as well as claiming that it was “explicitly pornographic” and “immoral.” The board of education had originally approved the novel for study. After months of controversy, the board ruled that the novel could be read in the advanced-placement class for its universal message, but they gave parents the right to decide whether or not their children would read it.

In 1978, parents in Issaquah, Washington, became upset with the rebellious views expressed in the novel by Holden Caulfield and with the profanity he uses. The woman who led the parents’ group asserted that she had counted 785 uses of profanity, and she alleged that the philosophy of the book marked it as part of a communist plot that was gaining a foothold in the schools, “in which a lot of people are used and may not even be aware of it.” The school

board voted to ban the book, but the decision was later reversed when the three members who had voted against the book were recalled due to illegal deal-making. In 1979, the Middleville, Michigan, school district removed the novel from the required reading list after parents objected to the content.

Objections to the novel were numerous throughout the 1980s. In 1980, the Jacksonville-Milton School libraries in North Jackson, Ohio, removed the book, as did two high school libraries in Anniston, Alabama. In 1982, school officials removed the book from all school libraries because it contained “excess vulgar language, sexual scenes, and things concerning moral issues.” In 1983, parents in Libby, Montana, challenged the assignment of the book in the high school due to the “book’s contents.” Deemed “unacceptable” and “obscene,” the novel was banned from use in English classes at Freeport High School in De Funiak Springs, Florida, in 1985, and it was removed from the required reading list in 1986 in Medicine Bow, Wyoming, Senior High School because of sexual references and profanity. In 1987, parents and the local Knights of Columbus chapter in Napoleon, North Dakota, complained about profanity and sexual references in the book, which was then banned from a required sophomore English reading list. Parents of students attending Linton-Stockton (Indiana) High School challenged the book in 1988 because it “undermines morality,” and profanity was the reason why the book was banned from classrooms in the Boron, California, high school in 1989.

The challenges to the novel continued well into the 1990s. In 1991, the novel was challenged at Grayslake (Illinois) Community High School for profanity, and parents of students in Jamaica High School in Sidell, Illinois, cited profanities and the depiction of premarital sex, alcohol abuse, and prostitution as the basis for their 1992 challenge. Three other major challenges to the novel occurred in 1992. The novel was challenged and removed from the Waterloo, Iowa, public schools and the Duval County, Florida, public school libraries because of the “lurid passages about sex” and profanity, and a parent in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, objected to the book because it was “immoral” and contained profanity. In 1993, parents in the Corona-Norco (California) School District protested the use of the novel as a required reading because it was “centered around negative activity.” The school board voted to retain the novel but instructed teachers to select alternative readings if students objected to it. The novel was challenged but retained for use in select English classes at New Richmond (Wisconsin) High School in 1994, but it was removed as mandatory reading from the Goffstown, New Hampshire, schools the same year because parents charged that it contained “vulgar words” and presented the main character’s “sexual exploits.”

In May 2000, *American Libraries* magazine reported that the Limestone County School District (Alabama) voted on attempts to ban the book from high school library collections. Elkmont High School parent Mike Taylor had challenged use of the book, complaining that “the Lord’s name is taken in vain throughout.” The move had the support of Joel Glaze, a board member, who asserted that the book is “teaching debauchery” and stated that a nearby

Bible school refused to teach the book. On March 13, 1999, the school board voted 4-3 to retain the book.

In 2001, parents of students in the Dorchester District 2 school in Summerville, South Carolina, complained to the school board that the novel is immoral and asked for the school officials to remove it. The school board reviewed the book and voted to remove it from the school, with one school board member supporting the decision and stating it “is a filthy, filthy book.” The same year, a school board member in Glynn County, Georgia, challenged use of the book because of the profanity, but school district officials voted to retain the book.

In 2004, parents of students attending Noble High School in North Berwick, Maine, challenged the use of the novel as an assigned reading. School officials decided to retain the novel, but they planned to create a program in which teachers would provide more information to parents regarding why certain books are studied.

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THE CHOCOLATE WAR

Author: Robert Cormier

Original date and place of publication: 1974, United States

Original publisher: Pantheon Books

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

The Chocolate War is the story of a young boy’s struggle against the conformity imposed on him by the restrictive atmosphere of an all-male Catholic prep

school as well as by the demands of the Vigils, a secret group that the school does not officially condone but whose existence and infractions it ignores. Jerry Renault, a freshman, has just lost his mother to cancer when the novel opens, and his father is too deep in grief to offer any solace or guidance. Singled out by the Vigils, a secret society at Trinity that manipulates and intimidates students to follow the group's dictates, Jerry is given the assignment by the group to oppose for 10 days the annual chocolate sale at the school and to make a public demonstration of his opposition. The annual chocolate sale, said to be voluntary even though pressures are exerted to participate, is vital to the financial well-being of Trinity, and each boy must sell 50 boxes at \$2 each for the school to achieve the necessary level of profit. Knowing that a successful sale is critical for Brother Leon, the leader of the Vigils decides to turn this to an advantage for the group. Brother Leon has already approached Archie, the Assigner of the Vigils, to gain support for the chocolate sale from the group, which he does not name, and Archie hints that they expect certain favors from Brother Leon in return.

When the 10 days end, Jerry, whose locker contains a poster that reads "Do I Dare Disturb the Universe?" continues his refusal to sell chocolates, despite the insistence by the Vigils that he now participate. He insists on the voluntary nature of the project and tries to gain control over his life by bucking the system, but his refusal influences other students to make little effort in the project. The Vigils place relentless pressure on Jerry, Brother Leon glares at him in a menacing manner, and other students give him the silent treatment and fear associating with him, but he continues in his refusal to sell chocolates.

Even as he receives brutal punishment in football practice and deals with threats on the telephone, Jerry stands firm on his decision. At the end of the novel, he must take part in a boxing match staged by the Vigils in the football stadium in front of the entire student body and out of sight of the school faculty. The rules demand that both fighters follow directions for blows that students have written on slips of paper. As Jerry is pummeled to near death, students catch sight of Brother Leon standing on the hillside and watching with approval.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The Chocolate War was frequently challenged throughout the 1980s and 1990s for reasons ranging from objections to the vocabulary and "pervasive vulgarity" to outcries regarding perceived themes of rape, masturbation, violence, and degrading treatment of women. In 1981, officials in two Lapeer, Michigan, high schools challenged the novel and temporarily removed it from the English curriculum, charging that it contained "offensive language and explicit descriptions of sexual situations." In 1982, it was removed from the classroom in Liberty High School in Westminster, Maryland, when critics charged that the novel portrayed violence and the degradation of schools

and teachers and that it contained “foul language.” The language was also the main complaint in 1983 when parents of students at Richmond (Rhode Island) High School demanded that the book be removed from the classroom because of the “repulsive” and “pornographic” text.

In 1984, the novel was banned from the middle school libraries of the Richland Two School District in Columbia, South Carolina, due to “language problems,” but the book was later reinstated for use by students in the eighth grade. That same year, school officials removed the novel from the freshman reading list at Laka Havasu (Arizona) High School. When teachers protested the ban, the school board censured the teachers for failing to set good examples for their students and for fostering disrespect in the classroom by failing to support the board in its decision.

In 1985, the novel was removed from the Stroudsburg (Pennsylvania) High School library after the school board determined that it was “blatantly graphic, pornographic and wholly unacceptable for a high school library.” Similar charges were made in 1986, when the book was challenged at Barnstable High School in Hyannis, Massachusetts, for its profanity, as well as for “obscene references to masturbation and sexual fantasies” and “ultimately because of its pessimistic ending.” Complainants charged further that the novel painted authority and school systems in an unfavorable light and provided a negative impression of religious schools. “Offensive” language motivated the removal of the novel from the Panama City, Florida, school classrooms and from its libraries in the same year. In 1987, parents cited the “profanity, sexual situations, and themes that allegedly encourage disrespectful behavior” in their demand that the novel be removed from school libraries in the Moreno Valley, California Unified School District. A West Hernando (Florida) Middle School principal recommended in 1988 that the novel be removed from the school library shelves because it was “inappropriate” for middle school readers.

In 1990, Methodist minister R. Lee Smith demanded that the novel be suspended from the required reading list for the ninth-grade class in Woodsville High School in Haverhill, New Hampshire, and the school superintendent withdrew the book from use until a district committee could meet. The novel had been on the required reading list for 13 years at the time of the challenge. At the first school board meeting, the minister identified numerous passages from the novel containing expletives, references to masturbation and sexual fantasies, and derogatory characterizations of a teacher. After consideration, the superintendent and the school board removed the novel from the required reading list. Similar charges were cited that same year when the novel was challenged in the Harwinton and Burlington, Connecticut, schools, where parents charged that it contained subject matter that set bad examples and gave students negative views on life.

In 1991, a minister in Paola, Kansas, joined the parent of a child in the school system to protest the use of *The Chocolate War* as part of the ninth-grade curriculum. The challengers charged that the novel contained curse

words and depicted sexual desires. A review committee, appointed to study the issue, recommended that the novel be retained, and the school board voted 4-3 to affirm the decision of the review committee. The board also reaffirmed its policy of offering an alternative reading assignment to students who objected. That same year, a seventh-grade language arts teacher in Augusta, Maine, requested that the novel be removed from the middle school library and placed in the high school, alleging that the novel lacked positive role models and that it had an unhappy ending. The district superintendent followed the recommendation of a district review committee to retain the book in the middle school library.

Parents of eighth-grade students in New Milford, Connecticut, challenged the inclusion of the novel on the required reading list in 1992, citing negativism, as well as vulgar language, sexual references, and violence that are harmful to students. The assistant superintendent defended the novel and a language arts coordinator supported inclusion of the book as a means of helping eighth-grade students to deal with peer pressure. A districtwide review committee recommended that the novel be retained but at a higher grade level. The suggestion was countered by parents who opposed the book ban and who claimed that the book addressed issues that were important to middle school children's lives. After hearing discussion, the school board voted 9-1 to retain *The Chocolate War* on the required reading list.

A 1993 challenge to the novel in the Kyrene, Arizona, elementary schools identified the masturbation scene as the sole basis for requesting removal of the novel. The novel was temporarily removed from the 10th-grade reading list at Hephzibah High School in Augusta, Georgia, after a parent complained, "I don't see anything educational about that book. If they ever send a book like that home with one of my daughters again I will personally burn it and throw the ashes on the principal's desk." In 1994, critics identified recurring themes of rape, masturbation, violence, and degrading treatment of women in their challenge to the appearance of the novel on the required reading list in the Hudson Falls, New York, schools.

In 2001, parents of students attending Dunedin Highland Middle School in St. Petersburg, Florida, submitted a complaint to school district officials objecting to the use of the novel in the middle school curriculum. They expressed concerns regarding profanity in the book and scenes that contain sexual fantasy and references to masturbation. The complaint also asserted that the book contains segments that degrade women and girls.

In 2002, *The Chocolate War* was challenged in Fairfax County, Virginia, by parents Richard and Alice Ess, who are members of Parents Against Bad Books in Schools (PABBIS). The group complained that the book contains "profanity and descriptions of drug abuse, sexually explicit conduct, and torture" and asked the school district to remove the novel from the school district libraries. The school board reviewed the complaint and decided in a 7-4 vote to retain the novel in only one of the seven elementary school libraries, the Halley Elementary School.

In May 2005, the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* of the American Library Association announced that *The Chocolate War* “tops the list of the most challenged books of 2004.”

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A CLOCKWORK ORANGE

Author: Anthony Burgess (John Anthony Burgess Wilson)
Original date and place of publication: 1962, United Kingdom
Original publisher: William Heinemann Ltd.
Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

A Clockwork Orange is a futuristic warning against both mindless violence and the mechanical reconditioning that is often proposed as society's solution to its ills. It offers a horrifying view of a future England in which gangs of hoodlums, or “droogs,” roam the streets freely, robbing, fighting, raping, and consuming illegal drugs and alcohol. Society is limp and listless, a socialist world in which no one reads anymore, despite streets named Amis Avenue and Priestley Place. The teenage language, “Nadsat,” consists largely of English mixed with Russian and quasi-Russian words, and the current music star is a “Russky” singer named Jonny Zhivago. The rule of society is that everyone “not a child nor with child nor ill” must work, yet the prisons are overcrowded and officials work to rehabilitate criminals to make room for the large number of expected political prisoners. Even with regular elections and opposition, the people continue to reelect the current government.

Alex, the 15-year-old cocky and self-indulgent main character, is both a product of and a reason for the continued breakdown of social institutions. Deteriorating urban life, ineffective law enforcement, the failure of officials to create order from the chaos, and sexual violence characterize this world, in which social ills perpetuate the violent behavior and prevent cohesion. It is a nightmarish place in which the droogs drive over a big, snarling, toothy thing and “odd squealing things” in the road throughout the night, accompanied by screams and squelches. The young hoodlums drink doped milk, and before committing robberies Alex and his fellow droogs put on their “maskies,” faces of historical personalities: Disraeli, Elvis Presley, Henry VIII, and “Peebee” Shelley. Women exist for the droogs only as objects of rape and other violence, and sex has also taken on a mechanical characteristic that is reinforced by the term to describe the sex act, “the old in-out in-out.” Even classical music, usually viewed as a sign of civilized taste, gains a new character in the novel. Symphonic music is Alex’s passion, and he retreats frequently to his speaker-filled room to lie naked on his bed and listen to the music of Mozart, Beethoven, or Bach. As the music swells, he fantasizes about raping and terrorizing young girls and grinding his boot heel into the faces of helpless victims.

The novel is divided into three parts. In the first part, Alex simply does whatever he wants without guilt or concern for others, and he experiences joy in violence of every kind, from destruction or theft of objects to every form of sexual and nonsexual assault. He is free to choose whatever pleasures he desires, however destructive to society they might be. However, because his choices are harmful, society asserts its right to deprive Alex of his freedom. Sentenced to 14 years for the murder of an old woman during a burglary, Alex is placed into prison, where he kills a fellow inmate. This ushers in the second part of the novel. The murder focuses attention on him and makes him the likely choice for an experimental treatment that will leave him “transformed out of all recognition” and make him unable to choose any socially deleterious course of action afterward. In essence, he is injected with a drug, strapped into a chair, and forced to watch films of Japanese and Nazi atrocities during World War II, as well as specially made films that combine with the drug to condition him against all thoughts of violence. His progress is measured with electronic devices that are wired to his body. The conditioning works, and the doctors declare Alex cured of his violent desires and now “your true Christian . . . ready to turn the other cheek, ready to be crucified rather than crucify, sick to the very heart at the thought even of killing a fly.”

In the third part of the novel, the rehabilitated Alex, now a harmless citizen, returns home to find that his parents have rented out his room to a lodger and that his stereo equipment has been confiscated by the police and sold to provide food for the cats of the woman he murdered. He is attacked by a group of old men whom he had victimized earlier, then rescued by three policemen, two of whom are former gang members who tell him that the

government has been cleaning up the streets and hiring former hoodlums as police. Rather than help Alex, they beat him severely, leaving him to crawl to a nearby cottage. There, he is bandaged and fed by a man whom he had once attacked and whose wife he had brutally raped and beaten, but the man does not recognize him at first. Instead, F. Alexander sees in Alex an opportunity for propaganda against the government. Professing that “a man who cannot choose ceases to be a man,” he calls together his friends but soon realizes that Alex is his wife’s murderer. He tortures Alex by playing symphonic music loudly, and Alex tries to commit suicide by jumping out a window. Days later, he awakens in the hospital, completely swathed in bandages, and realizes that he has regained his violent nature. The doctors and government officials are happy because they are now free of the charges that they had perpetrated a criminal reform scheme and violated Alex’s rights. While he was in a coma, they used “deep hypnopaedia or some such slovo” to restore his former depraved nature and his appetites for Beethoven and violence. As the old thoughts of violence fill Alex’s head, he declares himself “cured all right.”

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

A Clockwork Orange has motivated debate since its publication, and the controversy has centered on the language of the book as well as on the brutality and sexual violence of the first third of the novel. In 1973, a book dealer in Orem, Utah, was arrested for selling three purportedly obscene books: *Last Tango in Paris* by Robert Ailey, *The Idolators* by William Hegner, and *A Clockwork Orange*. Using the 1973 Supreme Court “local standards” decision, *Miller v. California* (June 21, 1973), the town passed a very specific obscenity ordinance under which police charged bookstore owner Carole Grant. The charges were later dropped, but Grant was forced to close the store and relocate to another city.

In Aurora, Colorado, in 1976, the school board at a regularly scheduled meeting approved 1,275 books for use in the high school, but they disapproved *A Clockwork Orange* and the following nine books: *The Exorcist* by William P. Blatty, *The Reincarnation of Peter Proud* by Max Ehrlich, *New American Poetry 1945–1960* by Donald Allen, *Starting from San Francisco* by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, *The Yage Letters* by William Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg, *Coney Island of the Mind* by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, *Kaddish and Other Poems, 1958–1960* by Allen Ginsberg, *Lunch Poems* by Frank O’Hara, and *Rosemary’s Baby* by Ira Levin. The books had already been included by teachers in their course reading lists, but on January 13, 1976, the school board issued a statement to teachers directing that the books “will not be purchased, nor used for class assignment, nor will an individual be given credit for reading any of these books.” The school board did not rule that the books were legally obscene nor did it remove the books from the school libraries. The teachers challenged the decision of the board, and the case went to court, where, in *Bob Cary, et al. v. Board of Education of Adams-Arapahoe School District 28-J*,

Aurora, Colorado, 427 F. Supp. 945, 952 (D. Colo. 1977), they argued that the decision had impinged on their academic freedom. In his decision, Judge Matsch observed that the board had committed itself to offering students “an opportunity to engage actively in the free exchange of ideas” by offering the courses as electives. He stated, “It is enough to conclude that having granted both teachers and students the freedom to explore contemporary literature in these high school classes, the school board may not now impose its value judgments on the literature they choose to consider.” Despite his stated position, the judge was forced to rule against the teachers because the teachers had bargained away their rights to academic freedom in this matter with a specific clause in their master contract.

In Westport, Connecticut, in 1977, parents approached members of the school board to protest the use of the novel in the high school classroom. They cited “objectionable” language in their complaints. The work was removed from the classroom. In Anniston, Alabama, in 1982, protests resulted in the temporary removal of the novel from the school libraries, but the work was later reinstated with the restriction that students would need parental permission to take out the book.

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THE COLOR PURPLE

Author: Alice Walker

Original date and place of publication: 1982, United States

Original publisher: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

The Color Purple, winner of the 1983 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the American Book Award, is composed of personal letters written by the main character, Celie, to God and to her sister Nettie. Written in the vernacular of poor Southern African Americans, the letters allow Celie to tell the story in her own words and permit the author to describe the community of women who support and eventually rescue each other from the restrictions placed on them by society.

The primary setting of the novel is Georgia in the years between World War I and World War II. The novel opens with the first letter written to God by 14-year-old Celie, the victim of continual sexual abuse by her stepfather Alphonso, whom she and her sister call "Pa" and whom they believe to be their natural father. When he first rapes her, he tells her to tell no one but God, and so begin her tragic and painful letters. Poor, uneducated, and unattractive as Celie believes herself to be, she finds no means of preventing the abuse to herself, but she strives to protect her younger sister, Nettie, from becoming a victim. Celie's two children born of the sexual abuse by her stepfather are taken from her and adopted by missionaries bound for Africa, a couple who also befriend Nettie and take her with them. Soon after, Celie is forced into a harsh and poverty-stricken marriage with Albert, a much older widower who mistreats her, leaving her letters to God and to Nettie as her only comfort. She never receives Nettie's responses because Albert hides the letters for years.

Victimized by men and by the failure to resist her ill treatment, Celie can conceive of no other life and views herself as ugly, talentless, and insignificant until the beautiful, sensual, confident, and independent Shug Avery enters her life. Albert's former lover and the mother of three of his children years earlier, Shug is a flamboyant blues singer. She returns as Albert's lover, then becomes Celie's lover, awakening her to experience love for the first time and to truly value her body and her talents. After learning that Albert has hidden her sister's letters for years, Celie leaves Albert to live with Shug and discovers her creative talent as she begins a pants company in Memphis. Years later, having become a confident and valued human being, Celie returns to Georgia to claim her family home. Her sister Nettie returns from Africa with Celie's children, and the family celebrates the survival of the human spirit.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel has been criticized for including such taboo themes as incest, birth of children outside of marriage, rape, sexual pleasure, and lesbian activity. Aggressive Shug Avery has not only given birth to three children outside of marriage, but she later becomes sexually intimate with both her former lover and his present wife, Celie. Critics of her behavior emphasize that she shows no remorse for her moral transgressions and, instead, exhibits daring boldness in her pleasure seeking. Some members of the African-American community find the novel insulting to African-American males with its emphasis on Celie's sexual abuse by her stepfather and her physical abuse at the hands of her husband. Parents have also objected to the lesbian theme within the novel, claiming that the book would not have been acceptable for use in schools had the lesbian characters been white. In only rare instances have critics challenged the book for its language, but those who have cite the several instances in which such terms as *tits* and *pussy* appear as the cause of their objections.

The novel was first challenged in 1984, when parents of students in the Oakland (California) High School honors English class complained that the book was inappropriate reading because of its “sexual and social explicitness,” especially its “troubling ideas about race relations . . . and human sexuality.” The book was removed from the classroom, pending review by the Oakland board of education. After nine months of discussion, the board reluctantly gave approval for use of the book in the honors curriculum. The following year, school trustees in Hayward, California, rejected a purchase order for copies of the novel based on their views that it contained “rough language” and “explicit sex scenes.” In 1986, school librarians in Newport News, Virginia, removed the novel from the open shelves because of its “profanity and sexual references.” The work was made available only to individuals over age 18 or to students who provided written permission from their parents. In 1989, a challenge was raised at the Saginaw (Michigan) Public Library, on the charge that the book was “too sexually graphic for a 12-year-old,” but the challenge failed, and the book remained on the open shelves. The novel was also challenged but remained in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in 1989, when it appeared as a summer youth program reading assignment.

Challenges to *The Color Purple* continued into the 1990s. A parent in Ten Sleep, Wyoming, complained in 1990 about the inclusion of the book as an optional reading assignment for a sophomore English class. The superintendent of schools refused to remove the book and, instead, reminded parents that the students had numerous alternative readings from which to choose. That same year, parents in Tyrone, Pennsylvania, objected to the inclusion of the novel on a high school supplementary reading list. They found the language and the sexual activity embarrassing. The school board formed a committee to review guidelines for reading lists and to set standards for material that did not appear on approved curriculum lists. Parents of students in New Bern (North Carolina) High School raised objections to the novel, one of the 10th-grade reading assignments, after they read the passage in which Celie is raped by her stepfather. The high school principal appointed a review committee and allowed parents to select another book for their children. The review committee created restrictions that determined how the novel would be taught to future students. Also in 1992, the novel was banned from the Souderton (Pennsylvania) Area School District 10th-grade reading lists, when parents protested that the language and sexual situations of the novel made it more “smut” than literature.

The Los Angeles Times reported that many of the parents were believed to be members of religious organizations. Parents called for the resignation of Marion Dugan, director of curriculum, because she supported retention of the book, although after a long defense she retained her job.

In 2001, the *Atlanta Constitution* reported that *The Color Purple* had been removed from the Accelerated Reader Program in Cobb County in metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia. Until April 2001, the novel was recommended for reading by children as young as 11 in the reading program that encouraged

younger students to read material with mature content aimed at teenage readers. Angry parents contacted Cobb County school officials and insisted on removal of the book because of the sexually explicit situations and the incidents of incest that occur. Pam McClure, the parent who led the challenge against the novel, told reporters, "The topic of incest was not appropriate . . . Sexually explicit situations—not appropriate."

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CUJO

Author: Stephen King

Original date and place of publication: 1981, United States

Original publisher: Viking Press

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Cujo is the story of a 200-pound Saint Bernard, a placid and typical "good dog" who becomes a source of terror to the family that loves him and to the inhabitants of the small town of Castle Rock, Maine. The Camber family pet, Cujo is the best friend of 10-year-old Brett Camber. The dog is bitten by rabid bats when he bolts into a cave while chasing rabbits. As Cujo slowly and painfully succumbs to rabies, King introduces his readers to the inhabitants of Castle Rock, some of whom will be attacked violently by Cujo and die.

Joe Camber, an auto mechanic and an abusive husband, makes a strong effort to indoctrinate his son Brett in his brutal ways, an effort that his wife, Charity, tries to counteract. Vic Trenton, a New York advertising executive who has moved with his wife, Donna, and son, Tad, to enjoy the peaceful Maine surroundings, strives to keep his marriage together even as Donna has an affair with local poet Steve Kemp, who cannot resist writing to Vic, "I enjoyed fucking the shit out of her." After receiving the note, Vic imagines their sexual encounter in detail. Aunt Evie, at 93 the oldest inhabitant, foretells the weather and has been labeled "that old loudmouth bitch" by postman George Meara, who is called "an old fart" by Aunt Evie. Gary Pervier, "meaner than a bull with a jackhandle up its ass," turned his Distinguished Service Cross into an ashtray in 1968. When hippies sought him out to tell him that he was "too fucking much," Gary threatened them with his rifle, for he considered them "a bunch of long-haired muff-diving crab-crawling asshole pinko fucksticks" and "told them he didn't give a shit if he blew their guts from Castle Rock to Fryeburg." The novel also contains "country club cunts" and several characters who routinely tell each other, "Fuck you."

Tad Trenton begins to see a monster in his closet each night soon after Cujo is bitten, and the two events are left for the reader to connect as representative of the evil that pervades ordinary life. The monster, "its eyes amber-glowing pits" that seem to follow him, frightens him and leaves "his scrotum crawling." He hears the monster's "purring growl" and smells "its sweet carrion breath." The monster disappears when Tad's parents enter the room but reappears after they leave and warns Tad that his name "was Frank Dodd once, and I killed the ladies and maybe I ate them, too." He also warns Tad that someday soon he will pounce on the little boy and eat him.

The narrative continues, lapsing occasionally into Cujo's consciousness as he relates his physical deterioration, notes his muscle aches and festering muzzle, and puzzles over his growing desire to kill the humans around him. The suspense builds with each kill, until Cujo traps Donna and Tad in their car, which she has taken to Camber's garage for repairs. For nearly two days, Donna struggles to keep her son safe from Cujo until she is forced into a physical confrontation with the dog and eventually kills him, using a baseball bat as her defense. Donna survives, although her deep bites bleed profusely and she must be treated for rabies, but Tad dies of dehydration despite her efforts to save him. As the novel ends, Vic and Donna reconcile, and Charity and Brett Camber begin a new life, free of Joe's brutality.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Many works written by Stephen King have been challenged or removed from school and community libraries, including: *Carrie*, *CHRISTINE*, *The Dark Half*, *The Dead Zone*, *Different Seasons*, *The Drawing of the Three*, *The Eyes of the Dragon*, *Firestarter*, *Four Past Midnight*, *It*, *Night Shift*, *Pet Semetary*, *'Salem's Lot*, *The Shining*, *The Skeleton Crew*, *The Stand*, *The Talisman*, *Thinner*, and

The Tommyknockers. The most frequently challenged of King's works is *Cujo*, which has been charged with "age inappropriateness," "unacceptable language," and being "violent."

In 1984, parents of students in the Rankin County (Mississippi) School District challenged the appearance of the novel in the school libraries, claiming that it is "profane and sexually objectionable." The school board voted to retain the book in the libraries. In 1985, the novel was removed from the high school library in Bradford, New York, after parents complained that it is "a bunch of garbage." Also in 1985, the school trustees in Hayward, California, refused to approve a purchase order for the book because of the "rough language" and "explicit sex scenes." That same year, the Washington County, Alabama, board of education made a unanimous decision to remove the novel from all school libraries in the county, based on their perception that the novel contains "unacceptable language" and is "pornographic." In 1987, school officials removed the novel from the high school library after parents in Durand, Wisconsin, objected to it because of "violence" and "inappropriate language." The school board appointed a nine-member panel composed of school personnel and community members to review the book, and the issue was not pursued further.

In 1992, parents complained to the school superintendent in Peru, Indiana, that the novel and two other King novels, *The Dead Zone* and *Christine*, contained "filthy language" and were "not suitable for high school students," and they asked for its removal. The superintendent recommended to the school board that the novels be kept in the school library and made available to students who have parental permission. The school board refused to consider the suggestion and voted 5-1 to ban the books entirely from the high school library. Also in 1992, parents of middle school students in South Portland, Maine, requested that the school board remove the novel from the middle school library because of its "profanity" and sexual references. A review committee appointed by the school board to consider the request recommended its retention in the library collection. That same year, parents of students in Sparta, Illinois, appeared before the board of education and requested the removal of all books by Stephen King from the school libraries, claiming they are "violent" and "contain sex and explicit language." The board honored the parents' request to bar their children from using the book but refused to ban the books.

In 1994, a local minister and a school board member in Bismarck, North Dakota, claimed that *Cujo* and eight other King novels (*Carrie*, *Christine*, *The Dead Zone*, *The Drawing of the Three*, *The Eyes of the Dragon*, *Pet Sematary*, *The Shining*, and *Thinner*) should be removed from the school libraries. They challenged the novel on grounds of "age appropriateness."

In October 1998, the West Hernando Middle School in Brooksville, Florida, removed the novel from general circulation and placed it into the restricted access area. The move came after several parents complained that the book contained vivid descriptions of sex and profanity.

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DADDY'S ROOMMATE

Author: Michael Willhoite

Original date and place of publication: 1990, United States

Original publisher: Alyson Publications

Literary form: Children's book

SUMMARY

Daddy's Roommate is one of the first children's books to deal openly with the topic of homosexual male parents. Brightly illustrated with only one brief, straightforward sentence on each page, the book relates the story of a young boy whose parents divorce. The young narrator visits his father and meets his father's roommate. The reader learns that the little boy's father and roommate work, eat, sleep, shave, and sometimes even fight together but always make up. Both men act as fathers, and the three enjoy days at the zoo, baseball games, and the beach.

Near the end of the book, the narrator states to readers that "Mommy says Daddy and Frank are gay." Because he doesn't know what that means, his mother explains that "Being gay is just one more kind of love." Another illustration shows Frank and the father barefoot and curled up on the couch watching television, accompanied by the line, "Daddy and his roommate are very happy together." The book ends with the narrator stating, "And I'm happy too!" as he stands between Frank and his father in line at the movies.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Daddy's Roommate has been challenged repeatedly since its first appearance for reasons that range from a criticism of its language as "age inappropri-

ate” to the charge that it is an indoctrination of children into the lesbian/gay lifestyle.

In 1992, nine incidents involving the book were recorded by the American Library Association. Bay Ridge School Board in Brooklyn, New York, removed this book and *HEATHER HAS TWO MOMMIES*, a book about lesbian parenting, from the district’s grade-school curriculum. The books had been included in the optional reading list for first-grade students, but the school board president decided after reviewing the books that certain words in the work were “age inappropriate.”

Patrons of Timberland Regional Libraries in Olympia, Washington, challenged the book, claiming that it was “offensive” and “promotes homosexuality,” but it was retained. Despite challenges by patrons of Roswell (New Mexico) Public Library and the Dauphin County (Pennsylvania) Library System that the intent of the book was “indoctrination into a gay lifestyle,” the book was retained in both library collections. Patrons of public libraries in Goldsboro, North Carolina; Grand Prairie, Texas; and Tillamook, Oregon, asserted in their separate challenges that the book “promotes a dangerous and ungodly lifestyle from which children must be protected,” but the named libraries retained the book.

A well-organized and well-orchestrated challenge to the book occurred in Gwinnett County, Georgia, where objectors submitted increasingly numerous complaints to the Lake Lanier Regional Library System. The complaints were followed by two petitions, one with 150 names and another with 200. Despite the pressure to remove the book from the library collection, the library staff chose to retain it. The challengers then requested a review of the book by the library board, which voted to remove it from open shelves and to place it behind the circulation desk, where it would be available to patrons who requested it. In explaining the decision, the board president stated that “it might be damaging to a three- to seven-year-old who might get the wrong idea. . . . Homosexuality is something we have to deal with in our lifetime, and we don’t want to be censors, but maybe a little restriction.”

Three challenges to *Daddy’s Roommate* in 1992 included objections to *Heather Has Two Mommies*. The challenge at Fayetteville (North Carolina) County Library was particularly risky to the future funding of the library. Six members of a Right-to-Life group submitted separate objections to the books and a petition. The library held a public hearing at which protesters, one of whom admitted that she had never seen the books, heatedly denounced the books and stated that “anything that promotes or teaches homosexuality is decaying the minds of children.” Despite the vehement objections, the library board voted unanimously to keep the books in the children’s section. One trustee observed that a ban of the books may have satisfied the objectors, but it would have “probably infuriated many and violated the rights of all.” The decision was announced shortly before the city was to vote on a bond issue to finance the library system. The protesters retaliated by organizing a campaign to defeat the bond issue, claiming in their propaganda that the library

system “encourages young children to affirm and endorse conduct or a ‘life style’ that leads to untimely death and serves no biological utility.” Unlike the strong support shown for the library in earlier years, only a small majority passed the bond issue.

When the public library in Springfield, Oregon, received donations of *Daddy's Roommate* and *Heather Has Two Mommies*, the children's librarian was forced to decide if inclusion of the books in the library collection would violate a recently passed city charter amendment that prohibited the city from “promoting, encouraging or facilitating” homosexuality. The Oregon Citizens Alliance (OCA), the group that had spearheaded the amendment, warned the library that if either book were to be placed in the library, they would “do everything they can to get it out of there.” A representative from the local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union warned the library that if it rejected the books solely because they violated the city charter amendment, they would file suit. The librarian applied the standard library selection guidelines to the books, and they were eventually retained over the protests of the OCA.

Daddy's Roommate and *Heather Has Two Mommies* were also challenged in Elizabethtown, North Carolina, by members of the Bladen Coalition of Christians who approached the Bladen County Commission to prevent the librarian from placing the newly purchased books in the county library. Labeling the books as “wicked, seditious, and dangerous,” the protesters demanded their elimination and the appointment of a committee that would include members of their coalition to create new library book selection guidelines. The books were placed in the adult section of the library.

The book faced an increased number of challenges in 1993, making it the most challenged book of the year. After objections from patrons, the book was moved from the children's section to the adult shelves in Manatee (Florida) Public Library and Mercer County Library System in Lawrence, New Jersey.

In Mesa, Arizona, a patron of the public library challenged the book because it “is vile, sick and goes against every law and constitution,” but it was retained. It was challenged but retained at Alachua County Library in High Springs, Florida; Seekonk (Massachusetts) Public Library; North Brunswick (New Jersey) Public Library; Cumberland County (North Carolina) Public Library; Chattanooga-Hamilton County (Tennessee) Bicentennial Library; Wicomico County Free County Library in Salisbury, Maryland; Sussex (Wisconsin) Public Library; Dayton and Montgomery County (Ohio) Public Library; and Juneau, Alaska, school libraries. The book was also challenged but retained as a reading in the curriculum in Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eden (Minnesota) School District.

In 1994, officials of the Lane County Head Start program in Cottage Grove, Oregon, removed *Daddy's Roommate* and *Heather Has Two Mommies* from its antibias curriculum after receiving complaints from parents. Challenged as being a “skillful presentation to the young child about lesbianism/

homosexuality,” the books were, nonetheless, retained by Chandler (Arizona) Public Library. In Fort Worth, Texas, however, the book was removed from the children’s section and not relocated within the public library after critics charged that the book “legitimizes gay relationships.”

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A DAY NO PIGS WOULD DIE

Author: Robert Newton Peck

Original date and place of publication: 1972, United States

Original publisher: Alfred A. Knopf

Literary form: Young adult novel

SUMMARY

A Day No Pigs Would Die is an autobiographical novel about a predominantly Shaker community in 1920s rural Vermont, during the year the author, as a young farm boy, is forced to grow from a 12-year-old child into a 13-year-old man. The novel opens with a bloody and graphic description of a cow giving birth. Rob, who has skipped school, sees her agony and goes to her aid. She nearly kills him, but the bull calves live, and he is rewarded with a piglet that he names Pinky.

Rob’s father, Haven, is the community pig slaughterer, an uneducated farmer who wants more for his son. Although the Peck family doesn’t follow the Shaker way, the Shakers respect Haven, who, in turn, inculcates strong values and a respect for all living creatures into Rob. This respect contains a tolerance for human error, for the community members are imperfect but decent people. Widow Bascom is said to be “carrying on” with her young

hired man, Ira Long, whom she later marries. Sebring Hillman had a child with Haven's cousin Letty years earlier when she cared for his ill wife, and he is tormented with guilt over her murder of the infant and her suicide. One night, Hillman digs up the baby's grave and takes the small coffin to bury in his family plot, a move that seems just to Haven and Rob. Rob uses "damn" and "hell" occasionally, and his father reprimands him. Even Haven is fallible. When he captures a weasel that had been killing his chickens, he invites Ira Long to test the weasel-killing instincts of his "bitch terrier," Hussy, by placing the two in a barrel with the lid on. Hussy kills the weasel, but she is badly injured, and they must kill her. Haven decides never to allow that again, no matter how many chickens are killed.

Rob looks forward to breeding Pinky and marketing her offspring. She is mated several times with the neighbor's prize boar, beginning with one violent confrontation in which she fights but is unable to escape. "He was bigger and stronger and ten times meaner than Pinky. And so he had his way with her. All the time he was breeding into her, she squealed like her throat had been cut. Every breath. She just squealed like crying, and wouldn't stop." Afterward, Pinky's rump is bruised, blood runs down her leg and her body shakes violently. For all their efforts, Pinky is barren, and Rob must concede that they cannot afford to keep her and must slaughter her for food.

Haven dies after a winter of ill health, and Rob must run the farm for his mother and great-aunt Carrie. He makes the funeral arrangements, speaks the eulogy, and leads the mourners to the orchard to bury his father. He is keenly aware of his new responsibilities as the novel ends.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel had been in classrooms and libraries for more than a decade before the first objections to content and language appeared. The objections have ranged from concern about the language to objections to the "violence" and "cruelty" of the weasel killing and hog slaughtering to the "graphic sexuality" of the descriptive passage in which Rob's pet sow is mated with a neighbor's boar.

In 1988, parents of students in the Jefferson County, Colorado, school district challenged the book and asked for its removal from the school libraries. They claimed that it was "bigoted against Baptists and women and depicts violence, hatred, animal cruelty, and murder." The school board reviewed their request and voted to retain the book. In 1990, the book was challenged but retained in the Harwinton and Burlington, Connecticut, schools where parents had raised objections to the use of the book in the school curriculum because of its "inappropriate language and subject matter that set bad examples and give students negative views of life."

In Carbondale, Illinois, in 1991, the parent of a ninth-grade student challenged the use of the book in the classroom and its inclusion in the school library. The concern centered on the use of profanity in the book. The school

board convened a review committee to consider the challenge, but the parent who complained did not appear at the hearing, so the board voided the complaint. The following year, several parents of students in a Califon, New Jersey, sixth-grade reading class demanded the removal of the book from the curriculum, asserting that it described violence to animals and “graphic depictions of animals mating.” A review committee established by the school board recommended retention of the book, and the school board unanimously agreed.

In 1993, parents of students attending Sherwood Elementary School in Melbourne, Florida, challenged use of the book in the classroom, stating that it could give students the “impression that rape and violence are acceptable.” Their concerns centered on the scene in which Pinky fights being mated. The book was retained. The novel was also challenged but retained in the school libraries in Waupaca, Wisconsin, in 1994, despite parents’ objections to “graphic passages with sexuality in the book.” That same year, the novel was removed from the seventh-grade classroom of Payson (Utah) Middle School after parents complained that they “had problems with language, with animal breeding, and with a scene that involves an infant grave exhumation.”

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DELIVERANCE

Author: James Dickey

Original date and place of publication: 1970, United States

Original publisher: Houghton Mifflin Company

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Deliverance is a stark novel that follows the adventures of four men from the city who embark on a three-day canoe trip into a wild and savage backwoods area of Georgia. Presented in journal form, the novel documents the self-awareness and reality that confront these men on September 14, 15, and 16 of an unidentified year, as well as their efforts to come to terms with the savage environment and find strengths to cope with the dangers that the environment poses.

The four men are individually introduced to the reader in the first section, "Before." Ed Gentry, part owner of a graphics studio, is the narrator and one of the two characters who prove themselves able to deal effectively with the brutal wilderness. The other survivor is Lewis Medlock, a champion archer who owns rental property in the city. The two weaker members of the party are Bobby Trippe, a mutual funds salesman, and Drew Ballinger, sales supervisor for a soft-drink company. The first third of the novel creates a lulling effect for the reader, who learns the reasons why each man feels the need to test his civilized self against the uncivilized environment. The second part of the novel begins abruptly as survival becomes an immediate concern. Events occur in quick succession, as one member of the group, Drew, is killed in an accident, another, Lewis, breaks his leg, and the two remaining members of the group, Bobby and Ed, are confronted by two brutal backwoods-men who try to force them to commit homosexual acts. Ed succeeds in his struggle against his attacker, but Bobby is ineffective and is sodomized. The author makes this scene a confrontation between the civilized and the bestial and shows Bobby as a man so emasculated by society that he can only succumb when attacked.

In the final third of the novel, the reader learns the permanent effect of the trip on the surviving members. Ed has recognized his ability to deal with a hostile environment, so he can now accept his civilized life without further need to test himself. Lewis, whose broken leg had forced him to give up his leadership role to Ed, has learned to put aside his former proud and defiant attitude in favor of becoming more in touch with life. Bobby's new awareness is tragic, for he feels dehumanized and recognizes that he is unable to cope with elements outside the city.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Deliverance has been challenged by parents, teachers, school board members, and concerned citizens who have determined that it is an unsuitable text for several reasons, most prominently the homosexual rape scene. Complaints have been made against the language, claiming that it contained "unacceptable sexual references," "vulgar language," and "subject matter inappropriate for use in school." Parents have lodged stronger complaints against the rape scene, claiming that this made the book nothing more than "pornography and filth" and that it "promotes homosexuality." In several instances, questions have arisen regarding the brutality of the sodomy scene and the need to relegate use of the book to older high school students.

In 1974, parents in Montgomery County, Maryland, challenged the use of the novel as a required reading in the classroom and called for its immediate removal from both the classroom and the school library. In a presentation to the district board of education, challengers asserted that the novel employed "gutter language" and that it depicted "perverted acts." The decision was to

offer an alternative reading to students, and the book was removed from the school library but later returned.

Similar complaints surfaced in 1993, voiced by parents of students at Hughes Junior High School in Bismarck, North Dakota. Basing their challenge on passages that they viewed as “obscene,” “pornographic,” and “filthy,” parents protested that the novel was inappropriate for junior high school students. After consideration, the school board agreed and removed the novel both from classroom use and from the junior high school library. Copies of the book remained in use at the high school level.

The most extensive challenge to the novel occurred in 1973, in Drake, North Dakota, where the school board acted on parent complaints to remove *Deliverance*, Kurt Vonnegut’s *SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE*, and a collection of short stories by Hemingway, Faulkner, Steinbeck, Conrad, and other writers. The English teacher, who was later fired, assigned the books “to get the kids to think clearly about current problems.” He defended his choices, noting that “a few four-letter words in a book is no big deal. These people have all heard these words before; none learned any new words. I’ve always thought the purpose of school is to prepare these people for the ‘big, bad world,’ but it evidently isn’t so.” None of the school board members had read the books, but based on parents’ complaints, they decided that the books were “dirty.”

The board ordered that the books be confiscated from students and burned, although only copies of *Slaughterhouse-Five* were destroyed. The school officials had planned to burn the other two books in equally public incidents but decided against doing so when their burning of the first book attracted nationwide attention, making people in Drake “sick and tired of all this publicity.” The school superintendent defended the action of the board, claiming that he did not regret the action, only all of the publicity that it garnered. The English teacher was fired at the end of the school year, but the American Civil Liberties Union filed a suit on his behalf against the school district. The suit resulted in an out-of-court settlement in which the teacher was awarded \$5,000 and the school board was ordered not to denigrate the teacher’s performance either orally or in writing. Further, the settlement provided that teachers in the high school may use the three books in their junior- and senior-level classes.

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A DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN SLANG

Editors: Harold Wentworth and Stuart Berg Flexner

Original date and place of publication: 1960, United States

Original publisher: T. Y. Crowell

Literary form: Reference

DICTIONARY OF SLANG AND UNCONVENTIONAL ENGLISH

Editor: Eric Partridge

Original date and place of publication: 1970, United States

Original publisher: Macmillan

Literary form: Reference

NEW DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN SLANG

Editor: Robert L. Chapman

Original date and place of publication: 1986, United States

Original publisher: Harper and Row

Literary form: Reference

SUMMARY

These works are compilations of words and meanings that illuminate the colloquial underpinnings of the American language; many are not found in standard dictionaries. Included are slang terms created by members of a range of subcultures, such as the underworld, the military, industry, law enforcement, show business, sports, various occupational and age groups, as well as the slang of talk shows, technology, and different sexual orientations. Some terms have sexual associations, and others give offense because of the challenge they represent to traditional speech. Included are words that are commonly labeled as “vulgar,” “obscene,” or “dirty.”

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

In 1963, Max Rafferty, the superintendent of public instruction in California, determined that among the approximately 8,000 entries contained in *A Dictionary of American Slang*, there were 150 “dirty” passages that made the book obscene. He suggested those passages necessitated “a little bit of censorship,” removal of the book from libraries, and supporters in many communities agreed. The book was banned in Costa Mesa and Newport Beach and removed from library shelves in other communities throughout the state, but

most libraries decided to keep the dictionary on a separate shelf for restricted use by “serious” students.

In 1979, a parent in Stuart (Florida) Middle School complained to school officials that the book was obscene. When other parents joined in the complaint, the school returned the book to the publisher. In 1981, the dictionary was removed from the Westminster County (Colorado) elementary and secondary school libraries after parents, members of the John Birch Society, and administrators labeled it obscene.

The *Dictionary of American Slang and Unconventional English* became the target of censors in 1973, when the Citizens Commission on Education challenged the Pinellas County (Florida) school board to explain the inclusion of the reference work in the high school libraries. The chair of the commission claimed that the book was responsible for encouraging students to use profanity and blamed the book for the 696 students suspended on that charge in recent years. School officials rebuffed the complaints and retained the book with the claim that to remove the book would be an infringement of students’ right to read.

The *New Dictionary of American Slang*, an updated version of *A Dictionary of American Slang*, was challenged for use in Walled Lake School District in Commerce Township, Michigan, in 1994. Parents approached the school board and complained that the book contained profanity. School officials decided to restrict use of the reference work and labeled it with the following warning: “This book contains words which might be offensive to the reader.”

FURTHER READING

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DOCTOR DOLITTLE (SERIES)

Author: Hugh John Lofting

Original date and place of publication: 1920, United States (first volume of series)

Original publisher: J. B. Lippincott Company

Literary form: Children’s fiction

SUMMARY

“Doctor Dolittle” is a series of 12 volumes recounting the adventures of an English village doctor, John Dolittle, M.D., who loves animals so much that he gives up his human medical practice to devote himself to them. He is

unique among men because he learns to understand and speak animal languages, and his compassion for animals takes him on adventures from his village of Puddleby-on-the-Marsh to strange continents and secret lakes, even to the moon on the back of a giant moth. His domestic menagerie of talking animals includes Dab-Dab, the duck who is his housekeeper; Jip, his loyal dog; Polynesia, the 182-year-old parrot known for her command of “the most dreadful seafaring swearwords you ever heard”; and Chee-Chee, Cheapside and the pushmipullyu.

Doctor Dolittle shows consistent enthusiasm for discovery, even to the point of staying up all night in order to learn the fish language of the silver fidgit. He shows concern for both animals and humans. In one adventure, he crosses the sea in a borrowed boat in order to save the monkeys of Africa from a mysterious, fatal disease. In another, he manages to persuade a judge in the British court to permit Bob, a dog, to testify at the murder trial of his master and thereby to save his master’s life.

Throughout the series, Doctor Dolittle and the same animal characters appear and reappear in the selections and provide a sense of continuity to the works.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

“Doctor Dolittle” was first expurgated in the 1960s by J. B. Lippincott Company in the effort to make the books conform to the changing sensibilities of a world that was beginning “to coalesce into one international, multiracial society.” The society of the 1920s, when the books were first published, was significantly less concerned with minority issues, and unexamined feelings of racial superiority pervaded not only children’s literature but also politics, religion, entertainment, and social ventures. African prince Bumpo, whom Doctor Dolittle and his animals meet when they sail to Africa on a mission of mercy, wants to be white, which produces a great deal of comedy as he sets about trying to achieve his desire. He appears ridiculous, but Lofting also makes the doctor appear ridiculous in many circumstances. In the 1960s, however, the growing pride in culture and multiculturalism made the desire of an African prince to be white offensive to many readers.

The language of the 182-year-old parrot, Polynesia, also a native of Africa, is similarly offensive when she uses the terms *darky* and *coon* in the first book in the series, *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*, then *nigger* in later books in the series. Lippincott purged the series of these terms in the 1960s, but more extensive changes were called for.

In an article in the bulletin of the Council on Interracial Books for Children in 1968, New York librarian Isabelle Suhl charged that “the ‘real’ Doctor Dolittle is in essence the personification of The Great White Father Nobly Bearing the White Man’s Burden and his creator was a white racist and chauvinist, guilty of almost every prejudice known to modern white Western Man.” The stand taken by the council was that editing the language was not

enough because the books were too racist to save. The recommendations of the council influenced librarians in schools and the public sector, and they simply stopped buying the Doctor Dolittle series after 1968. As a result, the 12 books went out of print in the early 1970s and did not reappear until 1988 in greatly altered form.

The 1988 version of the Dr. Dolittle books, published by Dell Publishing, was the result of radical censoring by two editors at Dell and by Christopher Lofting, the author's son. Prince Bumpo became neither black nor white, but colorless. All illustrations of the prince and of other African figures were omitted, and all of the characters were made racially neutral. The incident of the controversial desire of Prince Bumpo to become white so that Sleeping Beauty, his favorite fairy tale character, would marry him was removed. Changes were also made in the characters' responses to Doctor Dolittle. Representative of this change from the earlier version is a response given after Dr. Dolittle has saved the monkeys of Africa from a dread disease. In the original, they cheer him and shout gratefully, "Let us give him the finest present a White Man ever had!" This was changed to "Let us give him the finest present ever given." As a reviewer for the *New York Times* observed, "the present editors obviously hope to obliterate every emotionally tinted word."

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DOG DAY AFTERNOON

Author: Patrick Mann (pseudonym for Leslie Waller)
Original date and place of publication: 1974, United States
Original publisher: Delacorte Press
Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Dog Day Afternoon is based on the true story of a man who attempts to rob a bank to obtain money for his transsexual lover's operation. The first third of the novel describes the strange and tortured life of Joe Nowicki, half-Italian and half-Polish husband of the monstrously overweight Tina, "a religious guinea" with "immense breasts" whose "big soft lips" feel as if he "were biting ass" when he nibbles at them. His father never looks at him, but his mother can read his face so he avoids looking at her. He is sensitive about his slight build and wears four-inch clog heels to make himself appear taller, and he

proudly flaunts the fact that he has a reputation in Greenwich Village as a tough guy known as Littlejoe.

Joe runs out on the weekly family dinner to meet his lover Lana, a pre-operative transsexual with whom he has gone through a mock wedding ceremony. When he later carries a stoned Lana to one of the several “welfare pads” that he maintains to receive multiple welfare checks, the two make love, and he tenderly strokes her face, noting that “she needed a shave again.” As Lana comes to, she accuses Joe of not loving her enough because he hasn’t come up with the \$3,000 or \$4,000 necessary for the complete operation. Lana then taunts Joe about the size of his penis, telling him that she has had sex with 13-year-old boys who were better endowed. Joe decides that he will prove his worth by obtaining the money needed.

The second part of the novel begins after Joe completes plans to rob a bank of a huge bakery payroll. The plan is carefully followed, and Joe enters the bank with his cohorts right on schedule, but the payroll delivery schedule has been changed so only a few thousand dollars are at the branch. The robbers decide to wait all night until the Wells Fargo delivery of \$50,000 the following morning, and they also keep the hostages.

As the scheme begins to unravel, the police move in across the street, and Detective Sergeant Moretti begins a telephone dialogue with Joe. The two bargain while the television cameras move in. To keep the hostages alive, the police promise to meet Joe’s demands, which include a million dollars, safe passage to Kennedy airport, a plane gassed and ready for transatlantic flight, and his “wife,” Lana, to go with him. As they wait, a media circus forms outside the bank; ice cream, pizza, and beer vendors appear; and pizza is delivered to the bank for the hostages and the robbers. When the police finally locate Lana and bring her to the police barricades, the people realize that she is a man in drag and begin to chant: “Faggot! Faggot!” Lana faints, and inside the bank, Joe becomes defensive. Meanwhile, the police try to convince Lana to help them as they learn the real reason that Joe has tried to rob the bank.

When the ordeal appears about to end, the scene assumes an even more absurd tone. Joe’s mother arrives, and in front of all of the onlookers and the police, they begin a disagreement about his wife, Tina, and what drove Joe into Lana’s arms. Gay protesters appear with signs stating, “We Love You Joe.” The limousine that appears to take the robbers to the airport bears a sign stating, “Total Relaxation Baths—Our Hostesses Make Life Worth Living,” identifying it as transportation for an escort service. Before getting into the limousine, Joe mugs for the cameras and blows kisses into the crowd as the gay demonstrators chant, “Say it clear. Say it loud. I’m gay and I’m proud.”

The novel ends with the FBI closing in and saving the hostages, but of the robbers only Joe survives.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Dog Day Afternoon has been quietly kept out of many school libraries over the two decades since its publication simply by librarians’ failure to order the

book. The language and the sexual situations have motivated much of this reticence and most of the challenges to the work. Both men and women in the novel respond without attention to social niceties. While flipping channels, Littlejoe's father pauses at a soap opera in which a character moans she will never be able to look her friend in the eyes ever again. Annoyed, he suggests, "Look 'er inna twat." When a news bulletin exposes Littlejoe as the robber in a bank robbery standoff, his mother cries for their son, and his father responds, "*Your* fucking son maybe." Littlejoe refers to his heritage from his father's side as being "Polack" while he is a "wop" on his mother's side of the family. His mother asks if he wants to taste something great, and he responds, "Four pounds of shit in a two-pound paper bag?" Although Littlejoe is married, he cruises Greenwich Village and has Lana, a preoperative transsexual, for his lover; his mother suspects, and she questions him regarding his "faggot" and "queer" friends. When he waits for Lana at the bar where she entertains, he confides to a friend, "Gonna ball Lana tonight, man, and that broad don't ball without I lay a few solid blasts on her." Numerous other phrases have been singled out as "offensive."

Concern has also been raised regarding the descriptions of the gay milieu in which Littlejoe functions and the street hustling in which a younger man named Sam and other teenagers at a safe house have sex to obtain money. Scenes of Littlejoe's sexual activities with Lana have also drawn criticism, as has the graphic description of Lana's striptease in a bar in which she exposes her breasts and strokes them to a hooting and yelping crowd, then turns away from the crowd for a moment "and stuck out her ass at the crowd . . . then she turned back and her penis, engorged, arose from between her legs like some primeval sea monster searching for its mate."

In 1978, the school board in Vergennes, Vermont, responded to parents' demands that the novel and *The Wanderers* be removed from the Union High School library. The librarian was also forbidden to buy additional works of fiction without having prior approval from both the district administration and the school board. Upset by the decision, a group of parents and students joined the school librarian, Elizabeth Phillips, to challenge the decision of the board.

When *Bicknell v. Vergennes Union High School Board*, 475 F. Supp. 615 (D. Vt. 1979) was decided, U.S. District Court judge Albert W. Coffin rejected the students' and parents' claims and decided in favor of the Vergennes school board. Basing his decision on *Presidents Council, District 25 v. Community School Board, No. 25* (New York City) (see DOWN THESE MEAN STREETS), the court determined that the policies and actions of the school board did not directly or sharply infringe upon the basic constitutional right of the students of Vergennes Union High School. The court acknowledged that other courts may have taken a benign view of library freedoms, but it also determined that "neither the board's failure to purchase a work nor its decision to remove or restrict access to a work in the school library violate the First Amendment

rights of the student plaintiffs before this court” because the board removed the books for being vulgar and in bad taste.

Judge Coffin relied heavily on the *Presidents Council* decision in further denying that school librarians had the right to independent control over school library collections, rejecting their argument that denying such control amounted to denying their academic freedom. In 1980, the plaintiffs appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, but the court decision in *Bicknell v. Vergennes Union High School Board*, 638 F.2d 438 (2d Cir. 1980) affirmed that of the lower court.

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DOWN THESE MEAN STREETS

Author: Piri Thomas

Original date and place of publication: 1967, United States

Original publisher: Alfred A. Knopf

Literary form: Autobiography

SUMMARY

Down These Mean Streets relates the author's life between the ages of 12 and 20 growing up in Spanish Harlem in the 1940s and 1950s. Born of a light-skinned, Puerto Rico-born mother and a mainland-born, African-American father, Thomas bluntly reveals his difficulties as a dark-skinned, Spanish-speaking male in an atmosphere in which to be “cool” means running with a gang, using drugs, committing robberies, using illegal weapons, and having indiscriminate sex. He relates his years on the streets, the temporary escape to suburbia, and the six years spent in prison before he turned his life around and began to work as a counselor.

As befits the setting, *Down These Mean Streets* is told in the crude and coarse language of the streets. The young Piri is a survivor, and he learns how to deal and to use drugs, how to steal, and how to make some quick money with a friend who occasionally acts as a male prostitute to obtain money from homosexuals in the neighborhood. The adult Piri graphically describes these adventures, providing detailed instructions for how to get the maximum high while smoking marijuana, how to prepare and to inject heroin, as well as specific aspects of the sexual acts performed. He uses ethnic and homophobic insults in describing those with whom he interacts and himself. Thus,

“spics,” “guineas,” “faggots,” and “niggers” frequently appear in the book, and “motherfucker” and “fuck” appear on almost every page. When Piri is sent to prison, the feeling of violence escalates and so does the daily physical threat. In unadorned language, he describes the threat of rape and the constant tensions of prison life that finally make him realize that he wants more in his life. He leaves prison rehabilitated, ready to begin a life of helping others to leave the streets and to make good lives for themselves.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Down These Mean Streets contains the raw street vernacular of life in Spanish Harlem and descriptions of experiences that accurately depict a young man's struggle to survive in that brutal environment. These elements of realism have made the work a target of censors who have complained that the language is immoral, obscene, and “just plain filthy.” First challenged in 1971, the work was removed from the junior high school library by Community School Board 1250 in Queens, New York. The case that followed, *Presidents Council, District 25 v. Community School Board, No. 25* (New York City), 457 F.2d 289 (2d Cir. 1972), was the first to consider the issue of whether or not a school board had the authority to remove books from a school library. Parents were provoked by the language in the book, which they viewed as obscene, and requested the district board to order the book removed from school libraries. Responding to parent demands, the board held a public meeting where the book was described by 75 speakers, 73 of whom favored retention of the book on scholarly or educational grounds. Piri Thomas appeared at the meeting to speak: “I’m not here to defend the book. I’m here to defend the right of the truth to be said.” Despite the support, the district board voted 5-3 to remove all copies of the book from the junior high school libraries in the district. Dissatisfied with this decision, a group of parents, students, teachers, and a school librarian joined with the New York Civil Liberties Union to bring suit against the board in the United States District Court, but the court refused to hear the case.

Six weeks after removing the book, the board conducted another public meeting, where the original decision was modified to allow the libraries that had bought the book to retain their copies, but only parents, not students, could take out the book. Nearly a year later, when the case was appealed, the Court of Appeals of the Second Circuit affirmed the dismissal of the suit, noting that a specific group must be authorized to determine the makeup of a library collection, and proclaimed that there was no reason to elevate an “intramural strife to First Amendment constitutional proportions.” The court ignored the right of students to freedom of expression and their right to receive information and stated that “to suggest that the shelving or unshelving of books presents a constitutional issue, particularly where there is no showing of a curtailment of freedom of speech or thought, is a proposition we cannot accept.” To do so, stated the decision, “would be a constant intrusion of the judiciary into the internal affairs of the school.” Adamant in their

fight, the group took the case to the United States Supreme Court, but the Supreme Court refused to review the case. Justice William O. Douglas stated in a dissenting opinion: “What else can the School Board now decide it does not like? How else will its sensibilities be offended? Are we sending children off to school to be educated by the norms of the School Board or are we educating our youth to shed the prejudices of the past, to explore all forms of thought, and to find solutions to our world’s problems?”

In 1976, *Down These Mean Streets* was among nine books that school board members in Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 in New York identified as being “objectionable.” After a review committee examined the books, *Down These Mean Streets* was placed on a restricted list because it was judged by the committee to be “pornographic and filthy.” Students needed parental permission to take out the book. The book was returned to the library on June 25, 1982, after the United States Supreme Court ruling in *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico et al.* (See THE BEST SHORT STORIES BY NEGRO WRITERS for the full case.)

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DRACULA

Author: Bram Stoker

Original date and place of publication: 1897, England

Original publisher: Constable Publishers

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Dracula is the story of the fiendish Count Dracula, whose activities are related in diary and journal entries written by principal characters. The novel begins

and ends in Transylvania, the traditional site of vampire legends. At the outset, the count lures Jonathan Harker to his castle to explain the purchase of a London estate. Before leaving the inn in Bistritz, the young solicitor is puzzled by the behavior of the innkeeper's wife, who exhibits fear at the mention of the count's name and insists that he wear her crucifix around his neck. People in the crowd outside of the inn make the sign of the cross as Jonathan leaves for Dracula's castle. Once there, Harker becomes a prisoner of the count, who functions as his host, valet, driver, butler, and maid. Strange dreams and visions pursue Harker, who seeks to escape the intense danger that he senses in the castle.

Two young and beautiful women, Lucy and Mina, are the objects of Dracula's lust for blood. The count hypnotizes them before biting them, and even Jonathan falls under his spell as he must be awakened from "a stupor such as we know the Vampire can produce" after Mina's exchange of blood with Dracula. Once bitten by Dracula, the women become slaves to unlawful hunger for blood. The sweet and virginal Lucy Westenra is turned into a vampire, and former suitors see her returning to her grave after preying on a child, the blood dripping down her chin. Mina just barely escapes the same fate; her saving grace is that "she has a man's brain" and is more resistant than the ordinary woman. The young men who try to defend them are unable to do so alone. They must call in the assistance of Dr. Abraham Van Helsing, a Dutch professor whom Stoker describes as "a philosopher and a metaphysician, and one of the most advanced scientists of his day," and Dr. John Seward, a man of science and the head of "a large lunatic asylum."

The last third of the novel is rational and deliberately scientific in tone, as it documents the efforts of Van Helsing and Seward to use research and such technology as phonograph rolls and typewriters to locate Dracula and his followers and to destroy them.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Stoker professed to favor the censorship of fiction and wrote that "a close analysis will show that the only emotions which in the long run harm are those arising from sex impulses." He observed that "women are the worst offenders in this form of breach of moral law." This stance appears to exhibit a disparity between his prudery and the erotic and homoerotic undertones that readers have identified in *Dracula*. He ignored his own work when in 1908 he wrote a series of scathing articles for *Nineteenth Century* magazine in which he strongly advocated the censorship of eroticism in fiction.

Readers have long recognized the sexual overtones that pervade *Dracula*, from the first publication of the novel. Victorian readers professed to be scandalized by the intimacy of the count's act and the negative effect on Lucy's moral nature. Critics observed that the novel "is offensive to the sensibilities of the fair sex" and recommended that it be kept out of the hands of women. Booksellers in England were advised to keep the book out of view, so that

the “fair sex will not be polluted” by the “devilish mockery of purity” of the work.

Several passages were identified as having motivated particular moral concerns. When Harker lies on a couch in the castle, pretending to be asleep, he is visited by three beautiful, ghostly ladies. As he waits in “languorous ecstasy,” one of the women “went down on her knees and bent over me, . . . licked her lips like an animal. . . . I could feel her hot breath on my neck.” After Lucy has become a vampire, she is observed sucking the blood from a child, whose body she then throws to the ground after seeing her fiancée, Arthur Holmwood. Having changed from “purity to voluptuous wantonness,” she aggressively calls Arthur to her, provocatively telling him, “My arms are hungry for you.” When Dr. Seward pries open Lucy’s coffin to drive a stake into her heart, he sees “the bloodstained, voluptuous mouth . . . the whole carnal and unspiritual appearance.”

Dracula has been largely eclipsed by the numerous film and stage adaptations of the work, and most people today have become familiar with the story of Count Dracula through these sources rather than by reading the original. The novel does not appear frequently on required reading lists in schools; thus school censorship has not been a significant facet of its history. Only one such instance has been reported. In 1994, school officials at Colony High School in Lewisville, Texas, banned the novel from the required reading lists for junior and senior advanced-placement English classes. Complaints centered on what critics viewed as “unacceptable descriptions in the introduction.” The specific statement cited appears in an introduction written by George Stade: “*Dracula* is the symptom of a wish, largely sexual, that we wish we did not have.”

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THE DROWNING OF STEPHAN JONES

Author: Bette Greene

Original date and place of publication: 1991, United States

Original publisher: Delacorte Press

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

The Drowning of Stephan Jones takes place in Rachetville, Arkansas, a town that is not friendly toward people who are different, as Carla has learned by the reaction of the residents to her outspoken mother, the town librarian. When Carla goes to Harris's hardware store, determined to attract the attention of Andy Harris, who attends high school with her, she meets Frank and Stephan, two men who are new to the area. The two appear to be a couple, and their perceived relationship angers a woman customer who verbally attacks the two men after she hears Frank calling Stephan "my love." A shocked and speechless Carla watches as the Harris men join the woman in confronting Frank, who stands up to them while Stephan edges toward the door and looks poised to run. The next day at school, Andy stops Carla, who is thrilled at the attention until he begins to talk about Frank and Stephan and she realizes how deeply prejudiced he is against homosexuals. Even though she does not agree with his views, she remains quiet and does not defend Frank and Stephan because of her attraction to Andy.

Carla becomes increasingly infatuated with Andy and convinces her mother to attend Christmas services at the church Andy attends, where the Reverend Wheelwright delivers a sermon that condemns homosexuality, but Carla is concentrating too strongly on Andy to pay attention. Andy later makes a surprise visit to her home with an unexpected Christmas present, and the two become inseparable.

Andy and his friends Spider and Ironman begin a campaign of harassment against Frank and Stephan, who have opened an antiques store in a nearby town. They follow Stephan as he leaves his local pizza parlor and chase him into an alley, where they push his face into a steaming pizza, burning him. Their efforts escalate as they work to terrify the two men with the goal of driving them out of their store and town. They begin to make crank calls to the men and send threatening letters, which they claim are only pranks. Carla knows about their activities, but she refuses to become involved because she is more concerned with an upcoming prom.

Although frightened, Frank and Stephan are determined to stop the threats, but they feel that going to the police will be useless. Instead, they speak with Reverend Wheelwright, who offers them no assistance. The harassment continues. On the night of the prom, Carla and Andy and his friends unexpectedly meet Frank and Stephan, and the boys chase them, losing Frank and

concentrating their chase on Stephan. They catch him and throw him into the river, where he drowns. When Andy is placed on trial for the murder of Stephan Jones, Carla is the key witness. Andy claims that Stephan had made sexual advances, and the court gives the three boys suspended sentences and probation. During the celebration that follows, Frank appears and shows all of the people present the letters Andy wrote to Stephan, which discredit him in the eyes of everyone. Disillusioned by events, Carla and her mother move out of Rachetville.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The Drowning of Stephan Jones has motivated strong negative reactions in many school districts where antigay and anti-lesbian sentiments have led parents to challenge the inclusion of the book in the curriculum or in the school library. In 1993, a school board member in Boling, Texas, objected to the use of the book in a cultural diversity curriculum, charging that the book promoted “anti-Christian beliefs” and contained “objectionable language.” He also asserted that the book condones “illegal activity.” The school board told the teacher that she would be fired if she did not stop using the book, but she defended the book as a “teaching tool that sets the foundation for our students to learn responsible behavior.” The issue was referred to the district review committee, which recommended that the book be retained, but the school board voted to remove the book from the curriculum and from the library. With the assistance of the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC), the teacher retained an attorney and sued the school district; the book was returned to the curriculum and the library.

In 1995, in New Ipswich, New Hampshire, Penny Culliton, a respected English teacher at Mascenic Regional High School, was fired after she placed three books with gay or lesbian characters on the optional reading list for her English classes: *Maurice* by E. M. Forster, *The Education of Harriet Hatfield* by May Sarton, and *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* by Bette Greene. The books had been selected by a school review committee and were purchased with the approval of the superintendent of schools in the summer of 1994. Money for the purchase came from a grant given by the Respect for All Youth Fund, which supports efforts to counter negative stereotypes of gay and lesbian youth. School officials fired Culliton on a charge of “gross insubordination” and claimed that the books had not gone through the appropriate approval process. School board member Charles Saari moved to eliminate *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* entirely and to place the other two books into the school library, but other board members spoke up for including the books as readings in a proposed upper-level elective course, but not in required English classes. In the 4-3 vote, the board confirmed that decision and also voted to include the books in the school library. After voting to place the books in the proposed diversity course and in the school library, the board voted 5-1 with one abstention that none of the books would be used in any required course.

In 1998, *The Drowning of Stephan Jones*, *BABY BE-BOP*, *When Someone You Know Is Gay*, and *Two Teenagers in Twenty* were removed from the library shelves by school officials in Barron, Wisconsin.

In 2002, Eugene Carroll Craig, a resident of Socastee, South Carolina, filed a complaint with the Horry County School District Board, calling for removal of *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* from the school district. He claimed that he had examined a copy of the novel that the seventh-grade child of a friend had brought home from the Myrtle Beach Middle School and was shocked by the content. In an interview, Craig stated that the novel was “like a rattlesnake that needed to be killed right then and right there.” After receiving letters from Craig, the school board removed copies of the book from six high school libraries and two middle school libraries until a review committee could determine whether or not to retain it. A panel composed of teachers, administrators, parents, and librarians determined that the book was suitable for high school students but that restrictions should be placed on its use with middle school students. In a presentation to the district school board on June 12, 2002, Craig asserted, “If the book’s anti-Christian, anti-social agenda were anti-gay, anti-black, anti-Jewish, anti-Hispanic, it would have never been put in our schools in the first place.” The board voted 7-3 the same night to keep the book off district middle school library shelves. Board member Bill Graham stated that he voted for the removal because the book is “educationally unsuitable and contains unacceptable language.” School officials reported that this was the first time the district had voted to ban a book.

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EAST OF EDEN

Author: John Steinbeck

Original date and place of publication: 1952, United States

Original publisher: Viking-Penguin Press

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

East of Eden is the story of the classic epic struggle between two brothers, Charles and Adam Trask, whose rivalry reflects that of the biblical Cain and

Abel played out in modern times. In part a historical romance, the work relates the lives of several generations of two families, in Connecticut and California, covering significant incidents from the Civil War to World War I. The author incorporates historical events and actual historical figures into the narrative, and these act to mold lives and determine the destinies of the fictional characters. For the most part, Steinbeck does not permit his characters control over their lives. Instead, while they seem to have free will in their moral choices, external factors constantly place them into situations in which they must make choices to survive.

Cyrus Trask is the hard-nosed patriarch who makes his sons, each fathered by a different wife, live a military-like existence. He tolerates no weakness and determines that the gentle-natured Adam must become tougher, so he plans a military career for the boy. Fact blends with fantasy as Cyrus regales everyone with his purported military feats during the Civil War. Among these adventures is his oft-told story of contracting gonorrhea in 1862, when, as a young soldier, he paid ten cents to have sex with a prostitute whom he later hunted for revenge.

When Cyrus dies, he leaves the extensive land holdings in the Salinas Valley and a large amount of money, the source of which remains a mystery, to both sons to share equally. Charles, the stronger son, who has a propensity for evil, stays and farms, but gentle Adam wanders the world at first and returns uneasily to his home. Their lives are dominated by their sibling rivalry, which extends to women, the land, and life. After Adam settles down, his wife leaves him to own “a whorehouse, the most vicious and depraved in this whole end of the country,” and he follows her to San Francisco, where she hurts him further by telling him that Charles fathered their twin sons. The novel details the drug use, attempt at self-induced abortion, and sadistic practices of the prostitutes, even as it shows Adam rising above the immorality.

As the lives of Charles and Adam near their end, the epic rivalry is exhibited clearly in the behavior of Adam’s twin sons, who will continue the conflict between good and evil and the struggle of individuals to make the correct choices. In the end, Steinbeck shows that there is no Garden of Eden in this life.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel made readers uncomfortable when it was first published because it is a pessimistic look at man’s ability to cope with fate. The language is vulgar in parts, and the novel contains explicit sex scenes that convey the sense of the characters’ slow development throughout. These aspects motivated no legal challenges, but parents and school boards have been uncomfortable with the book.

In 1978, the novel was one of the numerous books removed from supplemental high school reading lists in Anaheim, California, despite their use for

many years, after complaints by parents, who viewed the book as obscene. Teachers were instructed to simply store the book, along with others such as Richard Wright's *BLACK BOY*, and cautioned that they were not permitted to provide the books for supplemental reading nor were they to discuss the books with students. The local school board warned teachers that they risked dismissal if they taught any of the banned books. The president of the Anaheim board of education denied that the removal of these books constituted a restriction. Rather, he stated the need of the school district to emphasize the basics of grammar and noted that " 'the only effort to restrict comes from the content of basic grammar classes. . . . If they teach grammar properly, they will have no need for further books. Nor will they have time for them.' "

The novel was challenged or banned in other areas of the country. In 1982, school board officials ordered that the novel be removed from two Anniston, Alabama, high school libraries, because it was "obscene." They later reinstated the work on a restrictive basis. That same year, the novel was also removed from the Morris, Manitoba (Canada), school libraries due to its language. In 1991, parents in the Greenville, South Carolina, schools challenged the appropriateness of the book because of its profanity and because it contained "inappropriate sexual references." The school board made the decision to allow the book to be read with parental permission.

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ELMER GANTRY

Author: Sinclair Lewis

Original date and place of publication: 1927, United States

Original publisher: Harcourt Brace & Company

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Elmer Gantry is the story of a quintessential scoundrel, charlatan, and womanizer, an extravagant faker who also happens to be a minister. He is an opportunist with few scruples or morals, who knows nothing about theology but everything about greed and seduction. Before he is "saved," Gantry is known to his college classmates as "Hellcat," known to become "eloquently drunk, lovingly and pugnaciously drunk." A typical Gantry suggestion is, "Let's go over to Cato and see the girls and get drunk." After his conversion, he vows

not to smoke, "to guzzle, to follow loose women, to blaspheme." Hours later, he decides that just one cigarette won't hurt and eventually returns to all of his vices. Gantry decides to preach even if it means losing his waitress girlfriend Juanita, for he can "find skirts like her any place." At Mizpah Seminary, however, his sexual needs lead him to moan, "If Juanita was just here!"

Ordained a Baptist minister, Gantry is appointed to a small church and meets Lulu Bains, a deacon's daughter. When they first meet, he determines, "God, I've *got* to have her!" Soon, "She was in his arms, on the couch . . . limp, unreasoning, at midnight." Lulu, whose babble soon bores him "and her lovemaking was equally unimaginative," expects marriage. He stalls for months and foists her on another man as soon as he can.

Reassigned, Gantry is sidetracked by one too many drinks. Three days late in reporting to his new post, Gantry calls the deacon, who knows all about his four days of drinking and carousing. He is fired but remains a Baptist minister and works as a salesman with the Pequot Farm Implement Company. For two years he makes a good living, buying himself fancy jewelry and clothing, but he misses the adulation of preaching. In Sauterville, Nebraska, he meets highly successful evangelist Sharon Falconer and decides at their first meeting "he was going to have Sharon Falconer." He follows her and becomes first her assistant, then her lover. Although he adores her, Gantry desires another woman, "feeling that it was sheer carelessness to let the pretty and anemic and virginal Lily be wasted."

Gantry next becomes the lover of a New Thought evangelist, but she ejects him from her circle for stealing. For a time, he preaches his own school of thought, then decides to "get in with a real big machine like the Methodists . . . with all their spondulix and big churches and big membership and everything to back me up." Assigned a church in Banjo Crossing, a town of 900, he feels that he is a failure at the age of 32 after the big-time evangelism with Sharon Falconer. Despite vows to the contrary, when he is led to his room by the Widow Clark's daughter, Jane, a girl of 14 or 15, his lechery surfaces and he thinks, "here was a girl he was going to pursue." Hours later, he meets Cleo, 27 years old and bosomy, and the daughter of a church trustee who is also the most successful man in town, worth at least \$75,000. Gantry is soon married to Cleo, although on their honeymoon in Chicago "he concealed his distaste for her" and later discovers that "Cleo would never be a lively lover." His dislike of Cleo grows, and he finds "his whole body yearning toward" Jane Clark, but the promise of greater prominence in the Methodist hierarchy restrains him.

Six years and two churches later, Gantry is assigned to Sparta, a town of 129,000 people. Cleo and he sleep in separate bedrooms and, despite guilt, he does not refuse "whenever he found a woman parishioner who was willing to comfort him," nor does he desist from being "called on important but never explained affairs to Sparta." He becomes reacquainted with Lulu, now married, and resumes an affair with her until a good-looking woman becomes his secretary and his lover. His new secretary sets him up and tries to blackmail

him using love letters that he wrote to her, but the clever intervention of lawyer T. J. Rigg clears him. In church the next Sunday, as the congregation crowds around to pray and to show their support, Gantry vows silently to never again become involved with a woman other than his wife. As he looks around, he sees a new choir singer, "a girl with charming ankles and lively eyes, with whom he would certainly have to become well acquainted."

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Elmer Gantry has been singled out by censors because of the sexual adventures of its title character and for the language that frequently peppers his personal conversation. Completely oblivious to the standards that he is supposed to uphold, Gantry frequently yields when his libido is aroused, then deals with the ensuing problems later. He is also given to interjecting "damn" and "hell" into discussions with trusted friends.

Despite expectations, major efforts to ban the novel were not spearheaded by Baptist or Methodist groups, who might take offense that Gantry holds posts in both churches. Instead, it became the target of the Watch and Ward Society, an organization made up mostly of Catholics in Boston, still a largely Catholic city in the 1920s. The organization differed from the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice because it prosecuted the booksellers, not the publishers. Its usual method was to warn all booksellers that a particular book violated the Massachusetts obscenity statutes, then leave it to the retailers to withdraw the book from sale or risk being taken to court. This method appeared to be more effective in taking books out of circulation, because individual booksellers were less likely than publishers to have the resources or the energy to defend them.

The year 1927 was critical, as Massachusetts State District Attorney William J. Foley placed numerous books on the banned list, and *Elmer Gantry* was among the first whose sale he declared indictable. In his edict against the sale of the novel, the attorney general warned dealers of the severe penalties they would pay if they continued to sell it: "Evidence that this book is sold or offered for sale within the confines of Suffolk County will be followed by prompt action by this office."

Among the many books that appeared on the banned list, *Elmer Gantry* attracted the most attention. After Foley informed the Boston Booksellers' Committee that further sales of the novel would be prosecuted, the committee, which consisted of Richard F. Fuller of the Old Corner Bookstore, Charles E. Lauriat of the Charles E. Lauriat Co., and John Tracy of the New England News Co., brought to his office 57 other books that they believed were in danger if *Elmer Gantry* were suppressed. The booksellers claimed that they were in no position to fight the law.

A further repercussion of the ban was economic. Rather than fight the ban, the Old Corner Bookstore returned its unsold copies of the novel to the publisher, Harcourt Brace. When the publisher protested, Richard Fuller

suggested that it should force legal action by publicly selling a copy of the book in Boston and, when the case came to court, obtain a decision applicable to Suffolk County that would supersede the threat of the attorney general. Harcourt Brace refused and chose to sue the Old Corner Bookstore for its loss on the returned copies in what they described as a “friendly suit” in civil court.

Sale of the novel was also banned in Camden, New Jersey, and Glasgow, Scotland, in 1927, and in Ireland in 1931, as “offensive to public morals.” The ban in Ireland was upheld in 1953.

In another incident, a catalog named *Summer Reading, 1927*, published by R. R. Bowker Company, became the target of censorship by the United States Department of the Post Office because it contained announcements of *Elmer Gantry*, as well as John Gunther’s *The Red Pavilion* and May Sinclair’s *The Allinghams*, all of which had either been banned in Boston or publicly labeled as “immoral” books. A Fifth Avenue bookstore manager was summoned to the New York City Post Office to discuss the catalog after he had sent out 8,000 copies of it with his shop’s imprint on them. A copy was submitted to Horace J. Donnelly, solicitor of the U.S. Post Office Department in Washington, and he advised New York officials that the catalog was unmailable. The first 8,000 were permitted to proceed through the mails, but the bookseller and all others were warned that no additional catalogs could be sent, and no further copies were printed or mailed. In 1931, the Post Office officially banned from the mails any catalog that listed this novel. The ban was lifted three years later.

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END AS A MAN

Author: Calder Willingham (Calder Bayard Willingham, Jr.)
Original date and place of publication: 1947, United States
Original publisher: Vanguard Press
Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

End as a Man is a satiric portrait of life in a southern military academy, an institution that is loosely based on The Citadel. The title of the work is taken from the speech of the commanding officer who claims that those who enter

the academy undergo a training so thorough that they enter as boys but each will “end as a man.” The reality conveyed by the characters is that the rigid academy code sadistically transforms each boy into a brute who learns to respect only what he fears. Thus, rather than become a man, each fully trained academy cadet must recognize that graduation from the academy marks his end as a man and his emergence as a fear-inducing brute.

The corruption inherent in the academy is personified by Robert Marquales, an unattractive character whose self-pitying and self-serving nature leads him to become an informer and henchman for Cadet Sergeant Jocko de Paris. Marquales ferrets out the secrets of vulnerable cadets, such as that of Perrin McKee, the homosexual cadet who, in bitterly sarcastic dialogue, vies with Marquales for the attention of de Paris. Marquales also fails to come to the aid of other cadets who are being treated sadistically, especially his roommate, the overweight Maurice Maynall “Sowbelly” Simmons, who prays all night and wets his bed repeatedly. Rather than help his roommate, Marquales disassociates himself from the pathetic cadet, who is later beaten so severely that blood coagulates on his boxer shorts. Simmons is found a few days after this incident lying on the floor of the latrine, exhausted from another beating and with his face and head smeared with human excrement.

While Marquales represents the corrupt aspects of the academy, de Paris represents the unrelenting cruelty as he leads the upperclassmen in their merciless behavior toward the cadets. In the opening chapter, de Paris bullies Simmons until he vomits at the dinner table, which establishes the cadet as the scapegoat, the “company crap-catcher,” of the new first-year cadets. De Paris cheats in card games with fellow cadets, blackmails them, and lies to extricate himself from every situation without concern for what his lies will do to others.

The society of the academy turns even the first-year men against their own, and the less clever cadets often find themselves tortured by their quicker-witted brothers. Simmons’s photograph of his dead 10-year-old sister disappears and is desecrated; when it reappears, “the child in the white dress had two breasts, a navel, and pubic hair from which a great penis emerged.” Another unsuspecting first-year man lends his pen, engraved “From Myrtle to Bubber with oodles of love,” to another cadet who learns that “Myrtle” is the pen owner’s mother. The fact is soon made public, and humiliation follows.

The novel recounts one brutish action after another, slowly escalating until the commandant discovers the existence of a secret drinking and gambling club, after a public drinking brawl instigated by de Paris that results in disciplinary action against 28 cadets and the expulsion of four, including de Paris. Marquales saves himself from expulsion by becoming an informer and exposing the role that de Paris played in the scandal. As the novel ends, Marquales receives three crisp \$10 bills and a letter from de Paris which states, “I hope your conscience doesn’t torture you about what you did. There are worse things than cowardly selling out the best man you ever knew. I’m

enclosing your reward.” With a smile, Marquales pockets the money and later uses it to buy a portable radio.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

John Sumner, appearing on behalf of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, issued a complaint against Vanguard Press in 1947 as soon as the novel was published. The unusually forthright language, which had been taboo before World War II, was cited as the chief cause of concern. In the novel, one cadet refers to a waitress as “table pussy,” while another cadet speaks of his father finding “a rubber draped over the steering wheel” after he had borrowed the car. At various times, other cadets use such expressions as “Oh, piss,” “Go shit in your hat,” and “Kiss my butt.” Admitting that he is homosexual, cadet Perrin McKee tells Marquales, “I had experiences at the age of 10 that would rot your prostate.” In addition, throughout the novel, cadets speak repeatedly of “whores” and “whorehouses,” and there are numerous references to masturbation.

The author and literary critics testified on behalf of *End as a Man* in *People v. Vanguard Press, Inc.*, 192 Misc. 127, 84 N.Y.S. 2d 427 (1947). In testimony, Willingham claimed that his purpose was “to show some of the spiritual and emotional consequences on the youths attending such a school” as well as the spiritual and emotional effects of the severe hazing and strict discipline at the academy. Magistrate Strong dismissed the case. In his decision, he acknowledged the large number of “so-called four-letter words, for the most part used as adjectives or expletives,” but he determined that the most vital question is the effect of the book as a whole. After viewing the work in total, he concluded that “its effect on the reasonably normal reader would not be sexually demoralizing.”

The following year *End as a Man* was again in court, this time in the Court of Quarter Sessions in Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, as one of nine novels identified as obscene. Criminal proceedings were brought against five booksellers who were charged with possessing and intending to sell the following allegedly obscene novels: James Farrell’s Studs Lonigan trilogy (*Young Lonigan*, *The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan*, and *Judgment Day*), Farrell’s *A WORLD I NEVER MADE*, William Faulkner’s *SANCTUARY* and *WILD PALMS*, Erskine Caldwell’s *GOD’S LITTLE ACRE*, Harold Robbins’ *NEVER LOVE A STRANGER*, and Willingham’s *End as a Man*. Judge Curtis Bok, who sat as trial judge in *Commonwealth v. Gordon et al.*, 66 D. & C. 101 (1949), read the books “with thoughtful care” and wrote the first really thoughtful judicial opinion about the limitations that the First Amendment’s guarantees should be interpreted to exert upon obscenity proceedings. He determined that “obscenity” was an indeterminate term, “that different meanings given to it at different times are not constant, not historically or legally; and that it is not constitutionally indictable unless it takes the form of sexual impurity, i.e., ‘dirt for dirt’s sake’ and can be traced to actual criminal behavior, either actual

or demonstrably imminent.” Judge Bok based his judgment on the books as a whole and upon their place in the arts. He discussed at length the concern whether in censoring obscenity the courts were contravening the principles of freedom of speech and of the press. Judge Bok concluded, “I hold that the books before me are not sexually impure and pornographic, and are therefore not obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, indecent, or disgusting.” This judgment was later sustained in the Superior and Supreme Courts of Pennsylvania.

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ESTHER WATERS

Author: George Moore

Original date and place of publication: 1894, England

Original publisher: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Esther Waters relates the story of a servant girl who loses her job, her status, and her respectability when she becomes pregnant, then fights against her fate to survive and raise her son to manhood. The struggle is realistically presented, as are the temptations to give up, yet she perseveres in a life of unrelieved and uneventful toil. The theme of gambling and its toll on lives also runs through the novel.

The novel opens with 20-year-old Esther standing on the train platform, about to begin her work as a kitchen maid at the Barfields' elegant estate, Woodview. As she walks from the station, she meets William Latch, whose mother is the cook at Woodview and whose father's life had been ruined by betting on racehorses. She cannot return home because “her [step]father would curse her, and perhaps beat her mother and her too. . . . Her little brothers and sisters would cry if she came back. They had little enough to eat as it was.”

The obsession with horse racing at Woodview is alien to Esther, who had “heard of racecourses as shameful places where men were led to their ruin, and betting she had always understood to be sinful.” She is religious, but a friendly housemaid warns her to keep her religious views to herself because the others will call her a “Creeping Jesus.” Fortunately for Esther, Mrs.

Barfield is also a “Plymouth Sister” who senses a spiritual soulmate in Esther and tries to teach her to read.

One evening, after an important horse race is won by the Barfields, the servants celebrate with the rest of the household, and ale flows freely. Even Esther, formerly opposed to drink, has two pints of ale, which lower her defenses. When she walks out into the moonlight with her boyfriend William, “she could not put him away . . . though she knew her fate depended upon her resistance.” She becomes pregnant after that one sexual experience, but William runs off with one of the wealthy Barfield daughters, deserting her without knowing that she carries his child.

With little money, Esther returns to her family, which she pays 10 shillings weekly for room and board. She soon leaves because her stepfather extorts increasing amounts of money from her, and she takes a room in a house near the hospital. When she goes into labor, she is treated with cold indifference by the nurses and doctors. Later, her only means of earning a living is to become a wet nurse for the baby of Mrs. Rivers, a fashionable lady. To do so, Esther must place her child into someone else’s care, until she learns that the infants of two previous wet nurses have died while in such care. Frantic, Esther gives up the position, takes her child, and must again look for work.

In the seven years that follow, Esther works long hours to provide for Jackie, then finds a suitable position with a kindly mistress and meets a devout man who wants to marry her and become a father to Jackie. On an errand for her mistress, Esther meets William, her son’s father, who expresses his remorse and desire to be a father to their son and a husband to Esther. He is now prosperous as the owner of the Kings’ Head pub and a successful book-maker for horse racing. Esther struggles to choose between the devout suitor and William and decides that Jackie would benefit from all that William could provide, so she becomes William’s wife. They prosper, so much so that Esther now has servants, even though she worries as she views the numerous lives ruined by betting on the horses. When Jackie is 15, disaster befalls the family as William becomes fatally ill with consumption, the Kings’ Head is raided because of the betting, and the license to operate is revoked. Esther struggles to keep Jackie in school and to keep life going as William wastes away in a hospital. When he dies, Jackie must leave school to work, and Esther must, once again, tolerate long, painful workdays and low pay.

At Jackie’s urging, Esther contacts Mrs. Barfield, and the older woman welcomes Esther back to Woodview, now an impoverished estate, where the two live in seclusion and in anticipation of word from their sons. Mrs. Barfield worries because her son Arthur makes his living at the racetrack and rarely contacts her, and she helps Esther provide for Jackie, who works hard just to survive in London. Finally, unable to find suitable work, Jackie joins the military. The novel ends as the handsome adult son visits his mother before he must leave with his military unit. To Esther, all that she has gone through in “the long fight for his life” has been worthwhile, and she truly feels that “she had accomplished her woman’s work—she had brought him up to man’s estate.”

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Esther Waters is written in a stark and realistic style that both recounts the struggle of a servant girl to raise her illegitimate child alone and presents a bitter indictment of society. The novel was excluded from British circulating libraries in 1894, as both Mudie's Library and Smith's Library refused to stock it, viewing it as too risqué because the main character suffers as the result of her one sexual indiscretion, but she does not die, and because of the candid manner in which her situation is presented. For instance, when Esther returns to live with her family before her baby's birth, her stepfather tells her, "We wants no bastards 'ere." Her mother, like many poor women of the day, is severely abused and economically dependent, as she must bear child after child and eventually dies in childbirth. In a scene considered by censors of the time to be in poor taste simply due to its mention, the doctors and nurses at the maternity ward where Esther gives birth show little consideration for the needs of the financially destitute young woman. After the birth, the young mother learns that many young women of the lower classes allow their own babies to die and use their milk production to gain well-paid positions as wet nurses to babies of the rich.

By censoring the novel, the influential libraries greatly decreased potential sales because they held the power to set the tone for novels. Representatives of the libraries claimed that they sought to protect their subscribers from "certain blemishes of treatment." In essence, they were displeased by the factual, unsentimental account of the birth of Esther's illegitimate child, as well as by the manner in which a hypocritical and inhumane society shuns her, and by her strength and competence to raise her son and to achieve some degree of happiness regardless of public scorn. Despite the efforts to ban *Esther Waters*, the novel became Moore's first financial and artistic success.

The author had experienced a similar reception from the libraries to two earlier novels, *A Modern Lover* (1883) and *A Mummer's Wife* (1885). These attacks motivated Moore to take an aggressive stance against censorship, and he had responded with a scathing attack on the power of the circulating libraries in *Literature at Nurse, or Circulating Morals* in 1885. He denounced the manner in which the circulating libraries had reduced English fiction to formulaic plots, featuring either "a sentimental misunderstanding which is happily cleared up in the end, or . . . singular escapes over the edges of precipices, and miraculous recoveries of one or more of the senses of which the hero was deprived . . ." Deploring the negative effects of the libraries, which had deprived modern publishing of the novel of analysis and observation, Moore wrote, "Let us renounce the effort to reconcile these two irreconcilable things—art and young girls." His attack failed to reverse the position of the libraries regarding his novels, and when *Esther Waters* came out in 1894, with its theme of unmarried motherhood and scenes of a maternity ward, both Smith's and Mudie's excluded it from their catalogs. When Moore later

proved that the libraries had lost a minimum of £1,200 in profits because of their stance, they recanted and added the work to their catalogs.

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FAHRENHEIT 451

Author: Ray Bradbury

Original date and place of publication: 1953, United States

Original publisher: Ballantine Books

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Fahrenheit 451 relates the story of an oppressive society in which books are forbidden objects and firemen are required to burn all books they encounter. The novel, an expanded version of a 1950 story entitled "The Fireman," takes its title from the temperature at which paper ignites: 451°F. One of a number of dystopic novels published after World War II, the work portrays humans as having lost touch with the natural world, with the world of the intellect, and with each other. As the fire captain observes, "the word 'intellectual' became the swear word it deserved to be."

People hurry from their homes to their workplaces and back, never speaking of what they feel or think but only spouting meaningless facts and figures. At home, they surround themselves with interactive picture walls, wall-size television screens on three walls (four walls if one can afford them) containing characters who become accepted as family in an otherwise unconnected life. The streets have become dangerous as *minimum* speed limits of 55 miles per hour must be maintained, and speeds well over 100 miles per hour are more common. Teenagers and daring adults race their cars through the streets without concern for human life. War with an unnamed enemy is imminent.

For one fireman, the realization that there is a better life comes in the form of a 17-year-old girl named Clarisse, whose appreciation of nature, desire to talk about feelings and thoughts, and appreciation for simply being alive mark her as an "odd duck." Guy Montag likes his job as a fireman, but he has clandestinely taken books from several sites where he and his fellow firemen have burned books and the houses in which they were hidden. Clarisse's

questions as to why Montag became a fireman and her observations that the job does not seem right for him are disconcerting. A call to burn the books and house of a woman who refuses to leave the premises and, instead, ignites herself with the books increases Montag's discontent. He tries to speak with his wife, Mildred, but she blocks him out with her Seashell ear thimbles, tiny radios worn in the ear that play continuously, and her involvement with her "family" on the picture walls.

Montag learns that the major reason for the abolition of books was to keep everyone happy. His fire captain explains that without books there is no conflicting theory or thought, and no one learns anything more than anyone else. With books, "Who knows who might be the target of the well-read man?"

After his wife reports that Montag has books in the house and their home is destroyed by the firemen, he seeks the help of former English professor Faber, who is part of a broader movement to preserve the knowledge of the past. Following Faber's directions, Montag goes to the railroad yards, where he meets a group of old men, all former university professors who have each memorized specific literary works. They claim to be part of a network of thousands of individuals who will keep literature alive in their heads until the time when the oppression ceases and they can set the literature in type once more. Montag, who has memorized several books of the Old Testament, joins them, and the novel ends on a hopeful note.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Fahrenheit 451 is an indictment of censorship and expurgation, so the fact that this book was expurgated and marketed by the publisher that way for 13 years before the author became aware of the abuse is particularly ironic. In 1967, Ballantine Books published a special edition of the novel to be sold in high schools. Over 75 passages were modified to eliminate such words as *hell*, *damn*, and *abortion*, and two incidents were eliminated. The original first incident described a drunk man who was changed to a sick man in the expurgated edition. In the second incident, reference is made to cleaning fluff out of the human navel, but the expurgated edition changed the reference to cleaning ears. No one complained about the expurgation, mainly because few people were aware of the changes and many had not read the original. The copyright page made no mention of the changes, but thousands of people read only this version of *Fahrenheit 451* because the edition ran to 10 printings. At the same time, Ballantine Books continued to publish the "adult" version that was marketed to bookstores. After six years of the simultaneous editions, the publisher ceased publication of the adult version, leaving only the expurgated version for sale from 1973 through 1979, during which neither Bradbury nor anyone else suspected the truth.

In 1979, a friend alerted Bradbury to the expurgation, and he demanded that Ballantine Books withdraw completely the expurgated version and replace it with his original. The publisher agreed, and the complete version has been available since 1980.

This act of censorship had far-reaching effects for authors in regard to the school book clubs. The incident set in motion the American Library Association (ALA) Intellectual Freedom Committee, Young Adult Division. In 1981, the committee looked into expurgation by school book clubs, such as Scholastic, and found that all of them expurgated books to some extent. Using its clout, the ALA reminded the book clubs that it awards the Newbery and Caldecott medals for children's books, and the ALA also noted that buyers are attracted to books designated as "ALA Best Books." The organization warned that it would strip the award announcements from expurgated books. The ALA also alerted teacher groups to demand that an expurgated book in a school book club be clearly identified on the copyright page as an "edited school book edition."

In a coda that now appears in editions of *Fahrenheit 451*, Bradbury states, "I will not go gently onto a shelf, degutted, to become a non-book."

The "adult" version still has its critics. In 1992, students at Venado Middle School in Irvine, California, were issued copies of the novel with numerous words blacked out. School officials had ordered teachers to use black markers to obliterate all of the "hells," "damns," and other words deemed "obscene" in the books before giving them to students as required reading. Parents complained to the school and contacted local newspapers, who sent reporters to write stories about the irony of a book that condemns bookburning and censorship being expurgated. Faced with such an outcry, school officials announced that the censored copies would no longer be used.

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FALLEN ANGELS

Author: Walter Dean Myers

Original date and place of publication: 1988, United States

Original publisher: Scholastic Books

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Walter Dean Myers dedicates this book to his late brother Thomas "Sonny" Myers, "whose dream of adding beauty to this world through his humanity and his art ended in Vietnam on May 7, 1968." He presents a realistic view

of war by portraying his characters with believable dialogue and reactions to the horror and the brutality they experience. They curse, they doubt their involvement, and they must deal with the lost limbs and lost lives of their fellow soldiers, as did the men who served as soldiers in the Vietnam War.

Fallen Angels relates the experiences of Richie Perry, a 17-year-old African American and recent high school graduate who enlists in the U.S. Army and leaves his Harlem community to fight in Vietnam. While in basic training at Fort Devon, he learns that an old knee injury makes him unfit for combat, but his medical profile must be processed before his orders can be changed. Because of delays, he is forced to ship out to Vietnam. A captain assures him that it takes a long while to process a medical profile, but "Once it catches up with you, you'll be headed home." Eight months later, while wounded and in an army hospital, Richie learns that his medical file had been completed months earlier, but no one had notified him.

Once in Vietnam, Richie learns that many of the beliefs about war and about service in the military he had built up while in basic training are just illusions. The men periodically pass rumors that peace is about to be declared as they hear sporadic reports of proposed Paris peace talks. His images of brave U.S. soldiers confronting an evil, faceless enemy are destroyed as he realizes that he and other soldiers are frightened most of the time and sees that the Vietcong soldiers are much like him, serving in a war they have not created. His romantic view of war continues to erode as he sees the errors of judgment made by his commanding officers in situations they cannot control. Before being sent to their company, stationed near Chu Lai, Richie and two other new recruits, Harold "Peewee" Gates and Jenkins, are told by a sergeant that they are lucky to be sent to an area with little fighting. Only days after they arrive, however, Jenkins is killed during their first patrol when he steps on a land mine. Other realizations further disturb Richie, and he finds that he can no longer write letters home to his mother and his younger brother Kenny because the truth is too horrible to share with them.

Not long after his arrival in Vietnam, Richie begins to see that conventional morality cannot be applied in this atmosphere of brutality, fear, and devastation. His company commander, Captain Stewart, seems more concerned with earning a promotion to the rank of major than with keeping the soldiers under his command safe. The platoon leader, Lieutenant Carroll, dies during a combat mission, and Richie starts to question out loud why he and his fellow soldiers are even in Vietnam. Although other squad members caution Richie to just stop thinking, he struggles to find a way to justify everything he has seen. As much as he wishes to, he is unable to express to his family the horror and disillusionment he feels.

Richie's disillusionment with the war leads him to question why he enlisted in the army and to worry what he will do when he returns to civilian life. He originally said he had joined the army to earn money to keep

his brother Kenny in school, because the family is poor. His father left years earlier and his mother is an alcoholic. Richie now wonders if he enlisted simply to escape one intolerable situation, only to enter another. He also wonders if he has any life to look forward to if he should survive combat.

Rumors fly through the camp that their squad leader, Sergeant Simpson, has been fighting with Captain Stewart, accusing the officer of sending his men all over the area to bolster his own career. As the combat activity increases, Richie is injured during a battle, suffering shrapnel wounds, a concussion, and a bullet wound to his wrist, and he is sent to a hospital to recuperate. While there, he thinks of ways to avoid returning to combat once he has healed. Although Richie considers deserting, he follows orders and rejoins his company but finds that the unit has changed. Sergeant Simpson has been sent home, and his replacement, Sergeant Dongan, is a racist who selects the African-American soldiers for the most dangerous missions. In reaction to his behavior, the squad members bond even more closely as they experience increasingly higher casualties. After the men engage in a particularly bloody battle during which many American lives are lost, including Dongan's, the men must hurry to burn the dead to prevent mutilation of the bodies by the Vietcong, and they are warned that the second North Vietnamese battalion is moving in their direction. Corporal Brunner takes command, and the men move on to track guerrilla forces along the river. A firefight occurs. Richie and Peewee are injured, and both are sent to the hospital, where they learn that their injuries are serious enough to send them home. While in the hospital, Richie learns that his medical profile had been processed eight months earlier and, had he been properly alerted, he would have avoided the terrors of combat.

While the two men wait for the plane that will take them and the silver caskets of dead soldiers back to the United States, Richie and Peewee attempt to hide their weariness and disillusionment from the new recruits.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Fallen Angels was awarded the Coretta Scott King Award in 1989, but parents in Michigan, Texas, Mississippi, Ohio, Georgia, and Pennsylvania have denounced the book for containing vulgar or profane language and called for its ban.

In 1999, *Fallen Angels* was removed from the curriculum in Livonia, Michigan, after a unanimous vote by the Livonia Public Schools trustees that banned the book from being taught in the classroom but allowed it to remain in the school library. The action was taken after a lengthy review of the book was initiated by a parent who complained that the book contains more than 300 "vulgaritys." School board trustees reviewed *Fallen Angels* and, in an interview with the *Miami Times* on September 2, 1999, trustee Daniel Lessard stated, "I've read it. It's a filthy book. I think the language portrays what

went on in Vietnam very accurately. But I don't think we should require a 14-year-old to read it."

In 2003, Franklin Central High School in Indianapolis, Indiana, principal Kevin Koers banned *Fallen Angels* from the curriculum because of concerns about the profanity in the book. In an interview with a local television station, Koers stated that two students drew attention to the profanity in the book when they told him that they would get into trouble if they used some of the language that appears in the book in school, and he agreed with them. The book was assigned reading for sophomore English classes, and Koers substituted another frequently banned book, *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*. Numerous parents agreed with the ban, many claiming that the use of such profanity was unnecessary in the literature students read. As a result of the controversy, school officials recognized that they needed to establish clear policies to deal with future controversies over literature. Franklin Township Community Schools official Scott Miley told a reporter for The Indy Channel that when future challenges to a book arise, "it will be assigned to a department chair, who will then evaluate whether the complaint is valid."

Also in 2003, the George County School Board in Pascagoula, Mississippi, voted to ban *Fallen Angels*, *OF MICE AND MEN*, and *THE THINGS THEY CARRIED* from the accelerated junior supplementary list because of "profanity" in the dialogue of the characters. The vote occurred on January 6, after the appointment of two new board members. Larry McDonald, one of the new board members, initiated the ban on the books. In an interview that appeared in the *Pascagoula Mississippi Press*, McDonald said that because the school has a policy that prevents students from using profanity in school, to have the three books containing so much profanity remain in the school library made him "uncomfortable." In taking this action, the board failed to follow the policy in place that should have been applied when a student or parent complains about the content of a book that appears on the approved supplemental list. According to policy, if a parent feels that a book the child has selected is inappropriate, then a teacher is asked to help the child select another. The action brought the attention of the American Library Association Committee for Intellectual Freedom and the National Coalition of Teachers of English, which were unsuccessful in their efforts to have the book restored to the reading list. As a result of the action, school superintendent Donnie Howell reported that he would suggest that the school board form a committee to review future objections by parents to school reading material.

Fallen Angels was also successfully challenged because of profanity in Bluffton, Ohio, in 1990 and in West Chester, Pennsylvania, in 1994; it was restricted as supplemental classroom reading material from the Jackson County Georgia High School in 1992 for "sensitive material" as well as "profanity." In Arlington, Texas, in April 2000, Donna Harkreader, the mother of a student attending Boles Junior High School, asked school librarian Sandra Cope to remove *Fallen Angels* from the library. She asserted that the "strong language" in the book and "graphic violence" made the book "too disturbing" for younger students. The school librarian refused her request, and

Harkreader petitioned the board of education to consider the issue. After both school and administrative committees and the school superintendent, Mac Bernd, upheld the decision of the school librarian to retain the book, the issue was referred to the school trustees for final resolution. In a special meeting, called on September 28, 2000, which numerous residents attended, trustees of the Arlington Independent School District voted unanimously to keep the novel in the junior high school libraries. In explaining their decision, trustee Jim Ash stated, "There is no wiggle room We are created to uphold the law."

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A FAREWELL TO ARMS

Author: Ernest Hemingway

Original date and place of publication: 1929, United States

Original publisher: Charles Scribner's Sons

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

A Farewell to Arms is both a powerful war novel and a love story. Told from the first-person point of view of American Frederic Henry, who becomes an ambulance driver for the Italian army in 1916, it chronicles fighting against the Austrian army along the Italian-Yugoslavian border. With the other officers, Henry first spends a lot of his time drinking and visiting the officers' brothel. On the battlefield, he is reckless in rescuing wounded soldiers and, after valorous conduct in his 11th battle, he is awarded a decoration. He also becomes involved with an English nurse named Catherine Barkley who serves in an Italian military hospital. He begins the relationship as a way to fill the time, after he learns that Catherine's fiancé was killed in the war and she is vulnerable.

After Henry is wounded and hospitalized, the affair intensifies, and he discovers that he really loves Catherine. He asks Catherine to marry him, but she refuses, knowing that she would then be sent back to England and away from him. However, the war imposes physical separations on them, when Henry is sent to the front just as Catherine learns that she is pregnant. His disillusionment with war escalates as he is involved in the retreat from Caporetto, which begins in an orderly, disciplined manner but eventually turns into a panicking mob as authority breaks down and self-preservation becomes paramount. Henry is captured with other officers and held for execution but manages to escape, thus completing his disillusionment with the war. He locates Catherine, and the two escape together to Switzerland, where they await the birth of their baby. They spend idyllic months, despite Catherine's worry that her narrow hips will make the birth difficult. When they seem about to achieve happiness together, their child is stillborn, and Catherine dies after suffering internal hemorrhaging, leaving Frederick Henry alone.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

A Farewell to Arms has been censored both for its language and for sexual innuendo, as well as for the sexual relationship between Henry and Catherine and her unmarried pregnancy, although no graphic sexuality occurs in the novel. The soldiers frequent "bawdy houses" or the officers' "brothel." Henry has had "gonorrhea" and a military officer fears having "contracted syphilis from a prostitute." A dead sergeant who had attempted to desert the army is referred to as a "son of a bitch." Early in the novel, a boisterous officer teases a priest that he is often seen with the girls. When the priest protests, the officer jokingly accuses him of masturbating, saying, "Priest every night five against one." At one point, Catherine teases Henry, who says that he is lost without her and states that he at least had something to do at the front. She says, "Othello with his occupation gone." He replies, "Othello was a nigger."

In the few instances in which Hemingway seemed unable to substitute an innocuous word for what might be viewed as a vulgar term, he used dashes. When speaking about their chances against the Austrians, one of two Italian soldiers says, "They'll shell the———out of us." When the soldiers pass through a small Italian town, they pick up two girls and place them in a jeep, while they speculate about having sex. As they speak, the soldiers reassure the girls that there will be no sex, "using the vulgar word," but Hemingway places dashes in the four places where the "vulgar word" should appear. Then the soldiers bluntly ask the girls if they are sexually inexperienced: "Virgin? . . . Virgin too?"

An officer visits the wounded Henry in the hospital, and he tells Henry that the priest is making big preparations to visit. He teases Henry, "Sometimes I think you and he are a little that way. You know." Catherine visits Henry when he is moved to an American hospital in Milan, and they make love in his room, but the reader has to pay careful attention to the dialogue to know this has occurred. Their lines alternate between Catherine asking if Henry *really* loves

her, and Henry reassuring her that he does. Afterward, as she sits in a chair by the bed, “the wildness was gone” for Henry, and Catherine asks, “Now do you believe I love you?” As the novel progresses, they discuss marrying, and the point is clearly made that Henry wants “to make an honest woman” out of Catherine. They are concerned about legitimizing her pregnancy.

The censorship of *A Farewell to Arms* began before the novel was published, leading to Hemingway’s complaints to editor Maxwell Perkins that too many necessary “unsavory” words had been removed from the manuscript. In letters to Perkins, he stated that “if a word can be printed and is needed in the text it is a weakening to omit it.” Perkins had warned Hemingway in 1926 in regard to the earlier novel *THE SUN ALSO RISES* that “papers now attack a book, not only on grounds of eroticism which could not hold here, but upon that of ‘decency,’ which means *words*.” He had suggested that in that novel another word be substituted for the bull’s “balls,” as well as for other terms.

Two years later, Hemingway was faced with eliminating the natural speech of men at war. Thus, in the original manuscript in the section that detailed the retreat from Caporetto, Hemingway wrote the following: “‘Tomorrow maybe we’ll sleep in *shit*,’ Piani said. ‘I’ll sleep with the queen,’ Bonello said. ‘You’ll sleep with *shit*,’ Piani said sleepily.” The italicized words appear as blanks or dashes in the final novel. Other passages in that same section of the novel have dashes to substitute for “the *fucking* cavalry” and in “So do you, *cocksucker*,” as well as in other instances.

In 1929, *Scribner’s Magazine* contracted to serialize the book with certain changes. As the editor Robert Bridges explained to the author in a letter:

we have in several places put in dashes instead of the realistic phrases which the soldiers of course used. This was not done from any particular squeamishness, but we have long been accepted in many schools as what is known, I believe, as “collateral reading,” and have quite a clientele among those who teach mixed classics. Things which are perfectly natural and realistic in a book are not viewed with the same mind in a serial reading.

Bridges excised the following words from the manuscript that could not be used in a magazine: *balls*, *cocksucker*, *fuck*, *Jesus Christ*, *shit*, *son of a bitch*, *whore*, and *whorehound*. He also deleted a passage in which Henry fantasizes about his weekend in bed with Catherine, a passage that would later be returned to the novel when it was published. The second installment contained increased deletions of passages, including the sanitization of the seduction scene. Despite all of the changes, the June 1929 issue of *Scribner’s Magazine* was banned from the bookstands in Boston, by order of the superintendent of police.

When Max Perkins edited the novel for publication, the following words deleted by Bridges were returned: *Jesus Christ*, *son of a bitch*, *whore*, and *whorehound*. However, Perkins suggested that Hemingway remove the following question: “Would you like to use a bedpan?” He also asked Hemingway to change “‘Miss Van Campen,’ I said, ‘did you ever know a man who tried to

disable himself by kicking himself in the balls?’” to substitute the word *scrotum* for *balls*. Hemingway fought to retain use of the word *cocksucker* by the soldiers, and he claimed that eliminating it would completely emasculate the novel. His suggestion to use the term *c—s—r* was considered still too strong, so only dashes appear for that word.

In spite of the modifications to the text, the novel was considered too risqué. In a strongly negative review entitled “What Is Dirt?” in *Bookman*, Robert Herrick claimed that he was “adamantly opposed to censorship” but found that *A Farewell to Arms* presented one of those times when it was necessary. Other guardians of morality sent scathing letters to *Scribner’s Magazine* threatening to cancel subscriptions because of the “vileness” of the novel, calling it “vulgar beyond express” and condemning the magazine for exploiting “such disgusting situations.”

The novel was banned in Italy in 1929 because of its painfully accurate account of the Italian retreat from Caporetto during World War I. In 1930, the Watch and Ward Society in Boston, buoyed by the earlier successful outcry against the serialization in *Scribner’s Magazine*, placed pressure on booksellers to remove the book from their store windows. In 1933, the novel was one of numerous books burned by the Nazis in Germany, allegedly for its “prurience.” In 1938, the National Organization for Decent Literature (NODL) found the novel to be “objectionable” and placed it on their list of blacklisted books that was then sent to cooperating book dealers who agreed to remove the books from their racks. Such NODL blacklists resulted in elaborate collegial pressure among booksellers, although not legal enforcement against a work. The novel was also banned in Ireland in 1939 because of the “fornication” of Henry and Catherine and the pregnancy outside of marriage.

The novel has experienced more recent challenges. In 1974, parents of students in the Dallas (Texas) Independent School District demanded that it be removed from the high school libraries, along with Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*, William Golding’s *LORD OF THE FLIES*, and Robert Penn Warren’s *All the King’s Men*. They complained that the novel contained a depressing view of life and “immoral” situations. After reviewing the work, school officials retained the novel. The book was also challenged in the Vernon-Verona-Sherrill (New York) School District in 1980 for being a “sex novel,” along with *A SEPARATE PEACE*, *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*, *THE GRAPES OF WRATH*, *OF MICE AND MEN*, and *THE RED PONY*.

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FINAL EXIT: THE PRACTICALITIES OF SELF-DELIVERANCE AND ASSISTED SUICIDE FOR THE DYING

Author: Derek Humphry
Original date and place of publication: 1991, United States
Original publisher: Hemlock Society
Literary form: Nonfiction

SUMMARY

Final Exit is a handbook for assisted suicide that is meant for patients and the doctors and nurses who have to handle their requests for euthanasia. In clear, factual language, Humphry provides a set of instructions that anticipate questions of those considering suicide and provide a detailed process told in simple language. He makes clear that the book "is intended to be read by a mature adult who is suffering from a terminal illness and is considering the option of rational suicide if and when suffering becomes unbearable."

Part I of the book examines and assesses the various steps in committing suicide and suggests creative ways by which to obtain the means of assuring a painless death. Chapters instruct the individual on how to find the right doctor, how to avoid legal problems, how to select a means of death (with a special discussion of cyanide), how to store drugs, and how to obtain "magic pills," as well as discussing the dilemma of quadriplegics, the protocol of letters to be left, and whether to die solo or with someone. Humphry also provides chapters on determining the time to die, whether or not to make it a private affair, and the use of a plastic bag with rubber bands as a backup, should medications alone not be sufficient.

Part II is entitled "Euthanasia Involving Doctors and Nurses." Humphry examines the nature of "justifiable euthanasia" and discusses the roles that

doctors and nurses can legally play in assisted suicide. The book also relates important information regarding having a living will and how to make certain that one's affairs are in order before taking the "final exit."

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Final Exit has had relatively few problems with challenges in the United States, but censorship in varying degrees has occurred in Australia, New Zealand, France, and Great Britain.

In 1991, *Library Journal* announced that the book was making a "firm entrance into public libraries." That year, a challenge was raised in Libertyville, Illinois. Several patrons of the Cook Memorial Library in Libertyville submitted requests that the library remove *Final Exit* from library shelves because the book "diminishes the value of the elderly and encourages breaking the law by assisting homicide and drug abuse." The library rejected the challenge, and the book remained on the shelves.

In March 1992, the Australian censors ordered all copies of the book seized from bookstores and banned the sale of the book. After an appeal by book distributors, in June 1992, the Australian Film and Literature Board of Review reversed the decision of the censors and classified the book as Category 1—Restricted. Under this designation, the book must be sealed in plastic and cannot be sold to anyone under the age of 18. The book has remained banned in Queensland. That same year, New Zealand customs officers were ordered to seize all copies of the book coming into the country and to hold them until the Office of Indecent Publications could review the suitability of the work. After careful review, the censors determined that the book would be permitted unrestricted entry.

The official Web site for the book notes that *Final Exit* is banned in France. In Britain, because assisted suicide is against the law, publishers will not publish the work, but the editions imported from the United States may be sold freely.

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THE FIXER

Author: Bernard Malamud

Original date and place of publication: 1966, United States

Original publisher: Farrar, Straus & Giroux

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

The Fixer, winner of both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, is based on the 1913 trial of Mendel Beiliss, a Jew in Russia who was acquitted after being tried in Kiev. The novel takes place in turn-of-the-century Russia and opens with people hurriedly running away from town and toward a ravine that contains numerous caves. They are shouting excitedly that the dead body of a child has been found covered with stab wounds and the body has been bled white. Anti-Jewish propaganda leaflets are quickly circulated that accuse the Jews of the murder and claim that the boy's blood had been collected "for religious purposes . . . for the making of the Passover matzos." The ridiculous charge frightens many, including 30-year-old Yakov Bok, who passes for a Christian and lives in a sector of Kiev that is forbidden to Jews.

Yakov had only come to Kiev from the provinces five months earlier. He is a man whose life has been marred by tragedy. His mother died 10 minutes after his birth, his father was killed in an anti-Semitic incident a year later, and he spent a miserable childhood in an orphanage. When he married, his wife Raisl did not become pregnant after five years, so he shunned her, and she ran off with another man. In the shtetl, the Jewish ghetto area of Russia, he was known as a fixer, a man who would fix whatever was broken, but half the time he worked for nothing because inhabitants of the shtetl barely had enough to eat. He goes to Kiev hoping to change his luck and to become a financial success. To avoid the bias suffered by Jews, Yakov plans to pass as a Christian.

Passing as a Christian is difficult for Yakov, even after he is offered steady work by a man whose life he saves one bitter, snowy night. One time, for instance, the man's daughter attempts to seduce Yakov, who reluctantly allows himself to be led to her bedroom, but he nearly gives himself away when she stands naked by a washbowl and blood trickles down her leg. His immediate reaction is, "But you're unclean!" Despite her protests that "this is the safest time," he leaves. Already suspicious of Yakov, the woman identifies his reluctance to have sex with her while she is menstruating as a sign of his adherence to Jewish law. His supervisors have already expressed suspicion, and he is soon exposed.

When the murdered child is found, Yakov is made the scapegoat, possibly as punishment for his audacity in attempting to hide his Jewish heritage, and immediately placed in prison where he is subjected to physical and mental torment and spiritual degradation. Dealing with insects, pails of excrement, and beatings becomes secondary to enduring the humiliating body searches during which his body orifices are probed first twice daily then six times daily.

After a few months of imprisonment, Yakov is offered a deal by the prosecutors to lessen his sentence if he will admit his guilt and sign a form stating that the Jewish Nation used him as its agent in the murder. He refuses, and they increase the pressure by offering a complete pardon and physical freedom if he will sign the confession, but Yakov insists on going to trial because an admission of guilt might motivate a pogrom.

After nearly two years, Yakov's wife visits him in prison and they recall his "curses and dirty names" directed against her because of her inability to conceive. Raisl tells him that she became pregnant after leaving him and that the boy is almost a year and a half old. She asks if Yakov will remove her stigma and her son's by claiming to be the child's father. Yakov agrees and signs a statement to that effect.

To the end, Yakov remains resolute and his case finally goes to trial, but the reader is denied knowledge of the outcome.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The Fixer has been challenged for several reasons, ranging from the "vivid grossness of scenes" to being "pornography and filth." The most surprising reason to Malamud has been the attack on the book for being "anti-Semitic" in its language and depiction of characters. Several instances of language use have been identified as "obscene." When his father-in-law suggests that Yakov blames him for Raisl's running off, Yakov responds, "You're blaming yourself for having brought up such a whore." In response to his father-in-law's caution that the horse that he has traded to Yakov is prone to gas if fed too much grass, Yakov replies, "If he's prone to gas let him fart." When a supervisor is accused by Yakov of dishonesty, "lifting his leg Proshko farted" in response. When Yakov is cautioned to not forget his God, he says angrily, "What do I get from him but a bang on the head and a stream of piss in my face?" When the fixer stops for lunch while on his journey, the horse "spattered a yellow stream on the road" and "Yakov urinated on some brown ferns."

Parents of students in Aurora (Colorado) High School English classes challenged the use of this book in the classroom because of "inappropriate" language, and the school board banned it from use in 1976. A Pennsylvania school district removed the book from classroom use and provided an alternate selection to students because of the "obscenities" in the novel.

The most extensive challenge to the novel occurred in 1982, in Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 in New York (see *THE BEST SHORT STORIES BY NEGRO WRITERS*), where the school board ordered *The Fixer* and 10 other works removed from the junior and senior high school libraries. Special care was taken with *The Fixer*; one of the few books that was also used in English classes, and the principal removed all copies from the classroom and storage closet. In the court record, specific objectionable passages are cited as "filthy" or "anti-Semitic." As the brickyard overseer, Yakov's job is to watch that the men do not steal; when he challenges the supervisor, the man responds angrily, "What do you think goes on in the wagons at night? Are the drivers on their

knees fucking their mothers?” After he is jailed, Yakov is harassed by his Russian cellmates: “So you’re the bastard Jew who killed the Christian boy. . . . Who else would do anything like that but a motherfucking Zhid?” The investigating magistrate asks Proshko what Yakov did with the rubles he is accused of stealing, and the supervisor responds that he probably took the money to bed and gave “it a fuck once in a while.” At another point in the novel, Yakov is threatened, “No more noise out of you or I’ll shoot your Jew cock off.”

Five students filed a suit against the school board, and the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and other organizations also became involved. In an amicus brief, filed by the AJC with the American Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, the American Orthopsychiatric Association, the Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island, Long Island Council of Churches, the National Council of Teachers of English, the Unitarian Universalist Association, and Writers in the Public Interest, submitted in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York against Island Trees School District, the groups declared their astonishment that *The Fixer* “was banned because it contained anti-Semitic references. That assertion can lead to one of two conclusions: that its author is either illiterate or dishonest. *The Fixer* clearly condemns anti-Semitism, as it does the authoritarian society which is the seed bed of anti-Semitism.” The case was heard by the United States Supreme Court, which ruled against the school board on June 25, 1982, in *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico*, and the books were returned to the libraries.

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FRUITS OF PHILOSOPHY: THE PRIVATE COMPANION OF MARRIED COUPLES

Author: Charles Knowlton

Original dates and places of publication: 1832, United States; 1833, England

Original publishers: Privately printed; James Watson

Literary form: Medical handbook

SUMMARY

Fruits of Philosophy: The Private Companion of Married Couples, the first popularly written English-language medical guide to preventing conception, was

initially subtitled “The Private Companion of Married People.” The book, written by a physician in simple and clear language so that the poorest members of society could understand and benefit from it, deals with reproductive physiology, coitus, and conception control. The book began as a slim pamphlet on the methods of preventing conception that Knowlton gave to patients who requested such knowledge.

The book opens with Knowlton’s response to the arguments against birth control, then explains its many advantages, including the control of overpopulation, reduction of poverty and crime, prevention of hereditary diseases, preservation and improvement of the species, and reduction of abortions and the ill health suffered by women who are subjected to excessive childbearing. In brief, he first discusses the moral philosophy of contraception. He then provides an anatomical discussion of the reproductive organs and explains the processes of menstruation and conception, both promoting and preventing conception. Some of Knowlton’s physiological descriptions are inaccurate and need updating, but his chemical methods of contraception were relatively effective, and “the tone and point of view are, on the whole, surprisingly modern.”

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The work gained little notice in the popular press, and the professional medical press waited 11 years after it appeared to publish a first review in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*. In contrast, the legal authorities in Massachusetts gave it nearly immediate attention as they rushed to prevent the information from reaching readers. In early 1832, only months after publication of the work, a local lawyer circulated a pamphlet in which he accused Knowlton of making prostitution easy and inexpensive at 50 cents per copy, while removing from it the “inconvenience and dangers.” The author was brought to trial in Taunton, Massachusetts, and charged with distributing “obscene material,” then fined \$50 and court costs. In December 1832, a rival physician signed a complaint in Cambridge, Massachusetts, charging that the book was “immoral” and that it “undermines chastity.” Knowlton, who suffered from a heart condition, was found guilty of distributing his book and sentenced to three months of hard labor in the Cambridge House of Correction, from January through March 1833. Late in the following year, a clergyman from Ashfield, Massachusetts, registered a complaint that charged Knowlton with “undermining society” by distributing *Fruits of Philosophy*. From late 1834 through mid-1835, Knowlton appeared in court in Greenfield, Massachusetts, three different times to answer this charge, but the case was finally dismissed because the jury in all three trials could not come to a decision.

The notoriety of the trials made the book a best seller, which went through nine editions in Knowlton’s lifetime. He died in 1850, but the book gained international fame after his death because of the epic 1877 Bradlaugh-

Besant trial in England. The book had been published by British publisher James Watson; at his death in 1874, London publisher Charles Watts bought the plates from his widow and placed the book back into print. Two years later, Henry Cook published in Bristol, England, a pirated copy of the book with the addition of allegedly obscene illustrations to enliven the book. Cook was arrested, tried, and sentenced to two years at hard labor. At the advice of well-known freethinkers Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant, Watts sought an audience with the court to identify himself as the original publisher of the book in its original condition. His aim was to return the book to its original condition, minus illustrations, and original level of acceptance, for it had been published in England for 40 years without prosecution. Watts was arrested, taken to London, and arraigned. He pleaded guilty to publishing a book about the physiological details of sex and paid a fine in the amount of 500 pounds.

Bradlaugh and Besant were angered by the cowardliness of Watts in admitting to publishing an “obscene” book, and they were determined to test the court. Late in 1877, they published the book themselves, with a new introduction, through their Free Thought Publishing Society. To be certain that the police would arrest them, Bradlaugh and Besant sent the London police a copy of the book and informed the police exactly where and at what time they would sell the first copy. A few days later, a detective in plain clothes purchased a copy of the book for six pence, then arrested the two. They were tried before Lord Chief Justice, Sir Alexander Cockburn.

During the five days of the trial of *Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant v. The Queen*, large crowds gathered outside of Guildhall expressing their sympathy with the defendants. Sir Hardinge Gifford, the prosecutor, condemned the book as being “a dirty, filthy book. . . . The object of it is to enable a person to have sexual intercourse, and not to have that which in the order of providence is the natural result of that sexual intercourse.” In contrast, Bradlaugh and Besant spoke of population problems and examined the meaning of the term “obscenity.” They and their prominent witnesses, among them the consulting physician to Metropolitan Hospital, spoke of England’s poor and the need to limit the population.

The jury returned an ambiguous verdict, stating: “We are unanimously of the opinion that the book in question is calculated to deprave public morals, but at the same time we entirely exonerate the defendants from any corrupt motives in publishing it.” Although he interpreted the verdict to mean that the jury thought the defendants guilty, Cockburn let the defendants go without a sentence or a fine, but they were told that they had to surrender the book and vow never to publish it again. When Bradlaugh and Besant declared clearly to the judge that they planned to publish, the judge sentenced them to six months in prison, a fine of £200 each, and recognizances of £500 each for two years. The defendants were released on bail while they appealed the case on the grounds that the specific words upon which the prosecution based its charge of “obscene” had never been expressly identified. Thus, in writing the

final opinion on the appeal decision, the judge made it clear that “we express no opinion whether this is a filthy and obscene, or an innocent book. We have not the materials before us for coming to a decision on this point. . . . the indictment simply averred that an offence had been committed, and did not shew how it had been committed.” The defendants recovered their stock of books, stamped in red “Recovered from Police,” and sold them.

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GARGANTUA AND PANTAGRUEL

Author: François Rabelais

Original dates and places of publication: 1567, France; 1708, England; 1927, United States

Original publishers: Privately published (France and England); Boni & Liveright (United States)

Literary form: Satire

SUMMARY

Gargantua and Pantagruel, originally five separate volumes later combined under the one title, reflects the author's changing experiences, interests, and attitudes in Renaissance France. The five books were separately titled *Pantagruel* (1533), *Gargantua* (1535), the *Third Book* (1546), the *Fourth Book* (1548–1552), and the *Fifth Book* (1562–1564). Although Rabelais had Cardinal Jean du Bellay as his longtime patron, and he was under the protection of François I of France for the publication of the *Fourth Book*, his bawdy and often obscene satires, joined with his lack of attention to social niceties, frequently put him into conflict with the authorities.

Written as a burlesque of the classical epic and chivalric romance, the work is an exuberant mock-heroic effort that purports to relate the lives, heroic deeds, and sayings of Gargantua and his son Pantagruel, two members of a pleasant race of giants who love to eat and drink heartily and who enjoy earthly pleasures and humor. The author claimed that the work “demon-

strates the theme that the real purpose of life is to expand the soul by exploring the sources of varied experience." The unifying philosophy of the work is expressed by Pantagruel, "Do As Thou Wilt." Using puns, wordplay, synonyms, and flexible syntax, Rabelais creates a world in which restrictions on sensual or intellectual experience are not tolerated, and excessive discipline is considered inhuman and evil. Those who would restrict freedom are satirized throughout the five books: the militarists, abusers of justice, pedants, and medieval scholastics.

The five books are only loosely connected, and the work contains nothing resembling a plot, for to force an order on the events would be too restrictive for the author. Because his concern is freedom of the *mind*, anarchy is not an issue, but he avoids the unimaginative, conforming mind. In presenting the adventures, Rabelais used extremely frank language to carry out his purpose, to force readers to recognize the ludicrous preoccupations of mankind and to make them laugh at the incongruities and absurdities of society.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Gargantua and Pantagruel contains a large number of humorous references that have been labeled "obscene" for over four centuries. Rabelais frequently speaks of emetic subjects in an exaggerated manner to draw attention and laughter from readers. In one passage, he tells of Gargantua's horse who "pissed to ease her belly, but it was in such abundance, that it did overflow the country seven leagues, and all the piss of that urinal flood ran glib away towards the ford of Vede, wherewith the water was so swollen, that all the forces the enemy had there were with great horror drowned." In a second passage, he suggests that the city walls of Paris would be better fortified if female organs, "callibristis" or "contrapunctums," were used instead of stones, because they are cheaper and can more easily be arranged according to size. He states wryly that "no thunderbolt or lightning would fall upon it. For why? They are all either blest or consecrated." In still another passage, Rabelais relates the story of a miraculous codpiece that sexually arouses anyone near it. When its owner enters a theater in which a passion play is being performed, all on stage and in the audience are so sexually aroused that they immediately begin to copulate randomly with each other.

Although less frequently, deviance appears in some of the stories, as in the episode in which hermaphrodites appear and in another in which boys are maintained for sodomy. In an ode to wine, Rabelais speaks bluntly of oral sex: "If there came such liquor from my ballock, would you not willingly thereafter suck the udder whence it issued?"

The first two books were published under the pseudonym of Alcofribas Nasier without the author's knowledge in 1533 and were promptly suppressed by censors in the French Parliament in 1534 and placed on the Index of the Sorbonne for being obscene and sacrilegious. In 1535, a papal bull was issued to remove censure from the work, and the third book was published

in France using the author's name with the endorsement of King François I. In 1552, while the king was out of the country, the Sorbonne censored the fourth book upon publication, but in 1554, Cardinal de Chatillon convinced Henri II to raise the ban on the work. In 1564, Rabelais was banned once again and listed in the Index Librorum Prohibitorum, and all of his works were banned.

The extreme frankness of Rabelais's language was preserved in a similarly frank English translation in the late 17th century by Sir Thomas Urquhart and Peter Motteux, in an edition that was not published until 1708 as a part of *The Complete Works of Doctor François Rabelais*. The translators used language that has been called "obscene," including such terms as *codpiece*, *bunghole*, *ballocks*, *teats*, *genitories*, and *spermatic vessels*. In 1894, the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, under the zealous leadership of Anthony Comstock, brought civil proceedings against the bankrupt Worthington Book Publishing Company that sought the right to sell off assets. Among those assets were the complete works of Rabelais, Queen Margaret of Navarre's *THE HEPTAMERON*, Giovanni Boccaccio's *THE DECAMERON*, Henry Fielding's *TOM JONES*, Sir Richard Burton's *THE ARABIAN NIGHTS*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *CONFESSIONS*, and Ovid's *ART OF LOVE*. The receiver for the company asked the court to allow sale of the books, expensive volumes of world-renowned literary classics. Comstock appeared in the court record as opposing the sale. In stating the decision of the court in *In re Worthington Company*, 30 N.Y.S. 361 (1894), Judge Morgan J. O'Brien stated that "a seeker after the sensual and degrading parts of a narrative may find in all these works, as in those of other great authors, something to satisfy his pruriency," but he added that to simply condemn an entire literary work because of a few episodes "would compel the exclusion from circulation of a very large proportion of the works of fiction of the most famous writers of the English language." The court decision characterized the specific editions as being "choice editions, both as to the letter-press and the bindings . . . as to prevent their being generally sold or purchased, except by those who would desire them for their literary merit, or for their worth as specimens of fine book-making." In short, even though the text remained the same as that in cheaper editions, the "very artistic character, the high qualities of style, the absence of those glaring and crude pictures [set these books] entirely apart from such gross and obscene writings as it is the duty of the public authorities to suppress."

The United States Custom Office continued to ban the import of all of Rabelais's works until the 1930 Tariff Act ended the censorship of acknowledged literary works, including the Motteux translation of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* with Frank C. Pepe's illustrations.

In 1951, city and county law enforcement officers obtained a warrant and raided the Dubuque (Iowa) Public Library, where they seized books charged with being obscene. Among those works were *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, *The Decameron*, and *Tom Jones*. The works were later returned to library shelves, as "restricted" material.

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GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT

Author: Laura Z. Hobson

Original date and place of publication: 1947, United States

Original publisher: Simon & Schuster

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

In *Gentleman's Agreement*, Phil Green is portrayed as the man next door, the typical American, unaware of many of the problems in his society. Green is a middle-class man and a widowed father who earns his living as a reporter. In order to carry out a newspaper assignment about Jewish life in America, he pretends to be Jewish. As a result of his newly assumed identity, he realizes that discrimination is more far-reaching than he ever suspected.

Lonely after his wife's death, he becomes romantically linked with Kathy, a divorcée, whose resentment of his work surfaces when she has to adjust to his various aliases. While trying to convince Green that she is really not bigoted, she begins to display the characteristics of a latent bigot.

As he continues his research, Green discovers that a surprising number of the people around him, including his family and friends, harbor deep prejudices. As a result of this discovery, his newspaper story emerges even more powerfully than he anticipated.

Gentleman's Agreement delves into the imperfections of society, specifically the prejudices of the American mainstream in the 1940s. Keenly aware of subtle forms of discrimination, Hobson describes the latent anti-Semitism rampant in America at that time. She focuses on people who do not regard themselves as anti-Semites and who deny charges of bigotry with the familiar rationalization that "Some of my best friends are Jews." Hobson attempts to show that many of these people are as much enemies of the Jews as are the overt anti-Semites.

Social problems are highlighted as Green pursues his assignment posing as a Jew. He discovers that Jews are barred admission to various country clubs and hotel resorts, as well as prohibited from buying homes in some neighborhoods. He learns the extent to which there is a "gentlemen's agreement" existing in the United States concerning how to treat Jews.

The major theme in *Gentleman's Agreement* is the need to recognize dominant prejudices and to create a society where people are accepted for what they really are. The story appeals for mutual respect and tolerance for all people. Hobson emphasizes that prejudices are not natural but learned. As she writes, "We are born in innocence . . . in an unstained purity of heart."

The author provides her characters with lengthy speeches that expose the hidden biases of American society. At various points in the novel, Green's mother and Kathy refer to "those people" or "that kind" in shows of anti-Semitism that lead to lessons in tolerance delivered by Green. As Green gathers material for his exposé of anti-Semitism in the United States, his relationship with Kathy becomes strained. His growing identification with his subject and his increased awareness contrast with Kathy's indifference to the social injustice. Their relationship suffers. As Green perseveres in his crusade, and after he passionately lectures Kathy, she sees fully how ignorant she has been regarding the treatment of Jews in society. Her acceptance of this knowledge and her understanding of Green's determination bring them together.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Gentleman's Agreement was banned from reading lists at DeWitt Clinton High School, Bronx, New York, in February 1948, by high school principal Dr. John V. Walsh, who told a reporter for the *New York Times* that he "barred Mrs. Hobson's novel on the ground that it makes light of extra-marital relations." At the time, the high school was an all-boys' institution. A teacher had offered the novel as a gift to the high school library, but Dr. Walsh refused to accept the book because of its perceived "immoral passages." On February 15, 1948, the executive board of the Teachers Union, CIO, adopted a resolution to urge that the principal withdraw his orders to ban the novel from the library. In a letter addressed to both Walsh and the associate superintendent in charge of the academic high school division, Frederic Ernst, the resolution stated, "in the future, steps should be taken to insure there will be no repetition of indirect censorship of socially significant books." The resolution also accused the principal of banning the book on the "flimsiest of pretexts" and questioned "How long will we continue to pretend that our students know only what would be approved by the most unworldly of schoolmasters?"

The following month, the executive board of the Parent-Teacher Association also protested the ban. In a letter dated March 3, 1948, and addressed to Ernst, the president of the high school PTA, Mrs. Jean Subin, wrote that school libraries are filled with the works of Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Thackeray, Dumas, and Sinclair Lewis and noted that "these esteemed authors devote many passages to 'extra-marital relations.'" She asserted, "Your reason for the banning of 'Gentleman's Agreement' has, therefore, no foundation." As the *New York Times* reported, she ended her letter by reminding the school

administration, "Censorship goes against the principle of democracy and has no place in our public schools."

On March 17, 1948, representatives of the United Parents Associations (UPA) contacted Dr. William Jansen, superintendent of schools, and urged him to create a new plan for reviewing books presented to the New York public school libraries as gifts to eliminate controversies similar to the one involving *Gentleman's Agreement*. The UPA suggested the formation of an advisory committee consisting of a member of the Board of Education, two members of the Board of Superintendents, "a representative of parent opinion to be selected by the UPA," and the chief librarian of the New York Public Library to study any gift book that a school principal believed should be rejected. The *New York Times* reported on March 18, 1948, that a committee of the Board of Education was currently studying *Gentleman's Agreement*. The board's committee was expected to make a recommendation regarding the novel within a short time, after which the Board of Superintendents would provide a final decision. In an interview, James Marshall, a Manhattan Board of Education member, told a reporter that he could not recall any time in which the Board of Education had overruled a decision of the superintendents on a book ban and declared that the superintendents "are the pedagogical experts and know whether a book should be banned or not."

The Board of Superintendents did not reverse the ban and approve the novel for public high school reading lists until October 21, 1948. Pressure was placed on the board by Maximilian Moss, vice president of the Board of Education, who submitted passages from 15 books currently on the approved reading list and asked the superintendents to compare them with the declared "immoral passage" in *Gentleman's Agreement*. In a statement given to the *New York Times*, the Board of Superintendents explained the following:

The Board of Superintendents was aware of the very high purpose of "Gentleman's Agreement," but had reservations about authorizing its being in the high school libraries because of elements in the book that could be considered by many people as unsuitable for high school use.

However, the Board of Superintendents listened to proponents of the book who advanced its fine purpose as against whatever limitations the book might have for purpose of high school listing. The Board of Superintendents, therefore, reconsidered all the aspects of the case and decided that the book should be authorized for use in high school libraries.

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THE GIVER

Author: Lois Lowry

Original date and place of publication: 1993, United States

Original publisher: Houghton Mifflin Company

Literary form: Science fiction novel

SUMMARY

Lois Lowry's *The Giver* is the story of Jonas, an exceptionally talented child in a utopian community who learns the price that humanity must pay to maintain a seemingly idyllic existence. The book is written in the third person, but the narrative viewpoint is always that of Jonas, as the reader sees what he sees and feels what he feels throughout. Until the age of 12, he leads a peaceful, albeit regulated, life with his sister, Lily, and parents; his mother is employed at the Department of Justice, and his father works as a Nurturer, keeping babies well. Jonas enjoys riding his bicycle, playing with his friends Asher and Fiona, and musing about his future. In Jonas's world, everything from individual desire, to the weather, to a person's career is regulated. The community rulers require that every member of this nameless, timeless community occupies a productive role in the society. At the age of three, all children begin the daily routine of "dreamtelling," which requires them to describe at their breakfast table the dreams they had the previous night. Three is also the age at which children are taught the correct use of language, regardless of individual development or speech skills. Children under the age of six wear jackets which fasten at the back, but when they turn seven they are given front-fastening clothing to signify their increased independence. At the age of eight their "comfort object" is taken away, and they are given another new jacket, which contains pockets to indicate that they must now look after small belongings. Eight-year-old children must also perform voluntary service outside of school hours. At the age of nine, girls remove their hair ribbons, and boys and girls receive their own bicycle, while at age 10 both boys and girls have their hair ceremoniously cut. When they reach the age of 11, boys are given long trousers and girls receive "new undergarments."

The members of the community receive a professional assignment at the Ceremony of Twelve, at which time the child becomes an adult. Jonas waits apprehensively for his assignment, while his friends receive desirable and appropriate assignments, such as "Fish Hatchery Attendant" and "Assistant Director of Recreation." After all of the other Twelves have received their assignments, Jonas continues to wait, then learns that he has been selected to become the next Receiver of Memory, because of his intelligence and courage, and because he has the "Capacity to See Beyond" (the ability to see colors). The assignment instantly changes his life, separating him even further from his friends than he has expected. The Chief Elder warns him that his training will involve pain. "Physical pain . . . of a magnitude that none of us here can

comprehend because it is beyond our experience.” While his friends find no surprises in their assignments, Jonas is “filled with fear”; he also knows that the last Twelve appointed to be Receiver of Memory failed. Not until Chapter 18 does he learn that 10 years earlier, the last Receiver of Memory, a girl named Rosemary, had found the memories of pain and sadness so unbearable after only five weeks of training that she had gone directly to the Chief Elder and asked to experience “Release” (to die). Because no rule existed at the time to prevent the fulfillment of her request, The Giver never saw her again, but he still grieves. He also reminds Jonas that the new rules Jonas has received prohibit him from doing the same.

The Ceremony of Twelve is the next to last ritual of the community because the children are now adults, and they are expected to spend the rest of their lives fulfilling their assignments. Two additional concerns remain for members of the community, aside from their functions in society: Sex and Death. Artificial insemination is the means by which members of the community procreate. A girl selected at the age of 12 to become a “Birthmother” spends three years at the Birthing Center and gives birth to three babies, who are not brought up by their natural mothers but allocated to volunteer parents who are permitted two children, one boy and one girl. All sexual longing is eliminated at puberty, aided by the process of “dreamtelling,” which is largely intended as a monitor of sexual desire, called “Stirrings” in the novel. Jonas confesses one morning to an erotic dream, and he is immediately prescribed a daily pill to eliminate such stirrings, but he openly rebels later in the book and stops taking the pill.

Death is euphemistically named “Release” by the community, and it functions as the final ritual. Young children are encouraged to believe that those who undergo “Release” are simply choosing to leave the community. Immediately preceding the “Release,” the community holds a ceremony, which includes a “telling of the life,” a toast, an anthem, a good-bye speech from the individual to be released if an adult, some farewell speeches from those who know him or her, then a walk through the door to the Releasing Room. Infants that do not thrive are also sent there, as are persistent violators of the community codes.

Jonas becomes increasingly fearful in his new position when he learns in the first training instructions that he is no longer allowed to share his dreams with anyone and that he may lie, both of which contradict everything he has been taught. The only person who understands his fears is the current Receiver of Memories, a “bearded man with pale eyes,” who tells Jonas to call him The Giver. His job, which will eventually fall on Jonas, is to consult his memories of “the whole world” and advise the Committee of Elders in their decisions. The Committee of Elders has no memories of the past, or of anywhere else, and they cannot imagine the world other than it is; therefore, they have trouble addressing new problems. Other than that, no other reason is given in the book for safekeeping by The Giver of the memories of how life used to be.

The Giver describes himself as not as old as he looks and says he has been made tired by the burden of knowledge and memories, which have consumed his life. He emphasizes to Jonas that it is not the memory of nostalgia—not the recollections of childhood normally indulged in by the old—that he must transmit. Rather, “It’s the memories of the whole world,” including the meaning of snow, rain, and other weather, because the community is climate-controlled. This involves a ritualistic laying on of hands and an extra-sensory simulation of the sensation of cold.

The Giver begins to transmit his memories to Jonas, first pleasant memories of snow, sledding, sun, and sailing, then gradually adding memories of injuries, of war, of hate, of horrors. As Jonas acquires a greater number of memories, he feels anger toward other community members, who are “satisfied with their lives which had none of the vibrance his own was taking on.” None of them understand what Jonas is learning every day, and he begins to feel “desperately lonely” because his family cannot understand what he has experienced. He lies and describes his job as pleasant but grows more and more estranged from his community and feels increasingly distressed.

After continued transmissions of memories, both pleasurable and painful, The Giver concludes his education of Jonas by showing him a videotape recording of a “Release” of unwanted babies conducted by his father. Jonas had always assumed that babies who were released went “Elsewhere,” and he had never imagined that his father gave a lethal injection to babies who were different because they were twins or because they, like his baby stepbrother, Gabriel, were difficult to care for. Jonas now feels a terrible responsibility to reform his community and decides to escape, believing that, when he leaves, his memories will be transmitted to others, and the community will regain its links to the past.

When Jonas learns that his temporarily adopted brother, Gabriel, is in danger of being released because the baby has not been thriving, he steals his father’s bicycle and takes Gabriel with him on a ride toward “Elsewhere.” During the cold, dark, and painful journey, Jonas twists an ankle and does his best to care for the weakening Gabriel. They reach a sled on a hilltop, and Jonas and Gabriel get onto the sled and sail toward “Elsewhere.” “The runners sliced through the snow and the wind whipped at his face as they sped in a straight line through an incision that seemed to lead to the final destination, the place that he had always felt was waiting, the ‘Elsewhere’ that held their future and their past.”

The novel’s ending is ambiguous, and the reader is left to question if the vision of lights at the bottom of the hill and the sound of voices singing are actual or if they are a sign that Jonas is sinking into unconsciousness.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The Giver has been a critical success, receiving numerous prestigious literary awards, including the Newbery Medal in 1994, an award for the best book

published in the United States for children or young adults in the preceding year. Many critics compare it favorably to adult classics such as *BRAVE NEW WORLD* (1933), *FAHRENHEIT 451* (1953), and *1984* (1948), and to children's classics such as *White Mountains* (1967) and *A Wrinkle in Time* (1962). Despite critical acclaim and the enthusiastic support of librarians, educators, and students, the novel has been the source of controversy across the United States. According to a report by the organization People For the American Way, *The Giver* was the second most frequently challenged book in 1996.

Parents have protested use of the novel in public schools because it contains the themes of infanticide and euthanasia, as well as suicide. In one particularly controversial scene, the protagonist watches his father sticking a needle filled with lethal liquid into the skull of an infant, "puncturing the place where the fragile skin pulsed." His father says cheerfully, "I know, I know. It hurts, little guy. But I have to use a vein, and the veins in your arms are still too teeny-weeny." Jonas's father pushes in the plunger, then says, "All done," and sends the small corpse down a chute. Challengers object to the scene because it is so graphic and transforms Jonas's once beloved father into a cold-blooded murderer.

Most people who have fought to censor *The Giver* confess that they have never read the novel in its entirety, and they sometimes misquote events. For example, parent Anna Cerbasi of Port Saint Lucie, Florida, who asked school board members in 1999 to remove the novel from middle-school shelves, objected to the book because "Nobody is a family. They kill the baby who cries at night. I read it and thought—no way. Not for sixth grade. Maybe high school, maybe." Ms. Cerbasi's concerns about the novel raise legitimate questions about who should decide which books are appropriate for which children, and whether or not disturbing stories are appropriate for youth even if they teach a valuable lesson. The incident she specifies, however, does not occur in the novel; the authorities plan to "release" Gabriel, the baby who cries constantly, but he is rescued by Jonas.

The outcry against *The Giver* is often fueled by taking issues in the book out of context. In 2003, former Oregon Republican Party activist Betty Freauf posted the article "Is *The Giver* on Your Horizon?" on her Web site, NewsWithViews.com. The article opens with her claim that a 1963 issue of the *Congressional Record* states that the 17th of the 45 Communist Party goals was "to get control of the schools and use them as transmission belts for socialism and current Communist propaganda. They also wanted to get control of the teachers associations and put the Communist party line into textbooks." From that opening, Freauf interprets various education measures passed in recent years by Oregon lawmakers and proclaims their goals similar to the planned community of *The Giver*.

The Giver, which received the 1994 Newbery Award, told about a special community where every child felt safe, ate plenty of food, took pills to stop any pain and lived in a family no larger than four. Overpopulation was not a

problem since new babies were limited to 50 a year and non-productive people such as the severally [sic] handicapped or the elderly were simply expected to voluntarily check out! Today, animals are placed on a higher pedestal than humans!!

Can you image the trauma that book might cause in a young child if they had a handicapped sibling or an elderly grandparent with a stroke? (Oregon voters passed the first euthanasia law in the U.S. in 1994. On the [sic] 5/31/2003 there was a story on T.V. about the Australian who has built a suicide machine which will cost \$100 in America). Read my article "Are We Destined for Selective Reduction?"

Why would such a book, which glamorizes death and the occult, be read to children as young as third graders? Book selection committees, perhaps without even reading *The Giver*, may have erroneously assumed because it received the prestigious Newbery Award, it would be safe. . . . Schools teach death education classes, take children to mortuaries and then wring their hands when teenagers commit suicide.

The Giver faced a challenge in 1999, in South Carolina, when the parent of a Pickens County student complained to the school board that references to death in the novel are inappropriate for children in elementary school classrooms. After additional parents joined the complaint, the school board voted to ban the novel from elementary school libraries and classrooms, but they agreed to allow the book to remain in high school classrooms and libraries. That same year, the superintendent of schools, Eugene Dukes, ordered the temporary removal of the novel from seventh-grade classrooms in the Union County (Florida) school district. Sandy Lane Avery, the mother of a seventh-grade student, began the drive to remove the book from classrooms, stating at a school board meeting that she objected to many of the explicit details in the book, especially the manner in which the babies receive a lethal injection. She asked the board, "Why do we need a fictional book to teach our children things we are trying not to get them to get involved in?" Brenda Burgin, mother of another student, also spoke out and told the board that 12-year-old children are too young emotionally to deal with concepts presented in the book: "This book opens a child's mind to experiences and thoughts that are not appropriate." Among opponents of the proposed ban was Reverend Bo Hammock, pastor of the Providence Village Baptist Church, who told the board that he is in favor of censorship, but he had recommended the book to his 12-year-old daughter. He voiced the opinion, "This book does not paint a picture of encouragement for murder. If you hold this stuff to its context, you will have no problem with this book." After hearing both opponents and supporters of *The Giver*, school board chairman Richard Cason stated that the district had not followed the board's policy for challenged books. In October 1999, the five-member committee composed of librarians, educators, and a community member reviewed the book and determined that it was appropriate for classroom use. On October 26, 1999, the matter came before the Union County school

board, which overturned the superintendent's decision to pull the novel from middle schools, after hearing from parents and students who supported the book.

In 2001, parents in the Colorado school district in which Columbine High School is located complained to the school board that it was inappropriate for teachers to read *The Giver* aloud in the classroom because "it portrays suicide, euthanasia, and infanticide in a neutral to positive light." Mark S. Hanson, father of an 11-year-old daughter, told the board that the book is particularly inappropriate "in a state with the nation's fifth-highest suicide rate and in the same state school district as Columbine High School . . . A lot has changed in our community and some things should be re-evaluated." The school board voted to keep the book in the elementary school library and to allow teachers to read the book in the classroom and to openly discuss the disturbing issues.

On January 10, 2005, WDAF-TV4 in Missouri interviewed representatives of a parents' group that had approached the Blue Springs School District board of education in the attempt to have *The Giver* removed from the eighth-grade curriculum at Delta Wood Junior High School in Blue Springs. Led by parent Eileen Casper, the 20-member group claimed that the book is "celebrating euthanasia and teen suicide." The group wrote letters to the district, sought entry to closed-door board meetings, and asked the school board to read the book. The book remains on the eighth-grade required reading list, but students who object to the content may select an alternative title. In another broadcast, KCRG-TV9, a television station in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, reported on April 21, 2005, that Shaun and Lorrie Holcomb, the parents of a fourth-grade student, complained to a school district review committee that passages in *The Giver* containing sex and death made their son feel uncomfortable. Numerous teachers and parents defended the book, but the review committee recommended that elementary school teachers not teach the book and that it should be removed from classrooms and the school library.

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GO ASK ALICE

Author: Anonymous

Original date and place of publication: 1971, United States

Original publisher: Prentice Hall

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Go Ask Alice is a fictionalized account said to be based on the actual diary of a middle-class 15-year-old drug user, the daughter of a college professor. The publisher only identifies "Anonymous" as the author. At the outset, the author has very low self-esteem and expresses dissatisfaction with her appearance. She dislikes her hair, hates the condition of her skin, and feels fat, and she has just broken up with her boyfriend. She learns that her family will soon move because her father has received an appointment as dean of political science at another university, and she is excited at the prospect. When school is out for the summer in her new place of residence, the author returns to her old friends while spending the summer with her grandparents.

Bored with her summer, the author jumps at the chance to attend a party given by one of the "top echelon," a girl who ignored her before but who wants to attend the university where the author's father is a dean. The partygoers play a variation on the children's game, "Button, Button, Who's Got the Button?" but the author is not aware that 10 of the 14 colas are spiked with LSD and the "lucky" winners are those who unwittingly select the acid-laced soda. This is her first experience, and she is both fearful and pleased afterward. In her entry a few days later, she writes, "I simply can't wait to try pot." She has also decided that LSD is not so bad and that "all

the things I've heard about LSD were obviously written by uninformed, ignorant people like my parents who obviously don't know what they are talking about." Her drug experiences escalate to taking "speed" and to stealing her grandmother's sleeping pills and tranquilizers. During her second acid trip, the author has sex, then worries afterward that she might become pregnant. She vows to stop using drugs, but she keeps her grandmother's sleeping pills.

The author returns home and becomes caught up in a vicious cycle of "Bennies," "Dexies," and hashish. She takes pills to give her bursts of energy during the day and pills to calm her down and let her sleep at night. She and a female friend become involved with two male college students who convince the girls to sell pot, which the girls do gladly, because the boys do not have time to sell and fewer girls than boys are "busted" for selling. Further, the author views herself as "Rich's chick all the way" so she has to do what she can to help him. That includes selling marijuana, LSD, and barbiturates not only to high school students but also to junior high and grade school students as well. Rich allows her to visit the apartment that he shares with Ted only when he restocks her supply of drugs. She finds that she has been used when she and Chris arrive unexpectedly at the apartment and find the two young men having sex. The author berates herself for all that she did for Rich, and she and her friend decide that they will "stay clean," which means running away to San Francisco. Introduced to heroin, she and Chris are sexually and sadistically abused. They return to their parents and high school, but the drug use does not stop. The author is eventually sent to a psychiatrist to deal with the drug use, but she runs away to Denver. She shares a hovel with several others who remain constantly stoned, and the dirt and depressing surroundings convince her to return home again.

Once home, the author decides to finally stop her drug use, but her former friends refuse to allow that. When she has remained drug-free for a time, others begin to threaten her. While babysitting, she unknowingly consumes a batch of homemade candy that has been laced with LSD, which results in a placement in the state mental hospital. Upon her release, the author seems determined to remain free of drugs, and her diary entries are all upbeat. In the final entry, she decides not to keep another diary because she now feels strong enough not to need that crutch. An afterword reveals that only three weeks later she is found dead of a drug overdose that may or may not have been accidental.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Go Ask Alice has been the target of numerous challenges and attempts to ban it because of its language, drug use, and sexual violence and promiscuity. In the 1970s, schools cited the "objectionable" language and explicit sexual scenes as their reasons for removing it from their libraries in Kalamazoo, Michigan (1974); Saginaw, Michigan (1975); Eagle Pass, Texas (1977); and

Trenton, New Jersey (1977). Written parental permission was required to take the book out of the library in Marcellus (New York) School District (1975), Ogden (Utah) School District (1979), and Safety Harbor Middle School Library in St. Petersburg, Florida (1982).

The work was one of 11 books banned by the school board in Island Trees Free School District No. 26 in New York in 1982. The court record specified the following passage as “objectionable” and representative of the reason for the ban: “shitty, goddamned, pissing, ass, goddamned be Jesus, screwing life’s, ass, shit. Doris was ten and had humped with who knows how many men in between but now when I face a girl it’s like facing a boy. I get all excited and turned on. I want to screw with the girl.” The novel was returned to the library after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 et al. v. Pico et al.*, 457 U.S. 853 (1982) that the First Amendment rights of students had been violated in the banning.

In 1983, the book was removed from the school libraries because a school board member in Osseo School District in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, found the language in the book to be “personally offensive,” and the same occurred in the Pagosa Springs, Colorado, schools when a parent objected to the “graphic language, subject matter, immoral tone, and lack of literary quality found in the book.” The book was challenged in 1984 in Rankin County (Mississippi) School District because it was “profane and sexually objectionable” and at the Central Gwinnett (Georgia) High School library in 1986 because “it encourages students to steal and take drugs.”

Go Ask Alice was removed from the school library bookshelves in Kalkaska, Michigan, in 1986 because of “objectionable language,” and that same year, the Gainesville (Georgia) Public Library prohibited young readers from checking out the book by keeping it in a locked room with other books on the topics of drug use, sexual dysfunction, hypnosis, and breast-feeding.

In 1993, the superintendent of schools of Wall Township, New Jersey, ordered the book removed from the intermediate school library because of “inappropriate” language and claims that it “borders on pornography.” He expressed shock that the book was still available, because he had ordered the book removed from all reading lists and classroom book collections five years previously after receiving an anonymous letter that condemned the work. Also in 1993, the work was removed because of “graphic” language from an English class at Buckhannon-Upshur (West Virginia) High School and challenged as a required reading assignment at Johnstown (New York) High School because of “numerous obscenities.” In 1994, Shepherd Hill High School in Dudley, Massachusetts, banned the book from its ninth-grade reading list due to “gross and vulgar language and graphic description of drug use and sexual conduct.”

In 1998, eighth-grade students in Tiverton, Rhode Island, were asked by their teacher to return the copies of the book, which they had been

reading as a class assignment. The middle school principal had received complaints from a mother who objected to the language and images of drug use in the book. Without advisement, the principal, who had not read the book, also ordered the book removed from the middle school library. The actions of the principal were in violation of the district's complaint policies and procedures; a review committee had to determine the outcome. In summer 1998, the review committee decided to return *Go Ask Alice* to the library but delayed a decision of whether to return the book to the classroom.

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GONE WITH THE WIND

Author: Margaret Mitchell

Original date and place of publication: 1936, United States

Original publisher: Macmillan Company

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Gone with the Wind was one of the two best-selling novels of the 1930s in the United States, with Hervey Allen's *Anthony Adverse*, a story set in the Napoleonic era. One million copies of the novel were sold in the first six months, and 1.5 million in the first two years. In 1937, Mitchell won the Pulitzer Prize and the American Booksellers' Association award for the novel.

Set in the American South from about 1861 through 1873, *Gone with the Wind* is a historical novel that portrays the struggle for survival by people whose secure lives were changed forever by the death and destruction of the Civil War. The daughter of a cultured French mother and a temperamental, hard-scrabble Irish father, Scarlett O'Hara is the spoiled center of life at the

expansive plantation, Tara. Her obsession with the weak-willed Ashley Wilkes dominates her life, but he marries his cousin Melanie, a reticent and caring woman who understands his honorable yet ineffectual nature and accepts it. Scarlett spitefully marries Charles Hamilton, who dies in the war and leaves her with a child. After Atlanta is burned by Sherman's troops, Scarlett returns to Tara, where her mother dies and her father goes mad, leaving the sheltered Scarlett to assume responsibility for Melanie, her sisters, her child, Melanie's child, and the remaining faithful servants. Worked to exhaustion and suffering from lack of food, she struggles to keep Tara and vows that she "will never be hungry again."

After the war ends, the carpetbaggers appear ready to take through taxes what the Union Army did not take in battle, so Scarlett marries her sister's fiancé to obtain the needed money to keep Tara. Her second husband, Frank Kennedy, is a modestly successful businessman, and Scarlett dominates his mill enterprise and store to emerge from the poverty and struggle in which the war has left her. After Kennedy is killed when he and area men stage a midnight raid to avenge a physical attack on Scarlett, she makes a third marriage with Rhett Butler, even as she pines for Ashley Wilkes.

Scarlett and Rhett are similar in their lack of scruples, their tenacity, and their fierce passions. He has no illusion about Scarlett, and he willingly allows her to enjoy the immense wealth that he acquired as a blockade runner during the war, as he waits for her to forget Ashley and to truly love him. After their daughter, Eugenia Victoria "Bonnie Blue" Butler, is born, Rhett works to attain respectability among the Old Guard of Atlanta society for his daughter's sake. He realizes what Scarlett does not, that money alone will not bring acceptance. As Rhett guarantees their daughter's social future, Scarlett continues her unscrupulous business practices, and she continues to associate with what Rhett and her beloved Mammy refer to as "white trash Northerners" and "scalawags."

The indulged Bonnie Blue dies in a riding accident, placing Rhett and Scarlett at even greater emotional distance. Rhett turns with greater frequency to drink and to spending nights at Belle Watling's brothel. When Melanie Wilkes dies, Scarlett recognizes that Ashley is a weak, unstable character and that she really loves Rhett, who is unmoved by her revelation. Faced with the challenge of rekindling Rhett's love, Scarlett decides to return to Tara, the one constant in her life, where she will think about it tomorrow.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Gone with the Wind captured the attention of both the public and the censors before it was even published, but a strong advertising campaign by the Macmillan Company produced 100,000 in advance sales that obscured any threat posed by John Sumner and the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice

upon its release in 1936. The society had objections to Scarlett O'Hara's serial marriages and her unscrupulous behavior, as well as to the marital rape of Scarlett, but public opinion was clearly on the side of the novel. In Boston, the Watch and Ward Society hoped to arouse some concern about the prominence that brothel madam Belle Watling holds in one part of the novel, as well as the use of "damn" and "whore," but Boston booksellers were unwilling to forgo the huge profits that the massive advertising campaign waged by the Macmillan Company promised. The hint of scandal actually fueled sales of the novel.

Direct challenges to the book did not appear until it entered schools as supplemental reading. In 1963, Lee Burress conducted a survey of high school English department chairpersons and school administrators regarding school censorship in Wisconsin. In an unnamed district in the state, a clergyman and a parent had challenged the appearance of the novel on a recommended reading list. They objected to Scarlett's "immorality." The district retained the book on the list. In a 1966 national sample of school librarians and high school English chairpersons, Burress reported that a teacher in an unnamed state challenged the availability of the book in the high school library, claiming that it could be "misunderstood." The novel was placed on a closed shelf and made unavailable to students.

In 1978, school officials in Anaheim (California) Union High School District banned the book from all English classrooms, at the same time that George Eliot's *Silas Marner* was banned, according to the Anaheim Secondary Teachers' Association. Parents condemned the "ruthless" and "immoral" behavior of Scarlett O'Hara and expressed concern about the negative depiction of freed slaves.

In 1984, an alderman in Waukegan, Illinois, challenged the appearance of the book on the recommended reading list in the Waukegan School District on grounds of "racism" and "unacceptable language." The main complaint was that the word *nigger* appears repeatedly in the novel. Joseph Conrad's *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, Harper Lee's *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*, and Mark Twain's *THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN* were named in the same complaint and also removed from the list.

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GORILLAS IN THE MIST

Author: Dian Fossey

Original date and place of publication: 1983, United States

Original publisher: Houghton Mifflin

Literary form: Zoological study

SUMMARY

Gorillas in the Mist, written by the world authority on the endangered mountain gorilla, relates Dian Fossey's experiences over the 14 years in which she conducted field studies among four gorilla families in the Virunga Mountains shared by Zaire, Rwanda, and Uganda. The scientist became well known to villagers, who signaled her approach by shouting, "*Nyiramachabelli!*" meaning, "The old lady who lives in the forest without a man."

To gain the acceptance of the gorillas, Fossey imitated their feeding and contentment sounds, as well as other behavior such as self-grooming and averting her eyes from their glances. After gaining their trust, she tracked the various groups and identified the adult animals with names, then gave names to the offspring that were born during the course of the study. Fossey viewed the gorillas as individuals, and she relates their unique characteristics in the book. She was eventually fully accepted by one gorilla group and made history when a fully mature male gorilla reached out to touch her.

As she studied the gorillas, Fossey meticulously documented male-female interactions, parent-child interactions, mating behavior, parenting skills, and both intragroup and intergroup behavior. Fossey's report of the sexual behavior and mating patterns of the gorillas is equally detailed. In one instance, the scientist reports that a young gorilla named Puck goes off alone and Fossey sees him "actively masturbating."

The author also documents mating behavior in careful detail, as well as other behavior of the young, sexually immature but curious gorillas. The book includes a photograph of a female being mounted by a male in her group. Fossey also tells of three-year-old Pablo, who is so obsessively interested in sexual activities that "he often tried to examine the penises of the older males but was usually shoved away." He also engages frequently in sex play with Poppy, a female gorilla 20 months his junior.

In addition to studying the lives of the gorillas, Fossey informs readers of the devastation that poachers have wreaked in the gorilla population and calls for a stop to their actions. She also relates instances in which she stood up to poachers and reported them, thus placing her life in danger.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The work was acclaimed by scientists as a breakthrough study, and Fossey was later thrust into the international spotlight after one of the gorillas was killed by poachers. She spoke to groups to focus attention on the rain forest and the plight of the gorillas, and she was brutally murdered in 1985. The passages regarding masturbation and mating behavior in her book are integral to the study and were accepted as such by scientists, but the same passages raised objections when the books appeared in schools and school libraries.

The book was kept out of many classrooms and not ordered for school libraries to avoid controversy over the details of the gorillas' sexual behavior. Many school administrators viewed the study as suitable for older students but unsuitable for or of less interest to middle school or younger students.

In 1993, teachers in Westlake Middle School in Erie, Pennsylvania, were instructed by school administrators to use felt-tip pens to black out "objectionable" passages in the book. Parents had challenged the use of the book in the classroom, claiming that the passages about gorilla sexual behavior and mating habits were "filthy," "unnecessary," and "inappropriate." The following passage regarding the masturbating gorilla was one of the "objectionable" passages blacked out:

His head was flexed backward, his eyes were closed, and he wore a semismile expression while using his right forefinger to manipulate his genital area. For about two minutes, Puck appeared to be obtaining great pleasure from his actions. . . . It was the only time I have ever seen a gorilla in the wild actively masturbate.

The teachers were also required to block out lines detailing the sex play of three-year-old Pablo and one-year-old Poppy which "could result in an erection for Pablo, who with a puzzled smile, lay back and twiddled his penis" while Poppy watched with interest "or, occasionally even sucked his penis."

Farley Mowat's *WOMAN IN THE MISTS* (Warner Books, 1987), which recounted Dian Fossey's dedication to her cause and her brutal death, was also subject to censorship. In 1991, the work was removed from a required reading list in the Omaha, Nebraska, school district. Parents who objected to the book claimed that it contained racial slurs, as well as "profanity" and passages that degraded women. They also objected to Mowat's long discussion of the aftermath of Fossey's abortion.

FURTHER READING

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GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

Author: James Baldwin

Original date and place of publication: 1953, United States

Original publisher: Alfred A. Knopf

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Go Tell It on the Mountain chronicles the struggles of a black evangelist and his family as they fight to live a moral life and to save others in the Harlem ghetto. The opening pages of the novel are highly autobiographical, as they show John Grimes, cruelly called "frog eyes" by his stepfather, living in poverty with his parents, Gabriel and Elizabeth, his brother, Roy, and his sisters Ruth and Sarah. People always said that John would be a preacher when he grew older, just like his stepfather, Gabriel, who has imposed a puritanical lifestyle on the boy. Despite John's obedience to Gabriel, the preacher favors his natural son, Roy, and views John as "a stranger, living unalterable testimony to his mother's days in sin."

The novel, which covers 24 hours in actual time, is divided into three parts. Part I, entitled "The Seventh Day," consists of one unbroken narrative that is set in Harlem. It relates the family's experiences as they move from their home to their storefront church, the Temple of the Fire Baptized. The family is an anomaly in the area; dressed in their Sunday best, on their way to church they pass men and women on the streets who "had spent the night in bars, or in cat houses, or on the streets, or on rooftops, or under the stairs." Sex is a fact of life where they live. John and Roy, the preacher's expected successor who would rather be like the people on the streets, have watched a man and woman in the basement of a condemned house who "did it standing up." Roy also claims to have watched others many times, and "he had done it with some girls down the block." Moreover, the family lives in a tenement above "the harlot's house downstairs."

Part II, entitled "The Prayers of the Saints," is more than twice the length of the other two parts. It takes place in the Temple of the Fire Baptized, as each character's prayer is framed into a separate chapter. Through "Florence's Prayer," "Gabriel's Prayer," and "Elizabeth's Prayer," each beginning with their Southern roots, the reader learns brief histories of John's mother, stepfather, and aunt. Their mistakes, joys, and pains are revealed, and all are shown to have flawed pasts. Gabriel has fathered a child by a "harlot," while married to his first wife. Elizabeth bore John while unmarried. Florence loved her first husband hopelessly and lost him to war. This part ends in the

church, with 14-year-old John lying on the floor before the altar, struggling with salvation.

Part III relates John's long night in church, praying and crying as he eventually becomes "saved."

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Go Tell It on the Mountain was not known as a mainstream novel for many years after it was first published in the United States. Part of the opposition was to its antiwhite rhetoric, expressed most forcefully by Gabriel when Roy is slashed in a fight with a white street gang; other objections were made against the discussions of "bastard" children, extramarital sex, and frank sensuality. For the most part, before 1960, Baldwin had "a very touch-and-go relationship with censorship" both in the United States and in England. Libraries might purchase the book, but more often than not, it would be kept on the public library "poison shelves," only available to the patron who asked specifically for the book. As with many such books, the novel was only available in an expensive hardcover for nearly 10 years before it was published in inexpensive paperback by Signet Books in 1963. In England, the novel was published in hardcover in 1954 by Michael Joseph, but it did not emerge in paperback until Corgi published it in 1963.

The novel was challenged for many of the same reasons once it entered the school libraries and classrooms, and most of the challenges took place in the 1970s. The lack of extensive challenges should not be taken as a sign of acceptance. Rather, the relatively small number of challenges simply reflects the lack of widespread adoption of the novel by schools, who refrained from adding the book to required or supplemental reading lists. In a 1973 national survey of English department chairpersons, Burress found one challenge in an unnamed school district in the North. A student and his parent objected to the required reading as being "nigger" literature. The school board agreed to allow the student to substitute another book for the novel. In 1975, in a survey of book challenges in Tennessee, Weathersby reported that the book was challenged by a parent in an unidentified school district for providing "a trashy idea of sex" and "filling a child's mind with ideas that cause him to lose confidence in the authorities." The book was removed from the classroom. In a 1977 national survey of English chairpersons, Burress reported that a clergyman in Illinois had challenged the book as "immoral" and demanded its removal from the high school classroom. The book was retained as a required reading.

In 1994, parents of students in the Hudson Falls, New York, school district objected to the inclusion of the book as a required reading in the high school English curriculum. Objectors claimed that the book contained "obscene language" and recurring themes of rape, masturbation, violence, and the degrading treatment of women. The book was retained, but students could substitute another book from an approved list.

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GRENDL

Author: John Gardner

Original date and place of publication: 1971, United States

Original publisher: Alfred A. Knopf

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Grendel is a novel derived from the classic Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf*, in which the monster Grendel is presented as the embodiment of evil, whose vicious attacks serve to test the hero, Beowulf. Gardner modifies the epic to tell the story from Grendel's point of view, creating a sympathetic creature whose actions in *Beowulf* seem justified when the monster explains them. An unlikely hero, Grendel professes to have a highly idealized view of humankind, but he admits that humankind's actions continually tarnish that image and disappoint him. He exhibits a strong sense of conscience for his rages and ravaging of the Danes and claims that he was blinded by brute rage when he attacked the Danes' mead hall, Heorot, killed the drunken and celebrating men, and destroyed the hall. He also wonders at the human propensity for war and the often petty excuses for it. As he cries out in one instance, "Why can't these creatures discover a little dignity?" . . . I make a face, uplift a defiant middle finger, and give an obscene little kick."

Before his final battle, Grendel makes astute observations regarding human affairs, as well as the nature of animals. In viewing a very old ruler, Hrothgar, with the young woman Wealtheow, whose brother had offered her as a sacrifice so that Hrothgar's forces would not attack, Grendel muses that

she could have given herself to a man whom she could have loved, a more vigorous man. He relates her unhappiness and her courage in fulfilling the role for which she had been sacrificed. When he warns away a mountain goat that will soon be within his dangerous reach, Grendel watches as the goat continues its mindless and mechanical climb, “because it is the business of goats to climb.” Similarly, when he later comes across children playing in the deepening twilight, those who choose to feign deafness when their mothers call them in from play “are gone forever. So it goes.”

The end of the novel reflects the ending of the epic, as Beowulf kills Grendel in a bloody, violent battle. The difference is that Grendel maintains that Beowulf wins “by mindless chance. . . . Accident.” Skill, right and good are not the basis for Beowulf’s victory. He only wins because “Poor Grendel’s had an accident.”

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel has been challenged, banned, and restricted from use in the classroom because of “obscene” language, as well as the violent and graphic nature of the action. Characters go out to “piss,” and the word “shit” is freely used throughout. In contemplating various deaths, the monster ponders roasting first the genital area of one character in front of the multitudes. The physical damage and amount of blood spilled in confrontations are graphically presented.

In 1978, the Frederick County, Maryland, school system declared the novel to be “full of vulgarity” and banned it from use in the classroom. In 1986, after the high school principal objected to the “profane” nature of *Grendel*, the novel became the only work placed on the restricted list at Wasco (California) High School. A “restricted list policy” was developed, and use of the novel was prohibited until every student in the classroom brought in written parental permission. A teacher brought suit against the school district, and a settlement was reached in 1991. Under terms agreed upon, the book could remain in the library and on display in the classroom, but teachers were not permitted to assign reading of the book. Also in 1986, the novel was challenged for use as an assignment in an accelerated English class in the Indianapolis, Indiana, school system.

In 1991, the parent of a student in Viewmont High School in Farmington, Utah, challenged use of the book as a required reading. She complained that her daughter had been asked to read sexist and sexual passages in the book and noted further that it “is obscene and should not be a required reading.” The district review committee considered the request and voted to retain the book for use only in the 12th-grade classroom and only in connection with the study of *Beowulf*. The student was given the option of an alternative assignment.

The book was also challenged as part of the English curriculum at Pine-lands Regional High School in Bass River Township, New Jersey, in 1992.

Parents complained that the book contained “numerous obscenities,” but the school board voted to retain the book. The parents then appealed to the mayor, who criticized the book but supported the right for it to remain in the library or for students to buy it, though he added that “it shouldn’t be given to children in the school.” Complaints about the “violence” and the “graphic nature” of the book were the basis of a 1993 challenge to the placement of the book on the supplemental reading list for advanced English students in Clayton County School District in Jonesboro, Georgia. The book remained on the list.

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HEATHER HAS TWO MOMMIES

Author: Leslea Newman

Original date and place of publication: 1989, United States

Original publisher: Alyson Publications

Literary form: Children’s book

SUMMARY

Heather Has Two Mommies is the story of a three-year-old girl being raised by a lesbian couple. For her, having two mothers feels perfectly normal, until she becomes part of a play group. Heather listens to the other children and realizes for the first time that many of them have one mother and a father, and she becomes upset. The leader of the play group encourages the children to talk about the different types of families that exist. As the children learn more about families, they realize that many children are growing up in nontraditional families. They also realize that the most important part of any type of family is love.

In the first part of the book, the events leading to Heather's conception through artificial insemination and her birth are dealt with in a matter-of-fact manner. The choices being made by the two "mommies" are discussed, as are their reasons for those choices. The second half of the book focuses on the family structure and shows that Heather's family is similar to those of other children, except for the "two mommies."

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Heather Has Two Mommies has been challenged repeatedly since it was first published. In 1992, this book and *DADDY'S ROOMMATE* were removed from the first-grade reading list in the Bay Ridge School District in Brooklyn, New York; challenged but retained in Fayetteville (North Carolina) County Library and Springfield (Oregon) Public Library; and placed in the adult section of the Bladen County Library in Elizabethtown, North Carolina.

In 1993, *Heather Has Two Mommies* and *Daddy's Roommate* were moved from the children's room to the adult section in Mercer County Library System in Lawrence, New Jersey. They were also challenged but retained in the public library in Mesa, Arizona; North Brunswick (New Jersey) Public Library; Cumberland County (North Carolina) Public Library; Wicomico County Free County Library in Salisbury, Maryland; and Dayton and Montgomery County (Ohio) Public Library. In 1994, the two books were taken out of the Lane County Head Start program in Cottage Grove, Oregon, and challenged but retained by Chandler (Arizona) Public Library.

Heather Has Two Mommies was also challenged in 1993 by patrons of Chastatee Regional Library System in Gainesville, Georgia, who believed that the book was "not suitable" to be shelved in the children's section. Librarians moved the book to the young adult section, but three state legislators who became involved in the case wanted it removed. The legislators stated, "We could put together a resolution to amend the Georgia state constitution to say that tax dollars cannot be used to promote homosexuality, pedophilia or sado-masochism." The book remained in the young adult section, and the controversy faded away.

In 1994, parents challenged the inclusion of the book in an Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts, elementary school library. The parent who led the protest spoke out at a public meeting and stated that the subject matter of the book "is obscene and vulgar and the message is that homosexuality is okay." The school board created a review committee to examine the book and voted unanimously to keep the book in the library.

FURTHER READING

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A HERO AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT A SANDWICH

Author: Alice Childress

Original date and place of publication: 1973, United States

Original publisher: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich is a young adult novel made up of 23 short chapters, each told from a different character's point of view. The number of chapters related by each character provides an indication of the importance of the character to the novel. Thirteen-year-old Benjie Johnson relates seven chapters, his stepfather, Butler Craig, relates four, and other characters relate only one or two of the remaining chapters.

The story focuses on Benjie, whose drug habit worries his family, his close friend Jimmy, and two teachers who care very much for him, but Benjie contends that the others are worrying needlessly for he has no habit. He misses his former closeness with his mother and blames Butler Craig for moving in with them and taking his mother's affections. Bored at home and at school, he begins to distrust everyone around him, including a black teacher named Nigeria Greene who joins another teacher in convincing the principal to sign necessary papers to hospitalize Benjie in a detoxification facility. After the treatment period ends and Benjie returns home, he decides to try drugs one more time, because he wants to remember what he is giving up forever. He steals Butler's best suit and overcoat; then he is caught stealing a toaster from a neighboring apartment. As Butler chases him to their building rooftop, Benjie slips and nearly dives over the edge to his death, but Butler catches him with one hand. Benjie yells out, "Let me die," but Butler holds on and saves him. This leads them to a new level of trust, and Benjie even calls Butler Dad. Butler's action has made him a hero, as has his tenaciousness in regularly meeting the responsibilities that are thrust upon him, despite the difficulties that must be overcome.

At the end of the novel, Butler, his arm in a sling, waits outside the drug rehabilitation center where Benjie has promised to continue treatment. He insists that Benjie is just late, because he has been looking in store windows or otherwise dawdling, and believes that the boy will appear.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich depicts urban ghetto life and people who are fragmented and alienated because of race and class barriers. The language

in the novel is a variety of Black English that violates the rules of standard grammar and pronunciation. Drugs pervade the work, and street terms are used with profanity throughout the novel. The setting is ugly, as is the devastation created by drugs, and the language is consistent with this devastation. The novel has been challenged for being “objectionable” and for containing “street language” and “abusive language,” as well as because of the sexual descriptions.

The novel was one of 11 books banned by the school board in Island Trees Free School District No. 26 in New York (see *THE BEST SHORT STORIES BY NEGRO WRITERS*) in 1982. It was charged with being “immoral” and “just plain filthy,” and the following passage is specified in the court record as representative of passages determined to be “objectionable”: “Hell, no! Fuck the society. They can have back the spread and curtains, I’m too old for them fuckin’ bunnies anyway.” The novel was returned to the library after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 et al. v. Pico et al.*, 457 U.S. 853 (1982) that the First Amendment rights of students had been violated in the banning.

In 1978, school officials removed the novel from the high school libraries in San Antonio, Texas, after complaints from parents that the novel contained “objectionable” passages. Teachers filed a grievance to protest the banning, and the book was reinstated. That same year, the school board in Savannah, Georgia, ordered that all copies of the novel be removed from all school libraries in the district because of “objectionable language.” Calling the book “garbage,” the president of the school board stated, “We don’t need people going around and calling other people ‘jive-asses’ and ‘Fuck the society’.”

Language was also the reason that parents of students attending Lamar Elementary School in Darlington, South Carolina, demanded that the book be removed from the school library in 1994. Citing examples from the book, parents stated in their complaint that “offensive language in the book makes it unsuitable for any children.” That same year, the novel was challenged in Aberdeen High School in Bel Air, Maryland, for being “racist and vulgar.”

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HOWL AND OTHER POEMS

Author: Allen Ginsberg

Original date and place of publication: 1956, United States

Original publisher: City Lights Books

Literary form: Poetry collection

SUMMARY

Howl and Other Poems contains 11 poems that explore what poet William Carlos Williams called “a howl of defeat.” Dedicated to fellow Beat writers Jack Kerouac, William Seward Burroughs, and Neal Cassady, of whose works Ginsberg claims “all these books are published in Heaven,” the work contains the poet’s passionate expressions on numerous taboos of the time. The title poem opens with the following lines: “I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked, / dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix.” He continues to speak of similarly unsavory topics, including “angelheaded hipsters . . . holloweyed and high sat up smoking in the supernatural darkness of cold-water flats . . . staggering on tenement roofs illuminated . . . publishing obscene odes on the windows of the skull.” The veiled, symbolic references in these lines kept the poems relatively safe from prosecution, but his distinct references to homosexuality and to anal and oral sex in such lines as “Who let themselves be fucked in the ass by saintly motorcyclists, / and screamed with joy, / who blew and were blown by those human seraphim, the sailors” have been more easily singled out by censors as obscene. References to drug use abound in the poems, as do Ginsberg’s private sexual fantasies and excretory images.

Although the title poem has been most heavily criticized for its obscene imagery and language, other poems in the collection celebrate Ginsberg’s loss of virginity (“Transcription of Organ Music”), his disillusionment with America and the declaration that “I smoke marijuana every chance I get,” (“America”) and reference to the “fairy Sam” (“In the Baggage Room at Greyhound”). Taken in total, *Howl and Other Poems* explores the horrors of the poet’s life and, as William Carlos Williams states in the final lines of his introduction to the collection, “Hold back the edges of your gowns, Ladies, we are going through hell.”

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Howl and Other Poems was first printed in England by Villiers and passed through Customs without incident to be published by City Lights Bookstore in fall 1956. On March 5, 1957, a second printing was seized in San Francisco by U.S. Customs officials, who confiscated 520 copies with the excuse that “the words and the sense of the writing is obscene You wouldn’t want your children to come across it.” Lawrence Ferlinghetti, owner of the City Lights Bookstore, had the forethought to contact the American Civil Liber-

ties Union (ACLU) before sending the work to England to be printed and had received assurance that the ACLU would defend him if the book were challenged. Thus, when the local U.S. attorney's office requested permission from a federal judge to destroy the book, the ACLU notified the collector of Customs and the U.S. attorney that it would defend the book. The U.S. attorney decided to drop proceedings.

Despite clearance from U.S. Customs, copies of the book were later seized by the San Francisco police, who claimed that the material was not suitable for children, even though the City Lights Bookstore did not carry books for children. Ferlinghetti was booked and fingerprinted in the San Francisco Hall of Justice, after being arrested by two juvenile-squad police officers.

The case went to trial and nine literary experts were called to defend the "social importance" of Ginsberg's poem: Mark Schorer, Leo Lowenthal, Walter Van Tilburg Clark, Herbert Blau, Arthur Foff, Mark Linenthal, Kenneth Rexroth, Vincent McHugh, and Luther Nichols. The experts identified the work as "social criticism . . . a literary work that hurled *ideological* accusation after accusation against American society." Prosecuting attorney Ralph McIntosh repeatedly attempted to coerce the witnesses into translating the poetry into prose, reading aloud passages from *Howl* that contained what he classified as "dirty" words and sexual images. He also baited the experts by asking if the terms that he deemed to be obscene could have been worded differently by Ginsberg, but presiding Judge Horn stopped him, saying "'it is obvious that the author could have used another term'" but that it was "'up to the author'" to decide.

In handing down his decision on *Howl and Other Poems*, the judge cited the decision of Justice William J. Brennan only four months earlier in *Roth v. the United States*, 354 U.S. 476 (1957), stating that "unless the book is entirely lacking in 'social importance' it cannot be held 'obscene.'" He added further that, while the poem contained "unorthodox and controversial ideas" that were expressed at times through "coarse and vulgar" words, including *cock*, *fuck*, *ass*, *cunt*, *gyzym*, and *asshole*, the work was protected by the constitutional freedoms of speech and press. Horn stated, "An author should be real in treating his subject and be allowed to express his thoughts and ideas in his own words."

Although Judge Horn's decision freed *Howl and Other Poems* in 1957, the poem has remained controversial. In 1988, the listener-supported Pacifica Radio Network did not carry a broadcast of the poem that was set to be read on radio stations nationwide on the evening of January 6, 1988, as part of a weeklong series about censorship called "Open Ears/Open Minds." The network made the decision after being threatened with possible obscenity prosecution by the Justice Department a few months before for broadcasting a play about homosexuality. The decision was also made based on an April 1987 ruling by the Federal Communications Commission stating that stations faced possible penalties for broadcasting "material that depicts or describes, in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary com-

munity standards for the broadcast medium, sexual or excretory activities or organs.” In response to Pacifica’s decision, the author said, “The Government now has set out rules which have had an intimidating and chilling effect on broadcasters. . . . it’s the last desperate gasp of the Reagan neo-conservatives.”

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I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS

Author: Maya Angelou (Marguerite Johnson)

Original date and place of publication: 1969, United States

Original publisher: Random House

Literary form: Autobiography

SUMMARY

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings is the first of five autobiographical books written by the author. The others are *Gather Together in My Name* (1974), *Singin’ and Swingin’ and Gettin’ Merry Like Christmas* (1976), *The Heart of a Woman* (1981), and *All God’s Children Need Traveling Shoes* (1986). The first book chronicles Angelou’s life from age three to age 16 and the birth of her only child, Guy, to whom she dedicates this book.

The book describes the divorce of her parents and her own difficulties as she is sent with her brother from Long Beach, California, to live with her grandmother and uncle in Stamps, Arkansas, spends a year in St. Louis with her mother, then returns to Stamps and eventually moves to California to be with her mother. The years in Stamps are largely happy years as her grandmother, “Momma,” protects and shields the young girl. There are, however, some social realities from which she cannot be protected. The book recalls the despair often felt by the black cotton pickers as they filed into Momma’s general store, returning from the fields on bad days. The rampant racism is evident in incidents such as the one in which her uncle must be hidden after a former sheriff warns the family that “Some of the boys’ll be coming over here later” because Willie had “messed with a white lady today.” When Maya is in need of a dentist, she overhears her grandmother being told by a white dentist to whom she had lent money during the Depression, “my policy is I’d rather stick my hand in a dog’s mouth than in a nigger’s.”

Maya also suffers personal indignities as a child. When she moves to St. Louis to live with her mother, she is raped by her mother’s live-in lover, who

is later murdered. When she travels to Los Angeles to spend a summer with her father, the woman with whom he lives stabs Maya with a knife. Maya is nearly six feet tall, flat-chested, and unsure of sexuality at 15 when she decides to have sex with a handsome neighborhood boy. He forgets her name the next day, but she becomes pregnant and later gives birth to her only child, her son. The autobiography ends with 16-year-old Maya holding her child protectively and going peacefully to sleep.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The majority of the challenges to *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* have resulted from parents' complaints about the rape scene and Maya's pregnancy out of wedlock. In 1983, the Alabama State Textbook Committee rejected the book because they believed that it "preaches bitterness and hatred against whites." The book was challenged at Mount Abram Regional High School in Strong, Maine, in 1988, because parents objected to the rape scene. In 1990, a parent in Bremerton, Washington, objected to the book as a required reading for the gifted ninth-grade class because of the "graphic" description of the molestation. The parent also complained that the book "raised sexual issues without giving them a moral resolution." Despite the teacher's defense that the molestation passages were only a small part of the book and that the main focus was the fulfillment that Angelou reached in spite of adversity, the school board removed the book from the classroom. The board president justified the action by explaining that his constituents expected him to uphold a higher level of moral standard than is evidenced by the book.

In 1991, several parents in Benning, California, complained about the explicit passages involving child molestation and requested that the book be removed from the eighth-grade curriculum. One parent complained that her son did not want to go back to class to read that "gross" book, and another characterized the work as "morally and religiously offensive smut." The book was removed from the curriculum. In 1992, the work was retained after the parent of a student in Amador Valley High School, in Pleasanton, California, complained of the sexually explicit language.

The work was challenged but retained in several 1993 incidents, all of which objected to the passage in which the rape of the seven-year-old Maya is discussed. The book was temporarily banned from Caledonia Middle School, in Columbus, Mississippi, on the grounds that it was too sexually explicit. In Haines City, Florida, parents objected to the same passage and challenged inclusion of the book in both the English curriculum and the high school library. The same challenge occurred in Hooks (Texas) High School, where the book was assigned in a freshman honors history class.

In 1994, the work was challenged but retained as required reading for Dowling High School sophomores in Des Moines, Iowa, and the book became an issue at Ponderosa High School in Castle Rock, Colorado, when parents charged that it was "a lurid tale of sexual perversion." In their 1994 challenge to the book, parents at Westwood High School in Austin, Texas,

claimed that the book was “pornographic, contains profanity, and encourages premarital sex and homosexuality.” The challenge motivated a new policy at the school for the reading of potentially controversial literature. The superintendent decreed that children would have to obtain their parents’ permission in writing before they would be taught controversial literature.

In 2002, parents of students in freshman English classes in Hamilton, Montana, took issue with the references to rape and premarital sexual intercourse in the book, as well as the author’s description of her molestation as an eight-year-old child. The parents also criticized the book for its suggestions of homosexuality. The same year, a group named the Parents Against Bad Books in Schools (PABBIS), represented by parents Richard and Alice Ess, complained to the school officials in Fairfax County, Virginia, that this book, along with 17 others, should be removed from elementary and secondary school libraries. They asserted that the book “contains profanity and descriptions of drug abuse, sexually explicit conduct, and torture.”

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IN THE NIGHT KITCHEN

Author: Maurice Sendak

Original date and place of publication: 1970, United States

Original publisher: Harper & Row

Literary form: Children’s picture book

SUMMARY

In the Night Kitchen, a winner of the Caldecott Medal, is a dream fantasy in which a child named Mickey awakens in bed and believes that he hears talking downstairs in the kitchen. He leaps out of bed and falls through the night darkness, and out of his clothes, into the night kitchen, which is brightly lighted. Three plump bakers dump him into cake batter; but he emerges,

then jumps into the bread dough. Mickey then kneads and shapes the bread dough into an airplane in which he flies to the Milky Way to obtain milk for the bakers. He provides the bakers with milk, then stands proudly, still nude, while he crows, "Cock-a-doodle-doo!" He then slides straight into his bed and into his clothes and goes to sleep.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The book was removed from many public and school libraries that had bought it because parents complained that showing a fully naked child with some semblance of the genitals sketched in the appropriate place was "pornography." In many other libraries where the book had been purchased, the offending organ was either carefully whited out or equipped with a diaper or a pair of shorts drawn on with marker.

In 1974, a mother in Camden, New York, complained to school authorities that the book should be removed from elementary school libraries because it contained nudity and "children are already exposed to enough profanity in the media." The school superintendent reviewed the book and determined that it did not have "sufficient merit" to keep in the libraries. In announcing his decision to remove the book, the superintendent stated that schools had "a real obligation to represent what is moral, what is honest, what is decent."

In 1977, the book was removed from the elementary school library in Northridge, Illinois, because of parent complaints that it contained "nudity for no purpose." That same year, copies of the book sent to 40 kindergarten classes were expurgated in Springfield, Missouri, by Wanda Gray, the director of elementary education, who drew shorts on the nude boy with a black felt pen. No one had complained, but the director said that she thought "it should be covered."

In 1985, parents of students attending Cunningham Elementary School in Beloit, Wisconsin, challenged the book as part of the school library collection, claiming that it "desensitizes children to nudity." One of the parents who issued the challenge insisted on parents' right to dictate book selection and stated, "You don't have to have a degree to know that teaching low morals and disrespect is wrong." The school board voted to retain the book in the library. In 1988, the book was challenged but retained after parents of students at Robeson Elementary School in Champaign, Illinois, complained that the book contained "gratuitous" nudity.

In 1990, parents of students in the Morrisonville, New York, elementary school requested that the book be removed from the school library because "it promotes nudity and child abuse." The school board appointed a review committee to consider the request and later accepted the recommendation of the review committee to retain the book in the elementary school library collection.

In 1991, a parent in Jacksonville, Florida, asked that the book be removed from the elementary school classroom because it contained "illustrations of a

boy without his clothes.” The parent appeared before the school board, calling the nudity “disgraceful and appalling.” A review committee appointed by the school board voted to retain the book without restriction, and the board concurred.

That same year, parents in Cornish, Maine, requested that the school board remove the book from the elementary school library because the illustrations of a naked boy “encourage child molestation.” In their official complaint, the parents stated that the book would cause the following harm: “Child abuse. Children are taught that their private parts are private. This book is contrary to this teaching.” A review committee appointed by the school board voted to retain the book, calling it “a masterpiece example of the timeless theme of childhood fantasy.”

In 1992, parents of students attending the Elk River, Minnesota, schools challenged the use of the book in the classroom because the nudity found within it “could lay the foundation for future use of pornography.” The school board failed to agree and retained the book. In El Paso, Texas, in 1994, parents challenged the inclusion of the book in the children’s section because “the little boy pictured did not have any clothes on and it pictured his private area.” The challenge was considered by the library board, but the book was retained.

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INVISIBLE MAN

Author: Ralph Ellison

Original date and place of publication: 1952, United States

Original publisher: Random House

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Invisible Man is related by an unnamed narrator who reveals that he is an African-American man who is invisible because of an impersonal and indifferent

world. While portions of the narration are realistic, a surreal quality pervades much of the novel as events occur chaotically and in rapid succession. The narrator lives in an underground cellar; after introducing his current situation, he explains his experiences moving from the South to the North that led to his present state.

“Battle Royal,” the first chapter, tells of the narrator’s experience when he is invited by the town’s leading white citizens to give his high school graduation speech at a local hotel. He is made part of a “battle royal” with other blindfolded African-American students, who fight each other as entertainment for the white businessmen. Their reward is the money that they obtain by crawling on an electrified carpet to pick up coins. A well-endowed, blonde-haired stripper with an American flag tattooed between her thighs appears, but she is only for the whites to ogle. During the evening, the narrator makes his speech and receives as his reward a leather briefcase and a scholarship to a state college for blacks.

At college, the narrator is a good student who is entrusted with driving white visitors around campus. In his junior year, he drives a trustee named Mr. Norton out into the country, accidentally meeting the “fieldnigger” family, the Truebloods, who relate their family incest scandal. Norton becomes nauseous and unsteady on his feet because the story reawakens his own desires for his recently deceased daughter. Unsure of where they might find medical help, the narrator decides that a drink of strong liquor might revive Norton, so they stop at a nearby bar and brothel. A brawl breaks out, during which Norton passes out and must be carried upstairs into the prostitutes’ quarters, where he is revived.

After the narrator returns the trustee to the college, he is expelled. Dr. Bedsoe, the college president, gives him what appear to be letters of recommendation to potential employers in New York, but the letters are actually warnings not to trust the narrator or to help him. He takes a job at the Liberty Paint Company, then is knocked out in an explosion when he fails to follow instructions. After a period of hospitalization, he walks back to Harlem and inadvertently becomes part of a protest against the eviction of an old black couple. This brings him to the attention of The Brotherhood, who ask him to be their speaker in Harlem and to organize black residents. He also becomes the object of the lust of a married white woman who views him as a sexual “stud” and insists on being “taken” by him.

In rapid succession, the narrator is held responsible for the disappearance of another activist, tried by The Brotherhood for conspiracy, and mistaken for Bliss Proteus Rinehart, a numbers runner, prolific lover, clergyman, and politician. Harlem erupts into violence and, as he strives to head for the safety of his home, he runs into a pillaging crowd that pushes him to the ground and into a coal cellar, where he decides to stay in order to understand what has happened in his life. At the end of the novel, the narrator has burned all of the false promises of his past, including his high school diploma, the recommendation letters, and the slip of paper with his Brotherhood name. He has made himself visible by lighting his cellar with 1,369 lightbulbs that run ille-

gally on electricity from the “Monopolated Light & Power” company. The “Epilogue” explains that the narrator’s story has also been that of the African-American community and ends by asking: “Who knows but that, on the lower frequencies, I speak for you?”

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel was well received when it was first published in 1952. Ellison won the National Book Award in 1953, the same year that he won the Russwurm Award and the National Newspaper Publishers’ Award. Critics viewed it as signaling a black literary renaissance by its decided difference from the earlier “Negro protest fiction” of Richard Wright, Ann Petry, and Chester Himes. Protests against its content did not occur until the work entered the school curriculum. In a 1973 national sample of English department chairpersons, Lee Burrell reported that a parent and a student in an unnamed midwestern city had objected to the assignment of the novel as a required reading for a high school English class. The challenge was based upon three aspects of the novel: 1) the fight staged by the black youths for the white businessmen, 2) the story of the black sharecropper raping his daughter and 3) the “vulgarity” of language. The school board retained the book but offered students the right to substitute another book for their assignment.

In 1975, several parents of students in the Butler, Pennsylvania, school district raised objections to *Contemporary American Short Stories*, the reading anthology being used in a high school English class, because it contained the selection “The Battle Royal,” the first chapter of *Invisible Man*. They protested against the “vulgar language” of several sentences in the work and requested that the entire anthology be banned from use. The school board complied with their request and removed the anthology from the classroom.

In 1994, two parents challenged this novel, as well as Carlos Fuentes’s *The Death of Artemio Cruz*, Nadine Gordimer’s *July’s People*, and Richard Wright’s *Native Son*, as required readings for advanced English classes in the Yakima, Washington, high school. They charged that the books contained “profanity,” “images of violence,” and “unacceptable” sexuality and requested that the books be removed from the required reading list. A school review committee was convened and voted to retain the books, a move with which the school board concurred.

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JAKE AND HONEYBUNCH GO TO HEAVEN

Author: Margot Zemach

Original date and place of publication: 1982, United States

Original publisher: Farrar, Straus & Giroux

Literary form: Children's picture book

SUMMARY

Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven is a 34-page children's picture book that contains bright, pastel, impressionist-style illustrations of a Depression-era African-American man and his "crazy mule," Honeybunch, and their experiences in Heaven, after a collision with a locomotive.

Jake is one of many poor people in the United States made even poorer by the economic depression of the 1930s. He lives in a dilapidated old house near a town named Hard Times. His only companion is Honeybunch, who some people believe he acquired from a witch. "Other folks said the Devil put a curse on Honeybunch when she ran under a clothesline between Christmas and New Year's." Whatever her origins, Honeybunch does her best to be unmanageable. Illustrations show her deliberately leaping onto the hood of a new car and upsetting her cart so that Jake topples into it. Folks often hear Jake mutter, "This misbegotten mule will be the death of me someday!"

His prediction is fulfilled one summer evening when Jake and Honeybunch are crossing the railroad tracks as a slow-moving train is heading toward them. Although he tries his best to make Honeybunch move forward, she refuses to leave the tracks, and they are struck by the train. The impact sends Jake and Honeybunch flying through the sky. For 15 minutes, Jake shoots upward until he reaches "the top of the sky," and he takes "another ten minutes to flip-flop his way along the Glory Road," which takes him in sight of the Pearly Gates. Illustrations of the Pearly Gates depict African-American men and women dressed in their Sunday best and wearing wings, with some clapping in heavenly rapture.

Standing outside the gates, Jake shouts "Hallelujah" and announces "Here's old Jake come from Hard Times, just been hit by the slow freight." He rings the bell repeatedly, "but God's angels were singing and making a powerful sound," and he concludes, "Maybe St. Peter can't hear me." Undaunted, Jake shakes the gates a bit, and they open slightly, so he squeezes through the opening and walks into Heaven.

The Heaven he encounters is filled with African-American angels, young and old, all wearing golden wings. Some are singing and dancing, others are playing in a jazz band, while others are lounging in the grass. In additional illustrations, groups of angels are seen cooking massive amounts of chicken, what appear to be pork spareribs, and pots of sauce. Jake sees wings hanging to dry on a clothesline and takes two of the shiniest. "As it happened, they were left wings, but they felt just fine." He begins to fly in erratic movements over the other angels, who shout for him to be careful and to stop, but Jake tells them, "I can't stop now. I'm just a flying fool." His wild flight, which upsets picnic tables where angels have been eating fried chicken, ribs, pies, and cakes, ends with Jake landing "in a Heavenly tree, his wings all bent and broken."

Several of the angels take Jake before God, also African-American, who demands to know why Jake did not wait for St. Peter to let him into Heaven in an orderly fashion. He then tells Jake to leave and warns him not to hang around the top step. Disappointed, Jake is led by St. Peter to the Pearly Gates, which are slammed shut once Jake is outside. As he sits and bemoans his bad luck, he hears the familiar clip-clop sound of Honeybunch and, looking up, sees her "coming along the Glory Road." He tells her to stop, but she ignores him and goes up to the Pearly Gates and bangs on them. When St. Peter opens them slightly, Honeybunch sees the Great Green Pastures of Heaven and charges through the gates, where she rampages all over Heaven. "She was so excited that she rolled in the clouds, kicking and carrying on, scattering angels in every direction."

Angels try repeatedly to capture Honeybunch, but they are unable to, so God tells St. Peter to find Jake, "Tell him to come and catch his crazy mule." Jake runs in and grabs Honeybunch, who continues to charge around until Jake whispers a warning in her ear, telling her that if she continues to create a ruckus, she will never "get a chance to graze in those Green Pastures." The warning works, and Honeybunch immediately calms down.

God and the angels are favorably impressed by Jake's quick action, and they decide to offer him another chance. God tells Jake that he "needs a Moon Regulator to hang the moon out at night and put all the stars in their places." If Jake does well, he will receive a pair of wings. Shouting, "Lord, I'm your man," Jake hurriedly hitches Honeybunch to the Moon Regulator wagon, which is already loaded with stars, and "they set off across Heaven, with Jake rolling the moon along." Jake and Honeybunch faithfully perform their task, and Jake eventually earns a beautiful pair of wings.

The book ends with an illustration of Honeybunch grazing peacefully in a flower-filled pasture, while Jake flies above. Readers are told that if the Moon and stars are not shining some nights, that is because Jake and Honeybunch are taking some time off. "Honeybunch is grazing in those Great Green Pastures and Jake is loop-the-looping all over Heaven, just like a flying fool."

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven was written by Margot Zemach, a Caucasian prize-winning author and illustrator of more than 40 children's books who won the American Library Association's 1974 Caldecott Medal for most distinguished American picture book for children and who spent eight months researching black folklore before writing the book. When the book was first published in 1982, the *New York Times Book Review* praised the book for its literary merit. In 1987, when the paperback version of the book appeared, the *Washington Post* complimented Zemach for "her exuberant watercolors to an hilarious adaptation of black Depression-era folklore" and called Zemach's Heaven "a lively enough place already, with its cast of '30s-style angels and other denizens busy barbecuing, playing jazz, and just shooting the breeze under the stars."

Critics Beryle Banfield and Geraldine Wilson identified and criticized symbolic representations and distortions in the book, writing, "Significantly the book misrepresents the unique, culturally distinctive view of spiritual life held by people of African descent. . . . Zemach has not used one culturally authentic clue about heaven as understood by generations of black people." Denise Wilms wrote about potential controversy surrounding the book in the January 1, 1983, issue of *Booklist*, "While the book's art and story are sound, its depiction of a certain segment of black culture will stir controversy. . . . In addition, its lighthearted view of heaven may be an affront to some groups who see heaven in a more somber light."

The library systems of Chicago, San Francisco, and Milwaukee alleged, after surveying librarians employed in the public libraries in their systems, that the book is "racially offensive" and refused to acquire it. In a letter to the publisher in November 1982, Elizabeth Huntoon, coordinator of children's services for the Chicago library system, explained that the book had been submitted to 14 librarians within the system for review. The librarians had all recommended against acquisition of the book because they believed that "the depiction of a black heaven would offend many people and that it reinforced many stereotypes which are not offset by a wealth of children's literature portraying the black experience." In their letter, the Chicago public library system did admit that one of their librarians, "a black woman who works in a predominantly black neighborhood, at first wanted to buy the book. She took it to her minister, who felt the book was positive and a good story." The remaining librarians ruled against that decision. The librarians also wrote a letter to Margot Zemach on November 3, 1982, stating that they rejected the book because it contains racial stereotyping. They acknowledged that the book jacket for *Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven* claimed that the author "has drawn freely on themes from black American folklore," but they asserted they could "not determine any such themes other than a jazz cabaret. The 'celestial fish fry and barbecue,' complete with copious amounts of ribs and chicken drumsticks, appears to us not so much as one of the pleasures of heaven, but as a sadly obvious racial stereotype."

Instead, they compared the book to the racially biased “*Cabin in the Sky* mentality,” from a movie in which African Americans endure their lot on Earth for a promise of joy and plenty in heaven, and concluded that the book “does not strive to present an entirely dignified view of an otherwise rich, black cultural heritage.”

The publisher charged that the library system was engaging in censorship, and a company spokesman quoted in the *New York Times* stated, “In this case, librarians are deliberately keeping a widely acclaimed book by a major author-artist off their shelves in the name of morality.”

The San Francisco library system also refused to order *Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven* for its collections, and representatives refused at first to respond to an inquiry sent by Stephen Roxburgh, editor in chief of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, requesting an explanation. City librarian John C. Frantz wrote to Roger W. Straus, president of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, and accused Roxburgh of attempting to intimidate the library and of “feigning ignorance.” In his letter, Frantz wrote, “If he really doesn’t know why we are not going to buy ‘Jake and Honeybunch,’ he is in the wrong line of work and should be selling banjos to minstrel troupes.” Straus responded to the accusations and repeated the earlier request for an explanation. Frantz spoke, instead, to a reporter for the *New York Times* and told him that “the book perpetuates overt and covert racism.” He stated that children’s librarians in the San Francisco library system reviewed the book and “gave it an unfavorable reception,” and one staff member specified that it was “offensive and degrading, wholly inappropriate for children whether they be black or white.”

In a parting shot to the publisher, Frantz told the reporter, “Flaps over books are very temporary, and 50 years from now this will be only a historical footnote. Meanwhile, there are too many good children’s books around to mess with this.” In response, Straus said, “Fifty years from now, when Mr. Frantz is only a footnote, this book will still be enjoying a long, fruitful life in most of the libraries of America.”

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JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH

Author: Roald Dahl

Original date and place of publication: 1961, United States

Original publisher: Penguin Books

Literary form: Children's novel

SUMMARY

James and the Giant Peach is the story of a four-year-old boy whose happy and secure life changes when his parents go shopping in London and are eaten by “an enormous angry rhinoceros which had escaped from the London Zoo.” He must live with his cruel and lazy Aunts Sponge and Spiker, who mistreat him, and he becomes a sad and lonely young boy with no friends. He endures this life for three years, then meets an old man who gives him magic crystals that, if ingested, will make “*marvelous things*” start happening to James, “*fabulous, unbelievable things—and you will never be miserable again in your life.*” James runs back to the house but trips and falls. The bag bursts open, and the magic crystals scatter and immediately sink into the ground.

The aunts see him lying on the ground and shout at him, then notice a peach growing to giant size high on their tree. Greedily hoping to make money with the peach, they hire carpenters to build a fence around it and charge people to view the peach. A hungry James climbs into the giant peach and nibbles bits of it as he walks through to the stone. There, he finds large and talkative insects who want to leave the tree and James's horrible aunts, so the centipede with his “pair of jaws as sharp as razors” gnaws at the stem that binds the peach to the tree. The peach rolls, crushes the aunts to death, and carries its passengers to various adventures. They first roll into the sea, where they encounter sharks that thrash around them. James saves them by convincing the silkworm to produce threads by which sea gulls lift them away from danger. In the air, they become victims of the Cloud Men, who pelt the peach with buckets of paint, frying pans, and bottle of hair oil, but they escape.

The peach hovers over New York City, and the centipede bites the strings attaching the peach to the seagulls, so it falls on the Empire State Building. Their appearance first creates pandemonium in the city; then the group is given a ticker tape parade. City workers place the peach on a large truck in the procession, where thousands of children take bites from it.

James and his insect friends decide to stay in America, where “Everyone of them became rich and successful” and where James makes many new friends. The huge peach stone is placed in Central Park and becomes a famous monument as well as James's home, where “hundreds and hundreds of children from far and near” visit the once lonely boy.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

James and the Giant Peach is only one of several Dahl books that has evoked challenges because of “unsavory activities” or because adult readers believe that the works are “unhealthy for children.” Despite challenges in schools, the novel has done well commercially and continues to appear in the children’s section of most bookstores and libraries, and it is frequently referred to as a “classic in children’s literature.”

The novel was challenged in 1991 by the parent of a fourth-grade student in Deep Creek Elementary School in Charlotte Harbor, Florida, who claimed that the book is “not appropriate reading material for young children.” When the student took the book home for a reading assignment, the parent, after examining the text, wrote a letter to the local newspaper. Noting that “The whole book is strange if you ask me,” the mother urged other parents to complain to the school. The child told her teacher that she was not allowed to read the book, so an alternative assignment was given. The school principal and the director of special projects in the district identified the work as a classic and retained the book.

That same year, the mother of a nine-year-old boy at Pederson Elementary School in Altoona, Wisconsin, demanded that the book be removed from the school library because the word “ass” appears in it. The parent expressed further concern that the book promotes an “unhealthy” lifestyle, because wine, tobacco and snuff appear in it. She requested that the book be removed from the school library to spare other children. The district reconsideration committee reviewed the parent’s request and voted unanimously to retain the book, a decision that the school board upheld. In reporting the decision, the school superintendent stated, “According to board policy no parent has the right to exclude material from other students in the district and I think that’s a very fair standard.”

In 1992, parents of students at Morton Elementary School in Brooksville, Florida, demanded that the book be removed from the school library because it contained “a foul word” and “promotes drugs and whiskey.” Two review committees considered the book, and both voted unanimously to retain it, a decision with which the county school board concurred. In reporting the decision, the county school superintendent stated that the book was “merely a fantasy about good triumphing over evil.”

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JAWS

Author: Peter Benchley

Original date and place of publication: 1974, United States

Original publisher: Doubleday & Company

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Jaws relates the story of an ocean resort community terrified by the appearance of a great white shark. The year-round residents of Amity, Long Island, depend upon summer crowds for their living, and the biggest holiday is the Fourth of July. The shark appears shortly before that date, violently chopping a woman in two and leaving pieces of her body at the water's edge. The businessmen seek to cover up the death, placing Police Chief Martin Brody in a moral dilemma. Leaving the beaches open will expose swimmers to danger, but closing the beaches will ruin summer business. As the town leaders forbid Brody to close the beaches, the shark strikes again, killing a six-year-old boy and a 65-year-old man and leading one witness to describe it as "the biggest fuckin' fish I ever saw in my whole life, big as a fuckin' station wagon." Unwilling to risk more lives, Brody closes the beaches, angering property and business owners.

The appearance of the shark initiates a private crisis on shore for Brody. The town calls upon the services of ichthyologist Matt Hooper, whose older brother once dated Brody's wife Ellen. Learning this makes the police chief's insecurities surface. He recalls his wife's early life, as part of the "country club set" that summered at Southampton and Amity, playing tennis and generally remaining idle. He and other year-round residents were largely working class. Hooper's appearance also evokes memories for Ellen, who aches for the old days. She examines her naked body in a mirror, assessing her breasts, belly, hips, and legs to determine if the "goods were good enough." In an effort to "resuscitate" herself, she calls Hooper, 10 years her junior, to meet her for lunch, during which they drink too much and discuss sexual fantasies, penis size, and "threesies." At a motel afterward, their intense sexual encounter, with Hooper's "obvious violent climax" when he "continued to pump madly," disturbs Ellen.

Brody and Hooper go out into the ocean with Quint, a charter boat captain, to kill the shark. The men tempt it to come near to the boat with buckets of chum, and Quint stands ready with a harpoon. Hooper asks to be lowered into the water in a cage so that he can take pictures, but the shark butts the cage repeatedly, separating the bars until the huge jaws reach in to

grasp Hooper and devour him. When Brody and Quint go out the next day, the shark chases the boat, leading Quint to refer to it repeatedly as a “cock-sucker,” “an uppity fuck,” and a “prick” as he thrusts harpoons into the shark’s underbelly. The men believe that the shark is dead, but it rears up in the water, landing its jaw on the deck as the boat sinks. Quint is pulled into the water, leaving only Brody to survive as the shark finally dies.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel has been removed from school classrooms and school libraries for complaints ranging from “objectionable” language to explicit sex. In 1977, a parent with the support of a minister in Montgomery, Alabama, challenged the book for containing explicit details about sex and requested the book be removed from the recommended reading list. The school board granted the request. The following year in Gardner-Edgerton-Antioch School District in Gardner, Kansas, several parents of students complained that the book contained an “explicit sex act” and requested its removal from the school library. The school board voted unanimously to take the book out of circulation, and all copies of *Jaws* were removed from all of the school libraries in the district. In 1979, parents challenged the availability of the book in the Ogden (Utah) High School library. The school board voted to place the book in a “restricted circulation” category, requiring students to have written parental permission to take the book out.

In 1980, parents of elementary and middle school students in Clinton, North Carolina, challenged the book for its “objectionable language” and asked for its removal from the school libraries. The school board voted to remove all copies of the book from the elementary and middle school libraries. In 1986, “obscene language” was the basis for a challenge by parents of students in the Gwinnett County, Georgia, public schools. The book was removed from the recommended reading list.

FURTHER READING

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JUNKY (ORIGINALLY, JUNKY: CONFESSIONS OF AN UNREDEEMED DRUG ADDICT)

Author: William S. Burroughs

Original date and place of publication: 1953, United States

Original publisher: Ace Books

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Junky is a graphic rendering of heroin addiction that chronicles the addict's life in full detail. Contained within are the hallucinations, the ghostly nocturnal wanderings, the strange and changing sexuality, and the continuous hunger for the needle. The "hero" of the novel, a barely disguised persona of the author, is a young midwesterner whose quest for the continuous high takes him to New York City, New Orleans, and Mexico City, as he experiences on his journey any substance that promises an escape. In often graphic, sometimes surreal, detail, the book identifies and discusses frankly the use and the effects of heroin, marijuana ("tea" or "weed"), "goof balls," "ben-nies," morphine, codeine, and peyote. The author also expresses his "junk equation": "Junk is not, like alcohol or weed, a means to increased enjoyment of life. Junk is not a kick. It is a way of life."

Burroughs also writes of the unscrupulous doctors who give numerous prescriptions ("scripts") for narcotics to addicts and of his efforts to have these prescriptions filled as he travels from one pharmacy to another. Along the way, he reveals the drug laws of the 1930s, providing details about the Narcotics Bureau inspectors who close down both doctors who write too many prescriptions and the pharmacies that fill too many. Burroughs deals bluntly with the fears of the addicts, who give fake names to obtain numerous prescriptions, and he identifies the tricks used to obtain these prescriptions—complaining of kidney stones, gallstones, or migraine headaches to obtain prescriptions for morphine or codeine.

Burroughs also discusses his homosexual cruising paired with his addiction, and the nature of his relationships while addicted. Such relationships are rendered in a surreal manner, with violent, nightmare-like details. As the novel draws to a close, the author speaks of his and others' efforts to kick the habit and of the false hope provided by the incarceration of friends on Riker's Island, for what they and law-enforcement officials refer to as the "thirty-day cure," after which they return to drugs as soon as they are again on the streets. The work ends with a glossary of terms used in the book, to enlighten the reader regarding the "junk lingo."

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Burroughs first published the novel under the pseudonym William Lee because of what Allen Ginsberg called his "police state paranoia cultivated by Narcotics Bureaus . . . that if you talked about 'tea' (much less Junk) on the bus or subway, you might be arrested—even if you were only discussing a change in the law."

His first publisher, Ace Books, was even more nervous "lest the publisher be implicated criminally with the author." As protection, the publisher required that the pseudonymous Burroughs write a preface that explained his "distinguished family background" and to exhibit the social significance

of the work by giving “some hint how some supposedly normal citizen could arrive at being a dope fiend, to soften the blow for readers, censors, reviewers, police, critical eyes in walls & publishers’ row, god [sic] knows who.” Carl Solomon, the editor at Ace Books who handled *Junky*, also wrote an introduction that emphasized the serious nature of the book and its social importance. As further protection, the publisher excised a description of “Texas agricultural society” that might have opened the company to a lawsuit and included disclaimers throughout the text at “crucial medico-political statements of fact or opinion by Wm. Lee.” As a final attempt to avoid prosecution, the publisher justified the existence of the book by binding it back to back with the title *Narcotic Agent*, written by Maurice Helbront. The first printing of 100,000 copies sold out the first year, and more than a million copies were sold over the next decade.

The first complete and unexpurgated edition was not published until 1977, when Penguin Books, in New York, issued the work alone, with an introduction by Allen Ginsberg. The book has remained out of schools because the title is sufficiently blunt to convey the content of the book, and many public libraries have avoided challenges by simply not ordering it.

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KING & KING

Authors: Linda de Haan and Stern Nijland

Original date and place of publication: 2002, United States

Original publisher: Tricycle Press

Literary form: Children’s picture book

SUMMARY

King & King presents a royal love story with a twist. Rather than a handsome prince searching for and finding a beautiful princess to marry and to live with “happily ever after,” this brightly illustrated large-format children’s book ends with the wedding of two princes.

Prince Bertie’s mother, the queen, has ruled the kingdom for a very long time and has become tired of the responsibilities. She wants the freedom to

live her life, so she makes up her mind that her son must marry and become King Bertie by the end of the summer. A direct woman, the queen marches into her son's room, wakes him up and announces, "I've had enough. You're getting married and that's all there is to it."

While the prince sits across the table from her, unable to eat his breakfast, the queen insists that Bertie is the only prince she knows who has not been married and reminds him, "When I was your age, I'd been married twice already." As the queen talks on and on, the prince pushes aside his food and claims that he cannot eat a bite. To appease his mother, whose talking has made him dizzy, Prince Bertie acquiesces to marry but cautions, "I must say, though, I've never cared much for princesses." The queen ignores her son's comment regarding his lack of interest in princesses and, after toasting the upcoming marriage with wine, locates her list of eligible princesses and methodically calls "every castle, alcazar, and palazzo from afar."

The following morning, a crowd of princesses waits at the palace gates, and they are led to Prince Bertie one at a time to show off their talents. The first is Princess Aria from Austria, a very full-figured woman with several chins who sings "a thunderous opera" for the prince. After she is shown to the door, Princess Dolly, who has flown all the way from Texas, performs a magic act, aided by "the crown kitty," but neither the queen nor Prince Bertie is amused. The unattractive, comical-looking princess from Greenland also fails to impress the prince, but he approves fully when his page falls in love with her.

The fourth choice is the elegant Princess Rahjmashputtin from Mumbai, who ignites an interest from the prince, though not the one she had hoped, when he proclaims, "Boy, those long arms will certainly come in handy when waving to the people."

After meeting all of the princesses and declaring them unsatisfactory, the queen and the prince sit sadly, thinking that none of this was what they had expected. As they brood, a palace page appears and announces that one more princess has arrived, Princess Madeleine, with her brother, Prince Lee. When Prince Bertie sees them, "At last, the prince felt a stir in his heart. It was love at sight." As the two princes stare deeply into each other's eyes, both exclaim, "What a wonderful prince!" The illustration emphasizes their sudden realization of love, and a profusion of hearts cover two facing pages of the book.

With the queen's blessings, Prince Bertie and Prince Lee marry in a wedding that "was very special. The queen even shed a tear or two." The pews in the church are filled with the rejected princesses and members of the court. After the ceremony, the two princes hold their wedding cake between them, and atop the cake are figures of the two princes. The illustration shows streamers containing "Congratulations" in huge letters above them.

The book ends with the two princes now known as "King and King," and a happy queen who now has some time for herself. "And everyone lives happily ever after." The final page shows the two kings kissing, but a large heart covers their joined lips.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

King & King has brought out strong emotions among parents and community members who have labeled the book “pro-homosexual marriage,” equated it with *Playboy* and “other dirty books,” and led them to question “Are public schools the next battleground over homosexuality?” In contrast, the book was viewed favorably by reputable reviewers for the *School Library Journal*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Horn Book Magazine*, and *Publishers Weekly*, and in 2002, *King & King* received honorable mention from *Publishers Weekly*’s 2002 “Off the Cuff Awards” in the “most unusual book of the year” category. Controversy has been good for sales. On March 19, 2004, the day after the book received national media attention when parents in North Carolina called for its ban from their public school library, Amazon.com reported a surge in sales of the book, making it number 38 on the site’s list of best sellers.

The parents who initiated the call for a ban in North Carolina were Michael and Tonya Hartsell, parents of seven-year-old daughter Olivia, who brought the book home from the Rachel Freeman Elementary School library. Michael Hartsell told a reporter for the Associated Press that his daughter “is not old enough to understand something like that, especially when it’s not in our beliefs.” The Hartsells said that they first became suspicious about the content of the book as their daughter read it to them, especially “when the queen in the story tells her unmarried son that she had already been married twice by the time she was his age,” but they were “stunned” as they took the book from their daughter and read further. Tonya Hartsell told a reporter for the North Carolina Family Policy Council newsletter, “All I could think about was how long has this book been on the shelves at the library, and how many other innocent children have gotten hold of it?”

The Hartsells contacted the school librarian and media coordinator, Barbara Hawley, who told them that the book had been on the library shelves since early 2003. When asked by reporters about the book, Hawley stated that she “couldn’t comment on the book” because she hadn’t seen it, and she declined to answer when asked if she “had knowingly selected a book on gay marriage.” The Hartsells then approached the school principal, Elizabeth Miars, who supported inclusion of the book in the school library and told an Associated Press reporter, “What might be inappropriate for one family, in another family is a totally acceptable thing.” Dissatisfied with the responses, the Hartsells refused to return the book to the library because they wanted to prevent other children from being exposed to it and because they wanted to submit the book, along with their formal complaint, to the New Hanover County School District Media Advisory Committee, a group that reviews books after their appropriateness has been challenged. D. John Morris, Jr., school district superintendent, told a reporter for the *Washington Times* the complaint by the Hartsells was the first complaint he had received about the book and that a decision would be made after the Media Advisory Committee

completed the appeals process. Two school board members expressed sympathy for the viewpoint of the Hartsells. Janice Cavanaugh agreed that the book is not appropriate for elementary school children, and Maryann Nunnally expressed discomfort with censorship but said that she would prefer “to put such controversial books out of children’s reach and circulate them only with parental permission.”

Several groups in North Carolina joined the Hartsells in the opposition to the book. Robert Knight, director of the Culture and Family Institute, which is affiliated with Concerned Women for America, told a reporter for the *Washington Times*, “You can’t make children feel valuable by validating immoral behavior.” He also said that he was “appalled” by the message sent by the book, “What a message to send a little girl: that a mommy isn’t necessary.” The North Carolina Family Policy Council also supported the stand taken by the Hartsells and expressed the following in their newsletter: “What happened to the Hartsells in Wilmington, NC, is just one example of how homosexual activists are seeking to infiltrate public schools and libraries with the message that homosexuality is ‘normal’. It also highlights how important it is for parents to investigate what is on the shelves of their public schools and libraries and raise concerns with public officials when they find objectionable materials.” Knight also warned parents that homosexual activists embed books such as *King & King* in school libraries, and they “are serious about taking over schools and indoctrinating children so they believe homosexuality is normal and healthy.” He also accused publishers of such books of “pursuing a political agenda.”

The New Hanover County School District Media Advisory Committee determined in an 8-3 vote that *King & King* was inappropriate for young children. Although the book remains in the Rachel Freeman Elementary School library, it has been moved to the “parenting collection,” where only adults are permitted to take it out. In response to the controversy in his state, Republican congressman Walter Jones wrote a letter to the North Carolina superintendent of public instruction, Michael Ward, and requested the removal of *King & King* from school libraries throughout the state. In the letter, which he made public, Jones wrote, “Either the State Board of Education has inadequate policies surrounding the selection and procurement of library books, or it is inadequately enforcing whatever rules it does have.” In May 2005, Jones introduced legislation named the Parental Empowerment Act of 2005 (H.R. 2295), which would restrict federal funds for states that fail to adopt guidelines for elementary school book purchases. The legislation would create parent-based advisory boards at the school district level to review material for school libraries and classrooms. As Jones told a reporter for the *Kinston Free Press*, “It would let parents, in blocks of five to 15, decide whether the country’s youngest children are ready for themes of homosexuality and gay marriage.” As of September 2005, the bill had five cosponsors from other states and was in the Subcommittee on Education Reform, with an anticipated hearing in 2006.

In Oklahoma on March 24, 2005, 75 members of the state legislature signed a petition calling for *King & King* to be removed from the children's section of libraries and placed in the adult section. The move came after parents of an elementary school child living in Oklahoma City, the district represented by Republican state legislator Sally Kern, contacted her and expressed surprise to learn that a book their child checked out was about homosexual marriage. Republican legislator Michael Jackson of Enid, Oklahoma, told reporters that he did not want to restrict free speech, but he was concerned that "parents don't even know a lot of times that these kinds of materials are available for children to check out." Curt Roggow, also a Republican legislator from Enid, stated, "I just found it offensive that it was a children's book with a homosexual theme." The state legislators submitted their petition to Oklahoma City's Metropolitan Library Commission, which oversees libraries in Oklahoma County. The move sparked heavy attendance at the May 2005 meeting of the Public Services Committee. The group met to review the library system's policies on selecting books and responding to customer complaints, issues sparked by the petition. The books receiving specific focus were *King & King*, *HEATHER HAS TWO MOMMIES*, *DADDY'S ROOMMATE*, and *The Duke Who Outlawed Jelly Beans*. Many of the speakers agreed that "children's books showing family situations different from traditional marriage are pornography" and called for libraries to place such books "in a special category or on a special shelf." Chairman Jose Jimenez questioned speakers, "But how are we going to decide which books to put there? Is that going to be my responsibility? Or yours? Or someone else's?"

The executive director of the Metropolitan Library System, Donna Morris, told speakers, "None of the material in question is illegal or pornographic." After the committee members voted to retain the current system policies for book selection, Morris told the crowd that the existing policies serve to "facilitate the free flow of information and ideas by providing access to materials, services and programs to Oklahoma County's diverse community." Despite support for the book by both the Public Services Committee and the director of the Metropolitan Library System, the commission voted 10-7 in May 2005 to place *King & King* in the adult section of system libraries.

In early May 2005, the Oklahoma House of Representatives also passed, in a vote of 81-3, House resolution 1039, introduced by Representative Sally Kern, that called upon Oklahoma libraries to "confine homosexually themed books and other age-inappropriate material to areas exclusively for adult access and distribution." Although the resolution does not have the power of law, some members of the Oklahoma legislature threatened to decrease new funding for the Department of Libraries "unless libraries across the state remove homosexual-themed books from children's shelves." Lynn McIntosh, president of the Oklahoma Library Association responded that libraries are a reflection of their communities and questioned if the legislature should control what appears in libraries across the state. Kern refuted that view and said that "community standards are state standards."

Libraries in other states have also received challenges to *King & King*, but most have handled the issue with little fanfare, as did the Shelbyville-Shelby County Public Library in Indiana. In April 2004, library patron Dustin McCullough wrote a formal letter to the library board telling him that his young son had “stumbled across the book” and brought it home, then asked questions that forced him to explain why two men were kissing in it and talk about two men being gay, “which is something we disagree with.” He suggested that the book is “inappropriate for the library” and requested its removal. The board disagreed but did acquiesce to move the book to the section for children ages eight to 12. The library director, Janet Wallace, reported that the book had been checked out regularly since it had been acquired the year before.

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KINGSBLOOD ROYAL

Author: Sinclair Lewis

Original date and place of publication: 1947, United States

Original publisher: Random House

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Kingsblood Royal examines the consequences of a previously racist white man discovering that his maternal great-great-grandfather was black. Set in the town of Grand Republic, Minnesota, the novel is the story of Neil Kingsblood, an unassuming bank assistant who learns the truth when tracing his family lines. Given the prejudice of the times during which most southern states and a few northern ones determined that by law "a 'Negro' is defined by having even 'one drop of Negro blood,'" Neil is understandably upset by what he learns.

Thirty-one-year-old Neil, who served as an army captain during World War II, is married to Vestal and has a golden-haired daughter named Biddy. He has a promising future at the bank, where he is developing a new account system. He has also established a Veterans' Advisory Center and hopes to lure new business to the bank in the form of mortgages and new accounts.

Before making his discovery, Neil is a well-liked success, and he is also racist in ways that he does not recognize. He and his wife own a black cocker spaniel named "Nigger," and they fail to understand why their black maid feels insulted. He has also internalized the negative beliefs regarding the intellect, industry, and sexuality of blacks.

Neil's self-confidence is shattered after he reads a letter written by his great-great-great-grandfather, which states, "I am to all intent a full-blooded negro born in Martinique. . . . please [do] not say anything about my color and how black it is." Neil is fearful of having to live under the limitations placed on blacks by society, and he begins to feel that he will now have to "live in a decaying shanty," "work in kitchens," "have unpleasant manners," "be an animal physically," and be unable "to grasp any science beyond addition and plain cooking and driving of a car."

His maternal grandmother and grandfather vehemently deny the ancestry, to the point that his grandfather rages, "Are you trying to make me out to be the father of part-nigger kids—make your Uncle Emery and your own mother into niggers?"

Plagued with guilt that he is "passing," Neil tries to find a way to actually "be Negro," but the more that he tries to experience the "Negro culture" and find "special Negro things to be," the more he becomes aware of the similarities rather than the differences between the two races. When white neighbors, coworkers, and other townspeople learn his secret, Neil loses his job, and his family is shunned. The novel ends as he and Vestal are taken to jail, charged with violence after they defend their home against an angry white mob that attacks them and tries to force them out of the neighborhood.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel was a daring effort to explore the issue of racial prejudice in 1940s America, and it won Sinclair Lewis an award from *Ebony* magazine for his attempts to promote racial understanding. In contrast, when the novel was first published in 1947, this effort also cost him and his publisher, Random House, sales in many small and moderately sized cities in the South, where the company's salesmen were forewarned to not even attempt to market the book. Several objections to the book were raised. One objection was to the intelligence and educational levels of many of the blacks portrayed in the novel. One man holds a Ph.D. in chemistry, another holds a doctorate from Columbia University, and all seem to converse about issues of importance. Another objection to the book centered on the negative way in which white characters were portrayed in their reactions to a man who, when thought to be white, was accepted and liked.

Lewis noted in one of his letters that he may have struck a chord with many white southerners who had doubts about their own ancestry being revealed. In several large cities, notably Atlanta and New Orleans, booksellers kept copies of the novel on closed shelves, only selling them if someone specifically asked to buy the book. Random House received numerous letters denouncing Lewis and threatening to stop buying any of his books.

In New York City, the Society for the Suppression of Vice sought to prevent sales of the book after complaints arose about the suggested sexual content of the novel. When Neil first learns of his ancestry and seeks out black

friends, he meets an attractive black nurse to whose one-room tenement apartment he goes one evening. There, he rests his cheek “on the smoothness of her [clothed] breast” and kisses her “with quietness and propriety.” The efforts by the society to bring charges against the book were fruitless, and only a few booksellers agreed to remove the novel from their stock.

In 1953, the novel was removed from an Illinois library after a mother complained that her daughter had borrowed the book and that it was offensive. The novel was also banned in Ireland in 1953 for the use of the term *nigger* and the “suggestive sexuality.”

The novel also aroused interest by the Federal Bureau of Investigation after, in 1947, “the FBI was flooded with letters denouncing Lewis’s *Kingsblood Royal*.” The FBI report in Lewis’s file states that the book was of concern for it seemed “to be propaganda for the white man’s acceptance of the negro as a social equal.”

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LAST EXIT TO BROOKLYN

Author: Hubert Selby, Jr.

Original date and place of publication: 1964, United States

Original publisher: Grove Press

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Last Exit to Brooklyn consists of six linked episodes, each preceded by a quotation from the Old Testament, that form a novel detailing the brutal and violent lives of a group of lower economic class Brooklyn, New York, youths in the late 1940s through the 1950s. The squalor of the environment and the hopelessness of their drug- and violence-dominated lives leave them devoid of human compassion and lacking in conventional morality. Married and single, gay and straight, the men are portrayed as relentlessly brutal, opportunistic and cruel to other men, to women, and to the children whom they conceive. Women, powerless for the most part, accept their limited roles, exacting revenge on those weaker than they whenever possible. Children are conditioned to live

life as a daily struggle and to accept abusive behavior as normal. For everyone in this novel, crime is an everyday fact of existence.

The novel takes its title from the sign “Last Exit to Brooklyn” that once appeared on the Gowanus Expressway, just before the entrance to the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel. The exit is depicted as an entrance into a hell composed of waterfront docks, dirty factory buildings, slum housing, cheap bars, and subsidized city apartment projects for the poor, with empty, bottle-strewn lots and concrete playgrounds. The language throughout the novel is in the vernacular, and the author omits the use of apostrophes in contractions or to indicate the possessive form of nouns, and he often runs words together to reflect the characters’ states of mind. Four young criminals, each of whom boasts of his prison record, spend their lives “hanging out” at “the Greeks” diner, mocking the prostitutes such as Tralala and boasting of recent “scores,” having “lushed a drunk” or “pulled a job.” Opportunistic, they claim to be completely heterosexual but become involved with a crowd of male transvestites whom they pretend to view as women in order to take advantage of the free gin, abundant benzedrine tablets, and cheap thrills. The young hoodlums pretend to care about the transvestites but are brutal, leading one to overdose on benzedrine tablets.

Tralala descends into a nightmare of alcoholism and drug addiction, trading her body for drinks and even giving it away for free just to feel wanted. She dies after being taken to a vacant lot filled with broken bottles and rusty cans and raped by 50 or more men from several area barrooms. Afterward, as Selby writes in a stream-of-consciousness tone,

the kids who were watching and waiting to take a turn took out their disappointment on Tralala and tore her clothes to small scraps put out a few cigarettes on her nipples pissed on her jerkedoff on her jammed a broomstick up her snatch then bored they left her lying amongst the broken bottles rusty cans and rubble of the lot and Jack and Fred and Ruthy and Annie stumbled into a cab still laughing and they leaned toward the window as they passed the lot and got a good look at Tralala lying naked covered with blood urine and semen and a small blot forming on the seat between her legs as blood seeped from her crotch and Ruth and Annie happy and completely relaxed now that they were on their way downtown.

Later sections explore the brutality of Harry Black, now a union organizer, who repeatedly blames and physically abuses his wife to compensate for his disgust with all women. A braggart and bully who drinks heavily, he has frequent violent dreams in which he sees himself torn to shreds. The dreams end, and he achieves temporary happiness and even softens toward all but his wife once he begins a passionate affair with a male transvestite upon whom he lavishes money taken from his union strike expense account. Black believes that he has found true love, but his lover leaves when the strike account closes and the flow of money stops. In a confused state, Black attempts to perform oral sex on a 10-year-old boy in his neighborhood, and neighborhood toughs brutally beat him as punishment.

Two other sections, “And Baby Makes Three” and “Landsend,” continue the pervasive theme of despair. None of the characters are happy, because all of the husbands and some of the wives appear to remain eager for extra-marital sex. Husbands who work are physically abusive and grudgingly give their stay-at-home wives money to buy food for their children; husbands who do not work but who depend on their wives’ paychecks are also abusive and refuse to assume any household or child-care responsibilities. Capital letters dominate the conversations as Selby indicates the continued arguments that pass for marital communication. Children are neglected and subjected to the constant fighting of their parents. The novel portrays a hellish existence that appears to continue as the characters age.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Last Exit to Brooklyn has been censored on both sides of the Atlantic. Several of the chapters have appeared separately in *Black Mountain Review*, *New Directions* #17, *Provincetown Review*, and *Swank*. The section entitled “Tralala” first appeared as a play that was banned from off-Broadway production in 1957. In 1965, in Boston, Massachusetts, a local city attorney sought an injunction against the book, but the complaint was dismissed. The following year, a circuit court in Connecticut issued a temporary injunction against sale of the book, now published by both Grove Press and Dell Publishing, charging that it was “obscene and pornographic.” The injunction was overturned and sales were again permitted. The novel has also been banned in Italy and Ireland and placed on a restricted list in Russia.

The most extensive censorship case occurred in England, where the novel was published by Calder and Boyars. In late 1966, a Conservative Member of Parliament, Sir Charles Taylor, received a copy of the novel, sent to him by Sir Basil Blackwell, member of an Oxford bookselling family and a man in his seventies who claimed that his few remaining years had been “defiled” by reading *Last Exit to Brooklyn*. Disgusted by the book, Taylor alerted the attorney general in June 1967 to register a complaint with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). That office replied that Taylor was too late to make an effective complaint because over 11,000 copies of the book had already been sold, and sales were slowing. Attorney General Sir Elwyn Jones stated further that “Literary Criticism was almost unanimous that it had literary merit.” The publisher taunted Taylor by including his name in an advertisement in the *Sunday Times*, stating: “Sir Charles Taylor, MP has described *Last Exit* as filthy, disgusting, degrading. It is one of the most important novels to come out of America.”

The audacity of the publisher angered another Member of Parliament, Sir Cyril Black (Conservative), who used the private prosecutions feature of Section 3 of the *Obscene Publications Act of 1959* to challenge the publishers. He brought a formal complaint against the book in July 1966, calling upon the publisher to prove that the book had value and to establish why it should not be banned. The

magistrate who granted the application was Sir Robert Blundell, a chief opponent of *FANNY HILL*, who issued a search warrant for members of law enforcement to seize all copies from area bookshops. The trial was held at Marlborough Street Magistrates Court in November 1966, and the numerous prosecution witnesses were consistent in expressing their disgust with the scenes depicted in the novel, especially with the brutal rape and humiliation of Tralala. This section has drawn the greatest objection in proceedings against the book because of the horrifying picture that Selby creates of the humiliation and death of Tralala and the cold indifference of onlookers. The presiding magistrate rejected the book, observing that “this book in its descriptions goes beyond any book of a merely pornographic kind that we have seen in this court [and] . . . is more likely to deprave and corrupt than any of those cyclostyled horrors.”

Buoyed by the published opinion of several critics that Britain “had made herself the laughing stock of the civilized world,” Calder and Boyars announced that they would continue publication. In response, the DPP announced that it would prosecute, using section 2 of the 1959 act that prohibited “possessing an obscene article for gain.” The trial was set for November 1967, and an all-male jury was selected to spare women the embarrassment of reading the material. The trial lasted nine days and brought together numerous prominent witnesses. The prosecution spotlighted David Shepherd, a former cricket star who had taken religious orders and would later become a bishop, who claimed that he had emerged “not unscathed” by reading the novel, although as a social worker in the East End of London he could identify many of the character types among his clients. To counter this testimony, Calder and Boyars assembled a list of nearly 30 writers, critics, professors, and members of the media who praised Selby’s work and his expression of theme. The effort was fruitless for, after deliberating five and a half hours, the jury declared the book guilty of being obscene and that “the effect of reading the book was to horrify, shock, disgust, and nauseate.” Although the judge determined that the book had been published in good faith by a respectable publishing house, he fined Calder and Boyars £100 and ordered them to pay £500 in court costs.

The publishers once again appealed the decision, represented this time by John Mortimer, who convinced the appeal judges that the judge in the earlier trial had not sufficiently explained the complexities of the 1959 act to the jury and had left too much to “commonsense” and not enough to law. As a result, the conviction was overturned and *Last Exit to Brooklyn* was free to appear in a complete and unexpurgated edition. To avoid further embarrassing litigation based on private prosecution, Section 3 of the *Obscene Publications Act of 1959* was changed. *Last Exit to Brooklyn* holds the distinction of being the last serious novel, poem, or play prosecuted under the 1959 act.

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LEAVES OF GRASS

Author: Walt Whitman

Original date and place of publication: 1855, United States

Original publisher: Self-published

Literary form: Poetry collection

SUMMARY

Leaves of Grass appeared in 1855 as a quarto of 95 pages that had been typeset by Whitman in the Brooklyn print shop of Andrew and James Rome. Whitman's name did not appear on the title page, nor did the name of a publisher or printer appear. He did not hide his authorship, however, for the copyright notice was credited to "Walter Whitman" and his portrait faced the title page. The 12 poems in the 1855 edition had no titles, but Whitman created titles for them, with which we are now familiar, in later editions: "Song of Myself," "A Song for Occupations," "To Think of Time," "The Sleepers," "I Sing the Body Electric," "Faces," "Song of the Answerer," "Europe the 72d and 73d Years of These States," "A Boston Ballad," "There Was a Child Went Forth," "Who Learns My Lesson Complete," and "Great Are the Myths." The collection went through five more editions in Whitman's lifetime. The third edition of the collection, published in 1860, contained more than 100 additional poems, many of them with homosexual overtones that brought more notoriety to the work.

The first edition fulfilled Walt Whitman's goal to write a serious work in a clearly sensuous manner. His subject is the common man, unlike other writers of his time who wrote about and for an educated elite. He chose to draw attention to the ordinary people who made up American society. He also had another purpose to his poetry. Whitman stated in the preface to the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* his purpose of uniting the physical aspect of the human with the spiritual, and this purpose appears in the poetry, as in "Song of Myself," which contains the line "I am the poet of the body, / And I am the poet of the soul."

In developing his theme of accepting everything in life equally, excluding nothing, Whitman included blunt anatomical references that offended many of his readers for whom such references remained taboos for many decades into the future. In accepting all of nature, he wrote of "the litter of the grunting sow as they tug at her teats" and "where the bull advances to do his masculine work, and the stud to the mare, and the cock is treading the hen." He

similarly accepted people in all stations and situations of life, as he wrote that “the keptwoman [sic] and sponger and thief are hereby invited—the heavy-lipped slave is invited—the veneralee is invited.” He offered friendship and brotherhood “to a drudge of the cottonfields or emptier of privies . . . on his right cheek I place the family kiss.”

Throughout the poems, Whitman speaks of the physical actions and realities that his contemporaries strained to keep hidden as not being “nice” or “appropriate” to speak of:

Copulation is no more rank to me than death is.
I believe in the flesh and the appetites,
Seeing hearing and feeling are miracles, and
each part and tag of me is a miracle.

. . . .

The scent of these arm-pits is aroma finer than prayer, . . .

. . . .

I turn the bridegroom out of bed and stay
with the bride myself,
And tighten her all night to my thighs and lips.

. . . .

Darkness you are gentler than my lover—
his flesh was sweaty and panting,
I feel the hot moisture yet that he left me.

In numerous lines throughout the collection, Whitman celebrated sensuality and reminded people of their most primitive desires.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Leaves of Grass was declared obscene from its first publication. The first bookseller to whom Whitman took his book refused to sell it, claiming that it was “too sensual.” Whitman met Lorenzo and Orson Fowler, who agreed to distribute the book, but sales were low and Whitman gave away many copies of the first edition. As cries of “immorality” were raised against the work, the Fowler brothers became frightened and gave existing copies of the second edition of the work to Whitman and resigned the whole edition. Libraries refused to buy the book; the Library Company of Philadelphia is the only one on record in America to have bought a copy when it was first published. Thus, other libraries effectively censored the book by their refusal to buy it.

Critic R. W. Griswold, writing on November 10, 1855, in the *New Criterion*, observed, “Thus, then we leave this gathering of muck to the laws which, certainly, if they fulfill their intent, must have power to suppress such obscenity.” A review in the English magazine *Saturday Review* also condemned the collection and stated in March 1856: “After every five or six pages . . . Mr. Whitman suddenly becomes very intelligible, but exceedingly obscene. If the *Leaves of Grass* should come into anybody’s possession, our advice is to throw them immediately

behind the fire." In 1865, Walt Whitman lost his job with the U.S. Department of the Interior because Chief Secretary James Harlan found an annotated copy of the poetry collection in Whitman's desk drawer and determined that he was "the author of an indecent book." In 1870, Noah Porter, president of Yale University, wrote in *Books and Reading* that "a generation cannot be entirely pure which tolerates writers who, like Walt Whitman, commit, in writing, an offense like that indictable at common law of walking naked through the streets."

Many people, among them Ralph Waldo Emerson, who had praised the book in a letter that Whitman arranged to have published in the *New York Times*, urged Whitman to permit an expurgated version of the collection. He remained staunchly opposed to expurgation, and American copyright law protected him unless he consented to it. From the time that the collection appeared in 1855, his editors suggested that a bowdlerized version for the general public would be good for sales. Whitman violently opposed expurgation, viewing such books as "the dirtiest book in all the world." Not until 1892, not long before his death, did he finally agree to an expurgated version as a gesture of friendship for Arthur Stedman, whose father, Edward Clarence Stedman, had done many favors for Whitman.

Leaves of Grass was not expurgated in the United States until 1892, but it was banned entirely, if informally, in New York and Philadelphia bookstores in the 1870s and legally in Boston in the 1880s. As per their usual practice, the Watch and Ward Society in Boston and the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice placed pressure on booksellers to suppress the sale of the book in their shops. Booksellers agreed not to advertise the book nor to suggest its sale to customers.

In 1881, the Society for the Suppression of Vice sought to obtain a legal ban of a proposed new edition of *Leaves of Grass* in Boston. At the urging of the society, the district attorney threatened criminal action against a publisher who had planned a new edition of the work unless it were expurgated. The edition was withdrawn.

In 1883, author, publisher, and free-love advocate Ezra Heywood was arrested by Anthony Comstock, the head of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, on the charge of sending obscene matter through the mail. The material consisted of *Cupid's Yokes*, a pamphlet that contained "unconventional social and sexual views," and an anthology entitled *The Word Extra* that contained two poems from *Leaves of Grass*, "To a Common Prostitute" and "A Woman Waits for Me." When the case went to trial, the grand jury declared the Whitman poems "too grossly obscene and lewd to be placed on the records of the court." This meant that members of the jury would decide Heywood's fate without being permitted to review copies of the poem nor to hear lines from the poem read before making their decision; they were expected to accept the decision of the prosecution that the works were obscene. Judge T. L. Nelson, presiding in the U.S. Circuit Court in Boston, threw out the case, "on the grounds that the allegation in the indictment was untrue."

The English bowdlerized the collection from its first appearance in England in 1868. Pre-Raphaelite ex-bohemian William Michael Rossetti, the

editor of the expurgated collection, explained in the preface that he had omitted about half the poems of the 1860s edition because he and Whitman lived in “this peculiarly nervous age.” He also proudly proclaimed that he was not bowdlerizing the work, because “I have not in a single instance excised *parts* of poems.” Noel Perrin observed, “it is the sort of preface a liberal poet might write if he happened to get involved in bowdlerism.” Although Rossetti did not excise parts of any poems, he did make numerous changes in Whitman’s preface to the original 1855 edition of the collection, excising even the term *prostitute*. The expurgated version of *Leaves of Grass* became part of the Everyman Library in 1886 and existed well into the twentieth century. Ernest de Selincourt used that version for Oxford’s “World Classics” series in 1920, removing several more poems. Late in life, Whitman considered his work and expressed his dissatisfaction with the English editions, noting that “I now feel somehow as if none of the changes should have been made: that I should have assumed that position: that’s the only possible, final, logical position.”

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LITTLE BLACK SAMBO

Author: Helen Bannerman

Original dates and places of publication: 1898, England; 1923, United States

Original publishers: Platt & Munk, Inc.; J.B. Lippincott Company

Literary form: Children’s book

SUMMARY

Little Black Sambo, one of many stories created by the author to amuse her daughters, was made up while on a long railway journey, and it “was the favourite.” The “Preface” establishes the setting and states: “Once upon a

time there was an English lady in India, where black children abound and tigers are everyday affairs, who had two little girls." Bannerman also "drew and coloured the pictures" that became so embroiled in controversy a half-century after publication.

The story is simple. Sambo is "a little black boy" whose father is Black Jumbo and mother is Black Mumbo. His mother makes him "a beautiful Red Coat, and a pair off beautiful little Blue Trousers." His father buys him "a beautiful Green Umbrella, and a lovely little Pair of Purple Shoes with Crimson soles and Crimson Linings" at the bazaar. Feeling very grand, Sambo takes a long walk in the forest and meets four dangerous tigers, one at a time. To prevent them from eating him, Sambo bargains with them, giving each a piece of his finery until he is left with what in the illustrations looks to be a towel around his waist. He walks home, crying, but hears the tigers and believes that they are coming as a group to eat him, so he hides behind a palm tree. As he watches, they remove the clothes and begin to claw each other. Finally, each grabs another's tail as they form a circle around a tree, running around it and "trying to eat each other up," while Sambo retrieves his clothes and goes home. The tigers run so quickly that they melt into a pool of butter, which Black Jumbo finds on his way home from work; he places it into a big brass pot and takes it home for Black Mumbo to use in cooking. The story ends as the family enjoys "a huge big plate of most lovely pancakes" that have been fried "in the melted butter which the Tigers had made."

The book was first published in England nearly a century ago, and it has appeared in nearly 50 different editions and collections over the years, the text or the illustrations varying according to the whims of the publisher. In the first American edition, published in 1923 by the J.B. Lippincott Company in Philadelphia, the title page bears the statement "The Only Authorized American Edition," as do all Lippincott reprintings of the book. In the "Preface," the reader learns that in the Lippincott version, "the pictures [are] copied as exactly as possible" from Bannerman's original illustrations. This point is significant because the illustrations have frequently been subject to heavier criticism than the text. Also significant is the realization that the Lippincott edition has been "most often in the line of fire and least often on library shelves" in the past three decades.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Little Black Sambo first attracted public criticism in the late 1950s, as the momentum of the civil rights movement in the United States increased. This public criticism intensified in the 1960s as greater attention was paid to the ways in which African Americans were treated and represented in all media. Critics viewed the story as "a dangerous and cruel book" that depicted African Americans in an extremely unfavorable light, dehumanizing them and perpetuating negative stereotypes. The name "Sambo" is itself rooted in controversy. The 1966 edition of *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymol-*

ogy defined the word as being “a colloquial term for any Negro,” but various popular dictionaries of the time, including the 1964 Webster’s *New World Dictionary*, defined “sambo” as a noun of Spanish derivation meaning “Negro, mulatto, monkey.” The term does not even appear in the 1991 edition of Webster’s *New World Dictionary*.

In 1956, the Toronto Board of Education ordered *Little Black Sambo* removed from classrooms and school library shelves after the board received complaints from several groups that “the popular book was a cause of mental suffering to Negroes in particular and children in general.” Canadian librarians protested the move and pointed out that the setting is India, not Africa: “Everything in it pertains to India, even the clothing and the house where Black Sambo lives.” A children’s librarian asserted that “all the boys and girls who have read *Little Black Sambo* have done so without any suggestion of harboring derogatory feelings.”

In 1959, the book was removed from a school library in New York City after a black resident challenged the book as racially derogatory. The school board convened a committee to review the charge. The committee determined that the charge was “unfounded” and voted to restore the book to library shelves.

In 1965, Lincoln (Nebraska) School Superintendent Steven N. Watkins ordered the book removed from the open shelves of the school libraries. The move was made following Watkins’ receipt of a letter from the local Human Relations Council, which explained the “inherent racism” of the work. He concluded that the book was “not worth making an issue over . . . There are plenty of good stories left.” A few weeks later, Watkins ordered copies of the book taken from storage and placed on the “Reserved” shelves, accompanied by a note stating that even though the book was “not a part of the instructional program, it will be available to those who want to read it as optional material.”

A well-publicized banning of the work occurred in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1971. After receiving parent complaints, the county school superintendent in conjunction with a committee of principals, librarians, teachers, and a county staff member voted to remove all copies of the book, as well as filmstrips and records featuring the story, from the county school libraries. Committee members labeled the book “inappropriate” and “not in keeping with good human relations.” In a memo to principals and librarians announcing the removal, the county director of educational media and technology stated that “the decision is not to be construed as book burning, but rather as book selection.”

In January 1972, the Montreal-based Canadian National Black Coalition mobilized efforts to remove the book from school and library shelves. In Hamilton, Ontario, teachers ordered students to tear from school readers the pages that contained the story. The book was banned entirely in New Brunswick.

Later that spring in the United States, a multiethnic committee in Dallas, Texas, lodged a formal complaint against the book and demanded its removal

from the city school libraries because it “distorts a child’s view of black people.” The school district conducted an investigation of the complaint and determined that the book had been informally removed from the school libraries in 1965, but it was later returned because officials questioned if they were depriving children of their literary freedom. The book was formally removed again.

Little Black Sambo was also attacked in England in 1972, where a coalition of educators campaigned against retaining the book in libraries and schools because it symbolized “the kind of dangerous and obsolete books that must go.” A member of the group noted that the story unfairly “depicts the Negro as an almost unclothed, illiterate and inferior savage from whose antics great humor can be derived.”

The banning and removal of *Little Black Sambo* sparked considerable debate regarding the conditions that justify censorship. Howard N. Meyer, an attorney writing in 1980 in the bulletin published by the Council on Interracial Books for Children, took the position of many who demanded the removal of *Little Black Sambo* and other books such as *THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN* or *Nicodemus and Sally* on the grounds that they were “racist.” He stated that “censorship” is an act of “official agencies” and asserted that “citizens who urged that *Little Black Sambo* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* be removed from school libraries as racial books should not be called censors since they are not state officials.” The following year, Michael Farris, president of the Moral Majority in the state of Washington, appeared as a speaker at the American Library Association conference in San Francisco. After claiming that he had searched several libraries and not found a copy of *Little Black Sambo*, Farris labeled as “intellectual hypocrisy” the move to ban presumably “racist” and “sexist” books but to contest the efforts of the Moral Majority to remove what they view as “sexually offensive materials.”

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LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE

Author: Laura Ingalls Wilder

Original date and place of publication: 1935, United States

Original publisher: Harper & Row

Literary form: Young adult novel

SUMMARY

Little House on the Prairie continues the adventures of the Ingalls family, which the author had begun in *Little House in the Big Woods*, published in 1932. The earlier novel told of the hardships suffered by Pa and Ma Ingalls and their daughters, Laura, Mary, and later baby Carrie, who lived on the edge of the Big Woods of Wisconsin and faced the difficulties of pioneer life. *Little House on the Prairie* relates their move to Kansas, an area of the country that was still heavily populated by Native Americans. They travel numerous days until they find a location that is suitable for building a log cabin.

The family soon reestablishes a home and begins to plow and to plant, as well as to hunt wild ducks and turkeys and to raise their livestock. They must also function without close neighbors or family for security and block out the howling of the wolves at night. The Ingalls also live in constant fear of “Indians” without having had any previous contact with them. When Laura yells out to her mother, she is admonished, “you yell like an Indian.” Ma Ingalls also cautions her girls that they are “getting to look like Indians.”

Numerous tribes gather several miles from the Ingalls’ cabin, shouting and yelling in the night and terrifying the girls. Various Native American males visit the cabin, but their presence is upsetting, as they frighten Ma Ingalls into preparing food and giving them her husband’s tobacco. After several months of worrying about their fate, the Ingalls learn that the tribes dispersed after the Osage tribe threatened to fight the other tribes who want to kill all of the white settlers. The settlers also learn that they will have to move because the government has declared the area to be Indian Territory.

The novel ends as the family accepts its fate, loads the covered wagon, and moves on to find another place to settle.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Objections to *Little House on the Prairie* emerged only in the 1990s. Before this decade, the novel and others in the series were highly praised; in 1954,

the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award was established by the American Library Association and was first presented to Wilder for her series. The award is now presented every three years to an author who has produced a body of work that has made a substantial and lasting contribution to children's literature.

In 1993, the novel was challenged by parents of students in the Lafourche Parish elementary schools in Thibodaux, Louisiana, who requested its removal from the school libraries because it was "offensive to Indians." Among their objections, the parents cited the repeated description of the Native Americans as "naked wild men" or "terrible men" with "glittering black eyes." The phrase "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" is repeated several times by the Ingalls' neighbor, Mrs. Scott. Further, the objectors cited the appearance of two Native American males who appear at the house when Charles is out hunting: "Those Indians were dirty and scowling and mean. They acted as if the house belonged to them." The two men look through all of the cupboards and take food and tobacco; then one goes to take the bundle of furs that are supposed to be traded for a plow and seeds, but he is stopped by his companion. The school board denied the request, and the book was retained.

In contrast, the novel was banned that same year from elementary school classrooms in Sturgis, South Dakota, because objectors asserted that "it contains statements that are considered derogatory to Native Americans." The objections presented to the Sturgis School Board were mainly those cited in the Lafourche Parish challenge, and Sturgis evidenced significantly greater public support for the ban.

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LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

Author: Charles Perrault

Original dates and places of publication: 1697, Paris; 1729, London (first English translation)

Original publishers: Privately printed

Literary form: Children's story

SUMMARY

Little Red Riding Hood was part of the collection “Histoires ou Contes du temps passé, avec des Moralités, stories created out of folktales by Charles Perrault, that was intended to be used in the nurseries at Versailles in the court of Louis XIV. Perrault’s tales were first translated into English in 1729 by Robert Samber in *Histories or Tales of Past Times*. The story, now often published alone, has undergone numerous transformations. The popular contemporary version found in children’s books in the United States is based upon the rewriting of the folktale by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm that appeared as “Little Red Cap” in their *Nursery and Household Tales*, published in Germany in 1812. The first accurate U.S. translation of this collection appeared in 1944 as *Grimm’s Fairy Tales*.

Little Red Riding Hood is the story of a sweet young girl who visits her grandmother and takes with her a basket of food and wine. As she travels through the woods on her way to her grandmother’s house, she meets a wolf who asks where she is going. After she tells him, the wolf takes a shortcut and arrives at grandmother’s house long before Little Red Riding Hood. He eats grandmother, dresses in her clothing, and waits for the little girl to arrive. Puzzled by her grandmother’s appearance, the little girl states a series of observations regarding the large size of the wolf’s eyes, ears, and other parts. The final observation is “Oh, Grandmother, what a terribly big mouth you have.” The wolf responds by leaping forward and shouting “The better to eat you with, my dear.” He then eats Little Red Riding Hood. After the wolf falls asleep, a hunter appears, cuts open the wolf’s stomach, and frees the little girl and her grandmother. They gather large rocks and place them in the wolf’s stomach. Then the hunter joins them in celebrating by eating the food and drinking the wine.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Perrault’s *Little Red Riding Hood* ended with both the little girl and her grandmother dead and no hunter to save them. The fairytales were written for the court of Louis XIV as a means of teaching children about the dangers lurking in the world surrounding them. Perrault’s moral is not stated, but his tale may have been intended as a warning against strangers and traveling alone. Contemporary writers, such as Maria Tatar and Jack Zipes, suggest that a specific warning appears to be directed toward women, reminding them of their need for male protectors.

The Grimm brothers softened the ending to suit their intention of entertainment rather than the moralizing of Perrault’s tales. They included a fierce woodsman with an axe to rescue and resuscitate the two female characters and retained the violent appearance and behavior of the wolf. Versions published in the United States have maintained the ending, but they have varied in regard to the violence contained within the story, sometimes making the

woodsman into a kind hunter who saves Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother.

Challenges to the story in the United States have involved the 1989 version published by Houghton Mifflin that won the Caldecott Honor Book Award. In 1990, the Empire, California, school district banned the book from the district because the bottle of wine appeared to “condone the use of alcohol” to district decision makers. The district curriculum director expressed further concern that the descriptions of the hunter’s rescue of Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother were too violent and inappropriate for young students. That same year, the book was also banned from elementary schools in Culver City, California, because the story “gives the wrong impression about alcohol” to children. Assistant Superintendent Vera Jashni expressed specific concern about the final paragraph of the story, which tells that, after the hunter has killed the wolf, the grandmother drinks some of the wine. She then feels strong and healthy enough to clean up that mess left by the wolf.

The presence of the wine bottle in illustrations of *Little Red Riding Hood* motivated challenges by parents of students in the fifth and sixth grades in the Clay County, Florida, elementary schools in 1990. The school board established a review committee to consider the objections and to examine the books, and the books were removed from the classrooms during the three weeks that the committee deliberated. The books were later returned to the classrooms after the review committee voted to retain the books and the school board concurred with their decision.

In 1991, a teacher in Bradford County, Florida, initiated a complaint that the book was violent because of the actions of the wolf. The teacher also questioned the appropriateness of the little girl taking wine to her grandmother and her grandmother later drinking the wine. The book was placed on the “restricted” shelf, where it was available only to students who specifically requested the book by title and author, while the school sought to locate a “nonalcoholic” version. In the same year, two teachers in Levy County, Florida, challenged the storybook for the same reason, but a review committee of educators and parents voted to retain the book in the schools.

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LORD OF THE FLIES

Author: William Golding

Original dates and places of publication: 1954, England; 1955, United States

Original publishers: Faber and Faber; Coward-McCann

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Lord of the Flies is an allegorical novel that relates the adventures of a group of English schoolboys whose plane crashes on a deserted island, killing all adults aboard. Using their instincts, early social training, and education, the boys attempt to form an organized society. Their efforts result in some of the boys' emerging as leaders or bullies, while others remain destined to follow or to be bullied. Rather than develop a caring and harmonious society free of the corrupting influences of adults, the boys revert to savage behavior and primitive rites.

The novel seems at first to be a simple adventure story of survival, but the growing brutality of the boys toward each other reveals the second level of meaning that questions the nature of civilization and the effect of instinct versus society on behavior. Told from the third-person point of view, the novel opens with a conversation between Ralph and Piggy, who are walking through a tangled jungle on their way back to the beach. The reader learns that they and a large number of other boys, ranging in age from five to 12, were being transported out of a besieged England in the midst of an atomic war when their plane crashed.

The boys emerge in different, seemingly natural roles as the novel progresses. Ralph takes the initiative of calling the boys together, and he emerges as leader of the group, much to the disappointment of Jack, one of the older boys who had hoped to become sole leader. The two boys attract followers. Ralph becomes the builder and organizer who takes a careful and rational look at their needs, while Jack hunts with his followers and becomes increasingly brutal and primitive in behavior. The two groups take turns at maintaining a signal fire on the beach in the hope of attracting passing ships, but Jack's group irresponsibly allows the fire to go out while they hunt and kill a pig. Aroused by their success, Jack's followers urge the others to join them in hunting, and the boys seem nearly overcome by a blood lust that almost leads to the death of one of the boys.

The island paradise soon becomes filled with fear. The younger boys cry out that they see beasts in the darkness despite the contention of Simon that it is only the beast inside themselves. As Jack fights more strongly for a leadership role, he gathers around him a majority of the boys, and they form their own "tribe." They kill a mother pig whom they have surprised while she is nursing her young, and the feast draws all of the boys. As if to worship the

dead animal, Jack's followers place the pig's head on a stake as their offering to the beast on the mountain. As flies cover the head, Simon realizes that it represents the potent emergence of the boys' wickedness.

The boys soon begin to direct their brutal behavior at each other. One of the younger boys burns to death when the signal fire rages out of control. Then Simon, the poetic, level-headed member of the group, is beaten to death by the boys in a frenzied ritualistic dance. The last to die is Piggy, one of the remaining boys to continue to act with civilized restraint, killed by the sadistic Roger, who crushes him by deliberately rolling a boulder down the mountain. After Piggy's death, Jack hurls a spear at Ralph in a failed attempt to kill him. Forced into hiding, Ralph collapses in exhaustion on the beach and is found by naval officers who have arrived to rescue the boys.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel has raised objections regarding its use in the classroom because of its pessimistic view of human society as well as for the scenes of brutality. The novel was challenged in Dallas (Texas) Independent School District high school libraries in 1974 and at Sully Buttes (South Dakota) High School in 1981. Critics at Owen (North Carolina) High School challenged the book in 1981 for being "demoralizing" by implying that man is little more than an animal, and the appropriateness of the novel as a reading assignment was challenged at Marana (Arizona) High School in 1983. The school district in Olney, Texas, challenged the use of the book in the classroom for containing "excessive violence and bad language." The Toronto (Ontario, Canada) board of education ruled on June 23, 1988 that the novel is "racist and recommended that it be removed from all schools," after parents and members of the black community complained that it degraded blacks because the boys paint themselves and savagely hunt and kill both wild boars and later several of their group, while they refer to themselves as a "tribe."

The novel was challenged by parents who demanded that it be removed from the junior high school reading list in Rocklin, California, in 1990. The parents claimed that the book did not provide a good model of "the social standards" and "good citizenship" that are expected of students. The school board rejected the complaint and retained the novel on its lists. The same year, the Gloucester County, New Jersey, school district quietly acquiesced to the protests of parents who claimed that the author's notes to the novel were not appropriate reading for the eighth-grade honors English class. With no formal fanfare, the school simply removed the novel from use until new copies of the novel, minus the author's notes, were obtained.

In 1992, the novel was challenged as indecent by protesters in the Waterloo, Iowa, schools. The challenge was based on perceived profanity, lurid passages, and statements viewed as being derogatory to minorities, women, and the disabled. The protesters pointed out that Piggy, who suffers from asthma and cannot see without his glasses, is ridiculed by the others and deprived of

his glasses. They also identified as offensive a passage in which the boys trap a sow, who is feeding her piglets, pursue her and stab her repeatedly until she falls; then, one boy proudly proclaims that he has stuck a spear “Right up her ass!” In several instances when the boys act in a manner that is out of step with expected masculine behavior, they are criticized as acting “just like a girl.” Despite the opposition, only one of the seven school board members voted against purchasing the book for use in the classroom.

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MANCHILD IN THE PROMISED LAND

Author: Claude Brown

Original date and place of publication: 1965, United States

Original publisher: Macmillan

Literary form: Autobiographical novel

SUMMARY

Manchild in the Promised Land is a fictionalized account of Claude Brown’s maturation from drug-dealing gang member to one of America’s most powerful writers about the African-American experience. The work bears the following dedication: “To Eleanor Roosevelt, who founded the Wiltwyck School for Boys. And to the Wiltwyck School, which is still finding Claude Browns.” Throughout the work, Brown uses the vernacular of the Harlem streets in recounting the drug addiction, prostitution, and murders that threatened to destroy the generation of young black boys and girls struggling in the 1940s and 1950s to survive in a hostile environment.

The book is narrated by “Sonny,” Claude Brown’s persona, who tells his story of growth and endurance in Harlem, where survival depends upon an individual’s ability to outfight and outmaneuver everyone and everything. He is unhappy at home, disdainful of his complacent mother and angry with his abusive father, and he makes the streets his home. Just 13 when the book opens, he has been shot while stealing bedsheets from a

clothesline and is about to be sent away. Already experienced with heroin use, like many of his friends he is headed for a life of poverty, addiction, and early death.

After recovering from his wound, Sonny is sent to the Wiltwyck School for socially maladjusted boys, founded by Eleanor Roosevelt, whom he meets when he sees “this rich old lady hanging around Wiltwyck . . . she used to be married to a cat who was President of the United States.” At the school, Sonny is impressed by the school administrator, Mr. Papanek, who commands respect through his knowledge and authoritative personality and who recognizes Sonny’s potential to overcome his environment. For the first time, the young boy realizes that a man does not have to use a gun, a knife, or a fist to exert power over others; education and intelligence are far more powerful weapons. That awareness stays with him throughout the years ahead.

Once he is back in Harlem, the abuse at home sends him back onto the street, where he continues to deal drugs and to steal. At 14, he is arrested again and sent to a reformatory. This cycle of crime and arrests lasts through most of his teenage years, but the brief experience at Wiltwyck gives him the power to realize that he is going to be just another Harlem statistic who will die of heroin addiction or a gunshot wound unless he makes some changes. The only course is to get a college education. He begins by leaving Harlem to work and to earn a high school diploma.

Once out of Harlem, Sonny takes any job available to pay for his classes. He explores African-American culture as he becomes involved in the Beat movement in art and literature, and new opportunities to grow and learn appear as he becomes friends with musicians who are proud and passionate in exploring their African heritage. He also learns that drugs become unnecessary when life has purpose, as he experiments with spiritual movements. For a time, he is drawn to the Coptic faith, more for its African roots than for the religious aspect; then he becomes deeply involved in the Muslim faith. His belief in formal education also strengthens, and he makes plans to leave New York to attend college. Before making this move, he returns to Harlem, walks the streets, and assesses what has happened to the people whom he has known. One of his best friends has just died of a drug overdose, his younger brother is in jail for armed robbery, and many of his acquaintances are heroin addicts. Only one has had the will to rise above the situation, one of his oldest friends, Danny, who survived heroin addiction and now has a stable marriage and family life and religious convictions. Sonny recognizes that his only hope of escaping the human misery of Harlem is to leave New York behind.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Manchild in the Promised Land has been the target of criticism as well as of numerous attempts to remove it from school libraries and the school curricu-

lum since its publication in 1965. Criticized upon its first appearance for what one reviewer called its limited vocabulary that was “not a language at all but an impoverished patois,” the work has since been condemned for containing a host of other evils.

Lee Burress reported that *Manchild in the Promised Land* was among the 10 most frequently challenged books in schools between 1965 and 1975. In a 1973 national survey of English department chairpersons, Burress, who does not identify the cities or states in which the bans occurred, only the geographical region of the United States, found that the book was banned across the nation. In the Northeast, a combined group consisting of a parent, clergyman, student, and member of the board of education complained that “Trash like this does not belong in the classroom That hippie English teacher is perverted.” The result was that students would not be required to fulfill any reading assignments if a book was judged “graphically realistic.” The book was also placed on a closed shelf in the library to which students had no access.

In a case in the West, a parent complained of the “language and content,” and the book was again placed on a closed shelf of the library to which students had no access. In a case in the Midwest, a teacher complained that the book was “obscene,” and the book was removed from classroom use. In the Southwest, a group calling itself the Committee of Concerned Parents complained to school officials that the book should be removed from the high school library because of “profanity” and sex scenes that are “too explicit.” School officials ordered the book placed on a closed shelf to which students had no access.

In 1974, after one parent of a student in the Waukesha, Wisconsin, school system complained about the language in the work as “filth and obscenity,” school administrators removed the work from the high school library. Similar charges were leveled by parents in Plant City, Florida, in 1976 and in North Jackson, Ohio, in 1980; school officials in both these school systems also removed the work from their high school libraries.

A national survey of high school English department chairpersons conducted by Burress in 1977 found that the work had been removed from classroom use in two New York schools because of parents’ complaints that the work was “obscene,” and it had been removed from the library in a Massachusetts school after the book was brought to the attention of a teacher who found that the book was “not suitable for some grade level students.” That same survey reported that a parent’s request that the book be removed from classroom use because of objections to the “obscene” language and the masturbation scene was denied in Massachusetts.

In 1977, Concerned Citizens and Taxpayers for Decent Books in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, listed the work with 64 other “offensive” works. Characterizing the book as “pornography and filth,” the group called for its removal from the classrooms and the school libraries. The work was removed from classroom use and placed on the restricted shelf in the school library.

In 1987, different complaints were voiced when parents and “concerned citizens” challenged the appearance of the book on reading lists for English classes at Parkrose (Oregon) High School. They protested that the content was “violent, the language offensive, and women are degraded.” They further questioned the relevance of the work to the lives of students in Parkrose and claimed that their students “have no need to understand life in a black ghetto.”

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MARRIED LOVE

Author: Marie Stopes

Original dates and places of publication: 1918, England; 1919, United States

Original publishers: Fiffeld & Co.; The Critic and Guide Co.

Literary form: Marriage manual

SUMMARY

Married Love was an attempt to explain to married men and women how their mutual sex lives could be made happier, and the chapter titles indicate a blend of the clinical and the romantic: “The Heart’s Desire,” “The Broken Joy,” “Woman’s Contrariness,” “The Fundamental Pulse,” “Marital Adjustment,” “Sleep, Modesty and Romance,” “Abstinence,” “Children,” “Society,” and “The Glorious Unfolding.” Although much of what Stopes says about married sexuality had already been covered in writings by Havelock Ellis, she brought a new perspective by emphasizing “the woman’s side of sex questions.” Rather than being merely a clinical “how-to,” the work includes efforts at counseling couples and pleading with husbands to make greater efforts at understanding the emotional and physical sides of their wives’ sexual natures. She also criticizes those men who demand their “conjugal rights” without concern for their spouses’ mental and physical comfort.

When it first appeared, *Married Love* was described as a “strange amalgam of purple prose, suffragist philosophy, and sage advice on lovemaking.” The

book became a vital sex guide because it offered frank discussions of the difficulties that may occur for both men and women in sexual intimacy.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

In 1919, American feminist activist Margaret Sanger bore “the brunt of insults from publishers because I tried to get ‘Married Love’ published” before finding an American publisher, but Stopes was completely unhappy with the arrangement. Dr. W. J. Robinson of The Critic and Guide Co. expurgated the manuscript, editing it extensively, toning down the author’s enthusiasm and making her specific language more vague. The intent and effect of the book were subverted by the expurgation.

In 1930, the Tariff Act provided the United States Customs Bureau of the Treasury Department with a new procedure for censoring books that permitted officials to judge books before they were permitted to enter American shores and exclude them if they were “below standard.” Under the *in rem* (“against the thing”) provision, a local Customs official would refuse to deliver the offending book and advise in a letter that “this volume will be destroyed unless you claim it and are willing to test the issue in a court.” Jail sentences and fines were not meted out to publishers or distributors, but the books were destroyed.

In 1930, *Married Love* was declared “not obscene or immoral” in Philadelphia after Fanny and Ida Teller, two social workers, imported copies of *Married Love* to use in their work. The volumes were seized by Customs, and the case went before Judge Kirkpatrick, United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, who made the ruling. The copies were returned to the Tellers. Despite the judge’s decision, the book was again seized later that year and again went to court.

In 1930, before the Philadelphia case had gone to trial, American publisher G.P. Putnam imported *Married Love* and notified Customs officials in advance in an effort to test the new Customs law. Lawyers for the publisher argued in *United States v. One Obscene Book Entitled “Married Love,”* 48 F. 2d 821 (1931), that the law was unconstitutional. Judge John M. Woolsey heard the case of obscenity brought by Customs against the work in New York City and decided that the book was not obscene. Woolsey declared that the Philadelphia decision should have been a bar to another similar proceeding. In a decision handed down on April 6, 1931, he stated: “I hold that Judge Kirkpatrick’s decision established the book ‘Married Love’ as having an admissible status at any point around the Customs’ barriers of the United States.” To forestall critics who might charge that he was merely concurring with a previous decision, Judge Woolsey stated: “I cannot imagine a normal mind to which this book would seem to be obscene or immoral within the proper definition of the words, or whose sex impulses would be stirred by reading it.” Instead of banning the book, the judge asserted that it should “be welcomed within our borders.”

In 1931, the work was banned by the Irish Censorship Board for its discussion of contraception, despite the praise of many such as George Bernard Shaw, who called Dr. Marie Stopes “an expert instructress” on technique and claimed that “numbers of unhappy marriages have been set right by her instruction.”

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MY HOUSE

Author: Nikki Giovanni

Original date and place of publication: 1972, United States

Original publisher: William Morrow Publishers

Literary form: Poetry collection

SUMMARY

My House is a collection of 36 personal and autobiographical poems that deal with thoughts of home, family, and humanness as written from the perspective of a black woman who is trying to verbalize the experience of other black women in balancing the desire to assert oneself and to help others. Grouped into two parts, 23 poems under the heading of “The Rooms Inside” and 13 poems under the heading of “The Rooms Outside,” the poems continue the expressions of black pride that characterized her earlier work. The first section contains poems that reflect the warmth, pleasures, and comforts of home and family, as well as the intimate relations, personal thoughts, and love that are integral to family life. In “The Only Song I’m Singing,” she asks “baby please / please somehow show me what i need / to know so i can love you right / now” as the persona struggles to determine her relationship to others.

The second section, “The Rooms Outside,” deals with people who are outside of the home environment and focuses on the struggles that they must face. In “Categories,” the persona considers occasions when she has seen “an old white woman” and wants to relate to her as a person but finds that impossible. She states, “if she weren’t such an aggressive bitch she would see / that if you weren’t such a Black one / there would be a relationship but anyway—it doesn’t matter / much—except that you started out to kill her and now find/ you just don’t give a damn”

The collection is largely a monologue that uses rich, descriptive, rhythmic language to reveal the mood and thoughts of the changing personae of the poems, the African-American woman who is trying “to put her house in order to keep outside atrocities from tearing down her house.”

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The collection was banned from the public school libraries in Waukesha, Wisconsin, in 1975 for “vulgarity” and for use of the word *nigger*. In 1990, parents of students at West Genesee High School in Syracuse, New York, called for a ban of the book from the classroom, charging that it contained “obscenities.” In 1992, school officials in Duval County, Florida, challenged the inclusion of the book in the public school libraries because it contained the word *nigger* and because of numerous identified instances of “vulgarity,” racism, and sex. That same year, a middle school librarian in Jacksonville, Florida, received complaints that *My House* was vulgar and racist. Questioned by school officials about the book, the librarian asked that it be moved from the middle school library to the high school or that it be restricted to students who have parental permission to read the book. She concurred with the parental objections that the book contained “explicit sexual connotations” and racial bias. The district review committee voted that the book should remain in the middle school library but on the restricted-access shelf available only to students with parental permission.

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THE NAKED APE

Author: Desmond Morris

Original date and place of publication: 1967, United States

Original publisher: McGraw-Hill Book Company

Literary form: Anthropology textbook

SUMMARY

The Naked Ape created a sensation among academics and the public alike when it was first published, because zoologist Desmond Morris treated his subject, the human species, as he might an animal and analyzed humans in

much the same way. The irreverent tone is evident from the first lines of the introduction, in which Morris notes that there are 193 living species of monkeys and apes, 192 of which are covered with hair. The one exception is the “naked ape,” the human who “is proud that he has the biggest brain of all the primates, but attempts to conceal the fact that he also has the biggest penis, preferring to accord this honour falsely to the mighty gorilla.” He observes that humans may have acquired “lofty new motives,” but they have “lost none of the earthy old ones.” It is to these earthy impulses that Morris directs most of his attention in the study.

The study contains chapters that examine humans in much the same terms and contexts that other mammals had been studied by zoologists for many decades. Chapter titles include “Origins,” “Sex,” “Rearing,” “Exploration,” “Fighting,” “Feeding,” “Comfort,” and “Animals.” The first seven chapters examine the interactions of humans with each other, and the final chapter examines human activities in relation to other animals. The most controversial chapter was Chapter 2, “Sex,” which provides detailed discussion of sexual development, sexual practices, and sexual aberrations. Using a clinical tone and an analytical approach that has been applied to countless studies of a diverse number of animal species, Morris painstakingly dissects the environmental and nurturing practices that help and hinder human sexual development and details its physical signs. He identifies sexual practices that humans have in common with other animals and the signs of physical arousal and sexual response that appear at each stage of “copulatory behaviour.”

In his discussion of sexual “aberrations,” Morris explains that he cannot discuss them in “the usual moralistic way.” Instead, the zoologist approaches these sexual differences, such as celibacy and homosexuality, as “biological morality in terms of population success and failure.” Morris is emphatic in his defense of all sexual practices and asserts that none, “no matter how disgusting and obscene it may appear to the members of a particular culture, can be criticized biologically providing it does not hinder general reproductive success.” He makes an exception in regard to the threat of overpopulation and suggests that birth control is sometimes a needed precaution to preserve the human race at its best.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The work was used as a college text for several years after publication without negative repercussions, but challenges arose when it entered high school classrooms and libraries. In 1975, a group in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, called the Concerned Citizens and Taxpayers for Decent Books challenged the inclusion of the book in the local school libraries. They complained that the book was “pornography and filth” and demanded its removal. The school board complied with the demand.

The most extensive challenge to *The Naked Ape* began in 1976, when school board members removed this book, along with 10 others, from the

Island Trees (New York) Union Free School District High School library (see THE BEST SHORT STORIES BY NEGRO WRITERS), claiming that it was “just plain filthy.” The court record of the case that was eventually heard before the United States Supreme Court, *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico et al.*, 457 U.S. 853 (1982), identified the following objectionable passage from the book:

If either males or females cannot for some reason obtain sexual access to their opposite numbers, they will find sexual outlets in other ways. They may use other members of their own sex, or they may even use members of other species, or they may masturbate.

The book was returned to the school library after the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the book.

In 1989, parents of students in Mifflinburg (Pennsylvania) High School challenged the use of the book as a required reading in the English curriculum. They charged that it contained “explicit, almost manual descriptions of what some would refer to as deviant sexual relations.” The book, temporarily removed from the classroom while a review committee considered the complaint, was later reinstated upon the recommendation of the committee.

FURTHER READING

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NAKED LUNCH

Author: William S. Burroughs

Original dates and places of publication: 1959, France; 1962, United States

Original publishers: Olympia Press; Grove Press

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Begun in Tangier in 1955, *Naked Lunch* is a montage of shocking scenes that combine surreal fantasy and hallucination to create a nightmarish blend of drug addiction, pederasty, and cannibalism. The unconventional narrative patterns of shifting point of view and stream-of-consciousness rambling make it less a unified novel than it is a series of images that are linked by their theme of the destructive effects of man's addictions. The lack of a consistent narrative and the frequently changing point of view reflect the nightmare world in which William Lee, the main character, fights himself as often as he

must fight with others. Burroughs claimed in his "Introduction" to have illuminated his technique through the title that "means exactly what the words say: NAKED Lunch—a frozen moment when everyone sees what is on the end of every fork."

Three sections make up the work: the account of drug withdrawal in the Introduction, which is subtitled "Deposition: Testimony Concerning a Sickness"; the paranoid-sexual fantasy of the body of the novel with erratically placed subheadings; and the scholarly examination of drug addiction in the Appendix.

The Introduction offers Burroughs' explanation of "The Sickness," his 15-year addiction to opium and opium derivatives. The author scrupulously distinguishes between drugs that create physical dependence and hallucinogens, which he claims are wrongly condemned. Using a sometimes jarring word order, he also describes in painstaking detail the economics of drug dealing and the victimization of the addict. The Introduction ends with his apocalyptic warning: "Look down LOOK DOWN along that junk road before you travel there and get in with the Wrong Mob . . . A word to the wise guy."

The body of the novel is the story of William Lee, a junkie who struggles to free himself of the strictures imposed by drugs, sex, language, and bureaucracy. He roams from New York to Mexico to Tangier and beyond, searching for escape from "the heat," which at first is slang reference for the police, but which eventually comes to refer to the pressures of life that have driven him to drug addiction. Space and time fluctuate wildly, and Lee lives in a nightmarish world in which time stretches or constricts according to the amount and type of drug consumed. Locations become interchangeable as Lee travels through a world of sadistic sex, extensive drug use, and squalid surroundings. Heterosexual and homosexual acts that emphasize pain and degradation are described in lurid detail, and mutilation imagery abounds in the novel. The names and specific effects of various drugs are detailed, as are the most and least effective means of administering the drugs in order to achieve their maximum effects.

Burroughs juxtaposes seemingly realistic scenes with brutal nightmarish acts that exhibit the degradation of his characters through the violent, bestial acts of others and of themselves. He uses colloquial language to refer to the human body, especially to genitalia, and strives for maximum shock effect in the extended descriptions of drug paraphernalia and use and the forced sexual encounters suffered by men, women, and boys.

In the Appendix, an essay entitled "Letter from a Master Addict to Dangerous Drugs" that was published in the *British Journal of Addiction* (53:2), Burroughs discusses the relative merits and dangers of opiates, cannabis indica, peyote, cocaine, and synthetic drugs. He interpolates his own experiences with each substance into an examination of sources and precautions, thus providing a guide to the unwary.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel has the distinction of being the last literary work to be declared obscene and brought to trial in America. From the 1959 publication of the book until January 1963, Customs agents seized copies of the work entering the United States, justifying their actions under the Tariff Act (1930), which provided for the seizure of allegedly obscene materials. The work was later involved in two legal actions. Although cleared in Los Angeles in 1965 before the case went to trial, it was declared obscene the same year in Boston, where the attorney general argued that the work was “trash.” Writers Norman Mailer, Allen Ginsberg, and John Ciardi were called as expert witnesses, along with psychiatrists and academics, to testify regarding the literary merit of the work, but Judge Eugene Hudson remained unconvinced. In delivering his verdict, the judge declared the book to be “obscene, indecent and impure . . . and taken as a whole . . . predominantly prurient, hardcore pornography and utterly without redeeming social importance.” In response to the claim by the defense that the work held significant social and scientific value, Hudson declared *Naked Lunch* to be trash written by a “mentally sick” individual.

An appeal was made to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, and *Attorney General v. A Book Named “Naked Lunch,”* 351 Mass. 298, 218 N.E.2d 571 (1966) was heard on October 8, 1965. The Supreme Judicial Court acknowledged that the book was “grossly offensive” and reminded those present that the author had himself described the book as “brutal, obscene and disgusting.” They also applied the test of redeeming social value to the work and could find no reason to declare the novel as “not utterly without redeeming social value.” Their determination that the work was not lacking in social importance resulted from the many reviews and articles in literary and other publications that discussed seriously the controversial book and showed that a “substantial and intelligent group” within the community believed the book to be of literary significance. On July 7, 1966, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court declared the book not obscene. The four members of the court who delivered the favorable decision and the two dissenting members declared further that the book could be sold in the state but that people would be subject to prosecution if they “have been or are advertising or distributing this book in this Commonwealth in a manner to exploit it for the sake of its possible prurient appeal.”

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NANA

Author: Émile Zola

Original dates and places of publication: 1880, France; 1888, England

Original publishers: Charpentier; Henry Vizetelly & Co.

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Nana is the ninth novel in a 20-novel series entitled *Les Rougon-Macquart*, which traces the fortunes of two families, the Rougons and the Macquarts, their entry into the modern world and into all social classes. Not merely the work of imagination, the novels were based on documented evidence obtained through books, newspaper clippings, and first-person investigations to ensure historical, social, and political accuracy. *Nana* presents a picture of French life and society from 1852 through 1870 as it follows the career of a vulgar, greedy, and cruel courtesan named Nana.

The novel opens at the theater premiere of *The Blonde Venus*, a mediocre play with amateur singer Nana, whose daring appearance in the last act clothed only in her long, golden hair and a transparent gauze veil mesmerizes the audience. The audience is fascinated by Nana's marble-like body, and the former street urchin recognizes the power that her flesh exerts on others.

She is soon a sought-after courtesan, captivating wealthy men who provide the money that she needs for her sickly son, who is living with her aunt, and for her own extravagant nature. With little regard for their feelings, and no delicacy of manner, Nana flaunts her multiple relationships. She is verbally abusive and physically destructive and demands money from her lovers according to her whims. Her sensuality captivates a coterie of adoring admirers, but the attraction wears thin: Some men return to their more compassionate and accommodating wives and mistresses while others are bankrupted.

Oblivious to anyone's feelings but her own, Nana becomes infatuated with the physically ugly comic actor Fontan and begins to live with him. He soon dominates the relationship, slapping her, bullying her, repeatedly calling her a "whore," and using all of her money while hoarding his own. Once her money is gone, he tells her that they must share costs. Nana loves him, so she plans to support them both, hoping to please him. She returns to streetwalking and meets Satin, a street "slut" who opens her eyes to the world of "perversion." They dine at Laure, "in which faded dresses and tattered hats were to be seen side by side with elegant costumes, in the fraternity of the same

perversions.” Nana is surprised to find successful courtesans in the restaurant, all flirting with younger women.

Nana becomes jaded, coming to believe that “there was no virtue left in the world. . . . everyone was wallowing in sensuality.” She even imagines that if she could look into all of the bedrooms in Paris between nine in the evening and three in the morning, “she could see some funny sights: poor people going at it for all they were worth, and quite a few rich people sticking their noses into filth more deeply than the others.” One evening, after running from police rounding up prostitutes, she races home to find the door bolted and Fontan with another woman. He tells Nana that he will kill her if she ever returns. Despondent, she goes to Satin, and the two commiserate at a hotel, then go to bed, where they kiss and Nana “began returning Satin’s caresses . . . uttering words of love.” The romantic interlude is cut short by police raiding the hotel for prostitutes. Nana goes to her aunt’s house, and she finds her son sickly and anemic.

Nana returns to being a courtesan, recapturing one of her former lovers, Count Muffat, who buys her a mansion and furnishes it elegantly. He looks the other way as she brings home numerous male and female lovers but finally leaves when he catches her in bed with his elderly father-in-law. She visits her son and finds him dying of smallpox, a death that Nana could have prevented by paying for medical care rather than lavish frivolity. Nana becomes ill with smallpox and dies. The final page of the novel emphasizes the destruction that the pustules had wreaked on her beautiful face. “It was as though the virus she had brought from the gutter . . . had risen to her face and rotted it.”

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Nana was censored before it even appeared in book form. In 1879, Zola sold serialization rights to the newspaper *Le Voltaire*, published by Jules Lafitte. Eager to make money on the venture, Lafitte sent sandwich-board men throughout Paris carrying signs stating “LISEZ NANA! LISEZ NANA!” (“READ NANA! READ NANA!”), and he inundated the city with large colored posters to announce the forthcoming serialization. Zola felt that the prepublication publicity made his work appear “cheap, nasty and frivolous.” Although Lafitte promised not to change a word, he did delete what he considered to be controversial parts to avoid government censorship. Leon Gambetta, the famous Republican leader and opponent of Napoleon III, warned Lafitte that *Nana* was “too strong” and would have to be further sanitized to avoid the risks of a fine, a shutdown of the paper, and even jail. Lafitte increased the expurgations with each new installment in the serial, at the end of which Charpentier produced the unexpurgated novel that sold 55,000 copies within a few weeks and required additional printings. People bought eagerly to read what “evil” and “decadence” Lafitte had removed.

In 1885, the United States Customs Department seized the imported French edition of the novel, as well as invoices for an English translation. The department commissioned an official literal translation of the work from the original for the Customs officers to read, after which they ordered all copies of the book burned.

In 1888, Zola's English publisher, Vizetelly, came under attack by the National Vigilance Association (NVA), a group composed mainly of clergymen, to continue the work of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, which had ceased operation a few years before. All of Zola's works, translated from French into English by the publisher's son, were specifically cited, as were works by Flaubert, Goncourt, Maupassant, Daudet, and Bourget. The NVA gained the attention of House of Commons member Samuel Smith, M.P., who spoke in May 1888 against Vizetelly, "the chief culprit in the spread of pernicious literature." Citing Zola's works as an example of "obscene publications," Smith asserted that "nothing more diabolical had ever been written by the pen of man; they are only fit for swine, and those who read them must turn their minds into cesspools." The House passed a motion that "the law against obscene publications and indecent pictures and prints should be vigorously enforced and, if necessary, strengthened." The government would leave the initiation of proceedings to private individuals.

Other politicians and the newspapers joined the campaign against pornography, widening the scope of the battle to include other works, but Zola remained the focus. The Roman Catholic newspaper *Tablet* attacked him as "a pornographer," the *Globe* charged that Zola "sapped the foundations of manhood and womanhood," and the *Whitehall Review* demanded immediate action against his books. The law firm Collette & Collette, retained by the NVA, obtained a summons on August 10, 1888, against Henry Vizetelly for publishing three "obscene" novels by Zola: *The Soil* (*La Terre*), *Piping Hot* (*Pot-bouille*), and *Nana*. Henry Asquith, prosecutor for the Crown, referred to these novels as "the three most immoral books ever published." The defense argued that Vizetelly had carefully expurgated the books while translating them into English and pointed out that the unexpurgated French versions were being freely circulated and sold in England at the same time. The prosecution declared the fact irrelevant, and the publisher went to trial at the Old Bailey in October 1888. Vizetelly was sentenced to four months in Holloway Prison and ordered not to publish any more of Zola's works. The court further agreed that all of Zola's works must be withdrawn from circulation in England, making Zola the only writer to have his works outlawed in England in the 19th century.

All of Zola's novels were banned at once in 1894, when they were placed on the Index librorum prohibitorum in Rome; in 1929, when Yugoslavia banned all of his works; and in 1953, when Ireland did the same. The major complaints centered on the perception that Zola had made a heroine of a prostitute and had discussed "debased man's nature" by uncovering the often sordid sexuality of the period.

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NEVER LOVE A STRANGER

Author: Harold Robbins

Original date and place of publication: 1948, United States

Original publisher: Alfred A. Knopf

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Never Love a Stranger is a carefully structured rags-to-riches story of a Depression-era hero who starts life in a Catholic orphanage and later becomes an important figure in the New York City crime world. The early chapters of the novel are largely autobiographical. Francis Kane is the name that Harold Robbins was given by the Paulist fathers in whose New York orphanage he was left as an infant. At the age of 10, he was adopted by a Jewish family and lived the early life of his fictionalized persona of this book.

The novel opens at the home of an Italian midwife who answers her door to find a pregnant young woman in the early stages of labor. After a difficult labor, she gives birth to a male infant, then dies. The midwife gives the baby the mother's name, Francis Kane. It is all that his mother leaves him.

Frankie Kane grows up in St. Therese's Catholic orphanage, eventually working part time as a numbers runner for a local criminal and, at 15, becoming sexually involved with an older French-Canadian housemaid. Frankie is adopted by his maternal uncle and learns that he is Jewish, but he finds himself unable to attend synagogue after years of daily Mass attendance and instruction in Roman Catholic doctrine. Instead of making a choice, he leaves organized religion entirely.

Happy to have a home, Frankie attends high school, hoping to enter a profession and leave numbers running far behind. His uncle contracts tuberculosis and the family makes plans to move, but state law requires that

Frankie must return to the orphanage. The distraught boy runs away and loses touch with his family. After a tour of duty with the navy, he returns to New York and works his way up to become head of New York City's gambling rackets. His language is coarse and his sexual experiences are frequent, but he leaves this behind when he marries childhood friend Ruth. After she dies in childbirth, he enlists in the army, eventually dying in the war. The novel ends as childhood friends read a letter in which Frankie reveals that his son with Ruth survived and was placed in the Orphanage of St. Therese. He begs his friends to care for his son, "to give him roots in the earth, in society, to teach him the true values in the world."

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

A trend emerged in the years after World War II among writers toward an increased use of frank language and more detailed description of sexual relationships. In many cases, both tendencies were classified as "obscenity" when litigation occurred. In addition, many novels in this period also depicted a greater social acceptance of extramarital sex. Reviewers criticized the language and the behavior of Frankie Kane, whose tough-spirited attitude and ability to survive read "almost like a handbook on how to be a gangster." Isabelle Mallet observed in a *New York Times* review that Kane's story would have had "more direct appeal" had he been "more introspective." In an article in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, Nathan L. Rothman condemned the use of "obscenities" in the novel and claimed that it "isn't realistic or important."

In 1948, *Never Love a Stranger* was one of nine novels identified as obscene in criminal proceedings in the Court of Quarter sessions in Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania. (See *END AS A MAN* for complete discussion of the case.) Indictments were brought by the state district attorney, John H. Maurer, against five booksellers who were charged with possessing and intending to sell the books. The other allegedly obscene novels were James Farrell's Studs Lonigan trilogy (*Young Lonigan*, *The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan* and *Judgment Day*), Farrell's *A WORLD I NEVER MADE*, William Faulkner's *SANCTUARY* and *WILD PALMS*, Erskine Caldwell's *GOD'S LITTLE ACRE*, and Calder Willingham's *End as a Man*.

In his March 18, 1949, decision in *Commonwealth v. Gordon*, 66 D. & C. 101 (1949) that *Never Love a Stranger* is not obscene, Judge Curtis Bok stated:

It is a swift story that covers a great deal of ground, its point being to portray a hard and lonely man who could not fully trust or give himself to anyone. Its last and least convincing part is also the least open to attack for obscenity; the rest, particularly the section dealing with New York City during the depression of the early 1930's, is very moving, not because there are sexual incidents but because the lines of the story are deep and authentic.

Bok refused to declare *Never Love a Stranger* “obscene” because the definition in cases that he cited in his decision restricted the meaning of obscenity “to that of sexual impurity, and with those cases that have made erotic allurements the test of its effect.” The work also failed to meet Bok’s definition of sexual impurity in literature, which he defined “as any writing whose dominant purpose and effect is erotic allurements—that is to say, a calculated and effective incitement to sexual desire.” In Robbins’s novel, references to sexual activity are brief and general, and Kane’s language is important to developing the character.

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OF MICE AND MEN

Author: John Steinbeck
Original date and place of publication: 1937, United States
Original publisher: Viking Penguin
Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Of Mice and Men is the story of two men, big and simpleminded Lennie and small and cunning George, who drift from one ranchhand job to another as they pursue their dream of owning their own place. Despite their mismatched intellectual capabilities, the two men are good friends who share the same dream, the simple desire to have their own farm where Lennie will be able to raise rabbits. As they travel from job to job, George becomes frustrated with Lennie’s limitations and often loses patience, but he does not desert the childlike giant. George knows that Lennie will inadvertently become involved in a situation from which he will be unable to extricate himself, so vigilance is necessary.

Although the two men are thrilled to be given a ranch job, George must, as usual, cover for Lennie and make him appear to be more capable and intelligent than he really is. The boss’s son Curley bullies the childlike Lennie, who finds himself drawn to the bully’s lovely young wife. Curley’s wife, however, does not treat Lennie fairly and she teases him playfully, unaware of how seriously he perceives her actions. He sees her as being similar to the soft

and cuddly puppy that he once had, and he wants only to stroke her soft hair as he had stroked the puppy's soft fur. When Lennie approaches Curley's wife to stroke her hair, she becomes frightened and struggles and starts to scream. He places his hand on her mouth to quiet her, but he is not capable of judging his strength and breaks her neck. When George finds them, Lennie apologizes and cries that he has hurt her just like he had hurt the puppy. George is aware that the ranchhands led by Curley will not have pity for Lennie, so he tells Lennie to pack up so that they can leave. A short time later, as the two sit on a riverbank, George shoots Lennie to death to save him from the more terrifying tortures of a mob.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Of Mice and Men earned the dubious prestige of being the second most frequently banned book in the public school curriculum of the 1990s, second only to the reading anthology *IMPRESSIONS*, and challenges were frequent in earlier decades and continue today. Censors claim that the novel contains crude heroes who speak vulgar language and whose experiences exhibit a sadly deficient social system in the United States.

The novel was placed on the banned list in Ireland in 1953 because of "obscurities" and "vulgar" language. It was banned for similar reasons in Syracuse, Indiana, in 1974; Oil City, Pennsylvania, in 1977; Grand Blanc, Michigan, in 1979; and Continental, Ohio, in 1980. In 1977, in Greenville, North Carolina, the Fourth Province of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan challenged the use of the book in the local school district, for containing "profanities and using God's name in vain." The same reason was given by parents who challenged the book in Vernon-Verona-Sherill (New York) School District in 1980 and in school districts in St. David, Arizona, in 1981 and Tell City, Indiana, in 1982. The school board of Scottsboro, Alabama, banned the novel from Skyline High School in 1983 because of "profanity," and the chair of the Knoxville, Tennessee, school board vowed to remove all "filthy books" from the local school system, beginning with *Of Mice and Men* because of "its vulgar language."

The novel was challenged as "vulgar" and "offensive" by parents in the Christian County, Kentucky, school district in 1987, but it was later reinstated in the school libraries and English classes. "Profanity" was also the reason for the 1988 challenges in Marion County, West Virginia, schools; Wheaton-Warrenville (Illinois) Middle School; and Berrien Springs (Michigan) High School. In 1989, the school board ordered the novel removed from Northside High School in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, because of "profanity," and it was challenged as a reading assignment at a summer youth program in Chattanooga, Tennessee, because "Steinbeck is known to have had an anti-business attitude." That same year, the novel was also removed from all reading lists and all copies were stored away in White Chapel High School in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, because parents objected to the language. "Offen-

sive language” was the reason that parents in the Shelby County, Tennessee, school system challenged the appropriateness of including the novel on the high school reading list.

The 1990s brought an increase in the number of challenges to *Of Mice and Men*. In 1990, a parent in Salinas, Kansas, challenged the use of the book in a 10th-grade English class because it contained “profanity” and “takes the Lord’s name in vain.” The school board review committee considered the complaint and recommended that the work be retained as a required reading but cautioned that no excerpts from the book should be read aloud in the classroom. That same year, a parent in Riviera, Texas, complained that the novel contained profanities and requested that it be removed from the 11th-grade English classes. At an open school board meeting to consider the request, 50 teachers and administrators and 10 high school students appeared to support continued use of the book. The only person who spoke against the novel was the parent who raised the original challenge. After the parent went through two more levels of appeal, the school board voted to continue assigning the novel.

In 1991, a Fresno, California, parent demanded that the book be removed from the 10th-grade English college preparatory curriculum, citing “profanity” and “racial slurs.” The book was retained, and the child of the objecting parent was provided with an alternative reading assignment. In Iowa City, Iowa, a parent complained of the use of *Of Mice and Men* in the seventh-grade literature courses because of the profanity in the book, such as the word “Goddamn.” She claimed that her daughter was subjected to “psychological and emotional abuse” when the book was read aloud and expressed the hope that her daughter would “not talk like a migrant worker” when she completed school. The district review committee retained the book. “Profanity,” “excessive cursing,” and “sexual overtones” were behind challenges to reading of the novel in high schools in Suwanee, Florida; Jacksboro, Tennessee; Buckingham, Virginia; and Branford, Florida.

A large number of challenges arose in 1992. A coalition of community members and clergy in Mobile, Alabama, requested that local school officials form a special textbook screening committee to “weed out objectionable things.” Their first target was to be *Of Mice and Men*, which they claimed contained “profanity” and “morbid and depressing themes.” No formal complaint was lodged, so school officials rejected the request. Challenges in Waterloo, Iowa, and Duval County, Florida, were made because of “profanity,” “lurid passages about sex,” and “statements defamatory to minorities.” A parent in Modesto, California, challenged the novel on the basis of profanity for the use of the word *nigger*, and the NAACP joined in demanding that the novel be removed from the reading list. “Profanity” prompted the challenge at Oak Hill High School in Alexandria, Louisiana, where it was retained.

One of the more detailed complaints emerged in 1992 in Hamilton, Ohio, where the book was temporarily removed from the high school reading list after a parent complained that it contained “vulgarity” and “racial slurs.” The parent, vice president of the Parents’ Coalition in Hamilton, stated that

the novel contained 108 profanities and 12 racial slurs. The school board suggested the use of alternative reading assignments, which the coalition refused, and the novel was temporarily removed from the optional reading list. At the meeting of the board-appointed review committee, 150 parents, students, and teachers appeared and enthusiastically supported the book. One student submitted a petition bearing 333 signatures of people who favored retaining the book. A local minister who opposed the book told the board, "Anybody that's got a child shouldn't want them to read this book. It should be burned up, put in a fire." The board of education voted unanimously to retain the book.

The novel was challenged in 1993 as an appropriate English curriculum assignment by parents of students at Mingus (Arizona) Union High School who were concerned about the "profane language, moral statement, treatment of the retarded, and the violent ending." In 1994, the school superintendent of Putnam County, Tennessee, removed the novel from the classroom "due to the language in it, we just can't have this kind of book being taught." That same year, parents of students at Loganville (Georgia) High School called for a ban of the book because of "its vulgar language throughout."

In spring 1997, after 13 years of teaching *Of Mice and Men*, eighth-grade teacher Dan Brooks, in Peru, Illinois, was told to stop teaching the book. The school had received three anonymous letters complaining that the language of the book was "inappropriate." Although Peru school superintendent John Jacobson stated that he viewed the novel as a "quality piece of literature," he supported the ban. The National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) stepped in to point out the lack of clear policies for responding to challenges, and the Peru, Illinois, school board lifted the ban while the board developed formal curriculum selection policies. In 1998, Brooks told NCAC that since the incident he has been observed more often and reprimanded frequently.

In 2002, the novel was challenged by parents in Grandville, Michigan, who wanted the book removed from high school classes as required reading, because it "is full of racism, profanity, and foul language." School officials considered the complaint but decided to retain the novel as required reading. That same year, after parents in George County, Mississippi, complained to school officials about "profanity" in the novel, the school board voted to ban *Of Mice and Men* from the school system.

In Lucedale, Mississippi, in January 2003, the school board voted to ban the novel. *School Library Journal* reported that a grandparent complained *Of Mice and Men* contains excessive profanity and violence. The book was removed from all classrooms and libraries in the district.

Also in 2003, parents of a student attending Community High School in Normal, Illinois, challenged the use of the novel in the classroom because it contains "racial slurs, profanity, violence, and does not represent traditional values." After a school district review committee considered the challenge and voted to retain the novel, the school district provided the student with

the option of reading *The Pearl*, another Steinbeck work, as an alternative, but the family challenging the novel rejected the offer. The committee reconsidered, then recommended two other alternatives, *The House on Mango Street* and *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, which the family accepted.

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OF TIME AND THE RIVER

Author: Thomas Wolfe

Original date and place of publication: 1935, United States

Original publisher: Charles Scribner's Sons

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Of Time and the River is an autobiographical novel in which Wolfe, in the persona of Eugene Gant, relates his experiences as a southern man who leaves home to pursue his education in the North. As the book opens, Gant thinks of the distance, in both time and space, between the little town of Altamont in North Carolina that he is leaving and the city of Boston, where he will attend Harvard. While on the train moving northward, he recalls his unhappy childhood and the hunger for experience that he could never quite satisfy.

At Harvard, Gant takes a drama class, then wanders the streets to gain experience to use in his own plays. He hungrily reads everything that he can.

He also becomes closer with another man from his town, Robert Weaver, who has insanity in his family. After graduating, Gant briefly goes home, where Robert and he get drunk and are jailed. Gant eventually decides to return north to live in New York City and work as an English instructor. Weaver reappears and takes a room at the apartment hotel where Gant lives. Weaver drinks heavily, destroys property, takes a mistress, and makes Gant's life miserable. Through another friend, Joel Pierce, Gant is introduced to the wealthy people of New York in their palatial homes. He is at first entranced by the opulence but eventually realizes that the wealth and luxury that he craves result from the misery of others.

On vacation in England, Gant meets old friend Francis Starwick, touring Europe with two women who are paying all of his bills. Gant becomes disgusted with them and travels alone to France. He visits Chartres, Orleans, and Tours, which remind him of Altamont, and he thinks of America and of his family and childhood. The thoughts make him homesick, and he makes reservations to return home. While on the ocean liner, Gant sees a woman whose face glows with great excitement. A woman companion calls her Esther, and Gant feels that she will be his destiny. The novel ends at that point.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Of Time and the River was a lumbering collection of half a million words when famed editor Max Perkins of Charles Scribner's Sons began the task of giving it form in 1933. After reading it, Perkins told Wolfe that the pile of papers contained two complete novels, one which told of "the period of unrest, wandering, search, and hunger in a man's youth" and a second that "was dominated by a unity of a single passion," the fictional account of Wolfe's affair with Aline Bernstein. The publishing house convinced Wolfe that the first part was the superior literary product and that his inability to be fully objective about the affair interfered with the quality of his writing in the second part. The real reason was that Scribner's "could not overlook the grave possibility that Aline Bernstein, or some member of her family, might well sue for libel if Wolfe's account of their love affair was published." Aline had already made Wolfe promise not to write anything about her or her family without approval, and he had given his word. Yet none of what Perkins read in the lumbering manuscript had been approved, and it was not likely to gain her approval. Thus, Perkins and Scribner's censored the author's original work before publication by removing the second half of the work because they "had every reason to think that Aline Bernstein might explode if Charles Scribner's Sons published a major book, half of which was devoted to her love life."

Once published, the novel became the object of criticism and of a call for its suppression by groups who perceived it as being both racist and anti-Semitic. Critics objected to his treatment of African Americans, pointing

out that these minor characters are treated more like “frantic children.” The growing activism of the New Deal era and the increasing awareness of individual human rights led critics to feel that Wolfe was contemptuous of blacks and that black characters in his books “hardly qualify as human beings.” More troubling to Wolfe was the charge of anti-Semitism. He saw nothing wrong in writing in *Of Time and the River* that the main character, Eugene Gant, feels when he begins teaching in New York City that he is in a world “over-run by Jews” and that his students with their “Yiddish” faces are “beak-nosed” and engage in “Kike” laughter. Cognizant of the growing threats to Jews in Germany, a Jewish leader wrote to Scribner’s from Philadelphia objecting to Wolfe’s “hymn of hate directed against an oppressed minority,” while another critic wrote that the novel “fairly reeks of the narrow-mindedness engendered in anti-Semitism.” Such criticism angered Wolfe, who had taken pains to create a view that “was so much more flattering than his own personal assessment of the Jews.” Aside from isolated individual refusals to buy the novel, no formal banning occurred.

In 1963, the novel was removed from four high school libraries in the Amarillo, Texas, area after parents of students attending the high schools raised charges of obscenity against the book. They protested the depiction of the relationship of Reverend Pentland with the “widder” as “pornographic” because one character teases him with “a lewd smile” that “she’s let him have a little of it.” The objectors also cited the “profanities” that were “inappropriate for a school” and identified “damn,” “hell,” “son of a bitch,” and the “lovely bastard of a train” used early in the book. Parents also protested references to sex and noted one character’s identification of a woman in a play as a “society whore. . . . you can find plenty of her kind for three dollars a throw,” as well as the open references to Weaver’s mistress.

In 1983, the Alabama State Textbook Committee removed Wolfe’s novel from use in the Alabama public schools. At the same time, the committee also removed Maya Angelou’s *I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS* and Henrik Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*. The committee claimed that they took the action in response to parent complaints about the “obscenities” and “inappropriate situations” in the works.

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ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST

Author: Ken Kesey

Original date and place of publication: 1962, United States

Original publisher: Viking Press

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest is told from the point of view of Bromden, a tall and heavyset schizophrenic Native American called the Chief, who is an inmate of a mental hospital ward. He pretends to be mute as a defense against his surroundings, but the arrival of Randle Patrick McMurphy, a fast-talking con artist who has feigned insanity to enter the mental hospital rather than a prison work farm, gives Bromden confidence and helps him to rebel against the sterile, domineering Miss Ratched. Known to the inmates as Big Nurse, she runs a tightly controlled, efficient ward in which the heavily medicated patients mechanically follow her orders without question and even the orderlies stand at attention, "ready to quell even the feeblest insurrection." McMurphy disrupts her efficiency with his irrepressible high spirits and his goal to create havoc on her well-run ward. The chilling authority of Nurse Ratched appalls McMurphy, who provides a direct contrast to the other patients. They "long ago gave up the struggle to assert themselves. Cowed, docile, they have surrendered completely to her unbridled authority."

The boisterous, fun-loving, rebellious McMurphy is a lusty and profane fighter whose brawling and gambling challenge the rigidly structured world over which Nurse Ratched presides. Against all hospital rules, he initiates gambling among the inmates and smuggles women and wine into the ward. As he openly defies Big Nurse, the other men gradually emerge from their fear-induced inactivity and learn to express happiness, anger, and other emotions that have long been repressed. Such behavior becomes dangerous for McMurphy because he has been committed by the state, not voluntarily as have most of the men, and his behavior will determine the length of his stay. The greater his rebellion against the repressive atmosphere created by Big Nurse, the greater the danger that he will be forced to remain in the hospital for a longer period of commitment.

From taking forbidden cigarettes left at the nurses' station to stealing a fishing boat for an inmates' fishing expedition, McMurphy shows a disregard for the rules that have long dominated the lives of the other inmates, as his vitality and enthusiasm radically change them. His escapades have sometimes tragic consequences that result from the clash of authority with the inmates' newfound freedom. One man drowns in the therapeutic swimming pool when his fingers become stuck in the grate at the bottom of the pool, while young Billy Bibbit takes his own life after Nurse Ratched threatens to tell his

mother that he has had sex with a prostitute whom McMurphy sneaked onto the ward. Even McMurphy must eventually yield to the misguided technology of the mental hospital after he attacks Big Nurse, blaming her brutal treatment and threats for young Billy's death. A few weeks after the attack, McMurphy disappears from the ward for a week. When he returns, the other inmates refuse to accept the changed man and claim that he is an impostor who looks "like one of those department store dummies . . . a crummy side-show fake lying there on the Gurney." A lobotomy destroys all that has made McMurphy human and makes him the perfect example of what happens to a man who bucks the system. Unable to bear seeing their friend deprived of his vitality, the remaining inmates decide to provide him with a dignified end. The Chief smothers him with a pillow, then escapes from the hospital to freedom.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel has been frequently censored and challenged as being racist, obscene, and immoral because of its raw language and for its emphasis upon the defiance of authority. The white inmates repeatedly refer to the black orderlies with such racial slurs as "coons," "boys," and "niggers," while the Japanese nurse from the Disturbed ward is spoken of as the "Jap." Numerous obscenities pepper McMurphy's speech, and he appears to purposely taunt the doctors and nurses, as when he challenges their question regarding his psychopathic tendencies: "'Is it my fightin' tendencies or my fuckin' tendencies? Must be fuckin', mustn't it? All that wham-bam-thank-you-ma'am . . .'" He further describes Nurse Ratched as having "the too big boobs" and as "a bitch and a buzzard and a ballcutter."

Identified as containing "obscene, filthy language," the novel was challenged in 1971 in Greeley, Colorado, where parents in the public school district demanded that it be removed from the nonrequired American Culture reading list along with *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* and *Love Story*. In 1974, five residents of Strongsville, Ohio, sued the board of education to remove *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *MANCHILD IN THE PROMISED LAND* from the classroom. Labeling both books "pornographic materials," they charged that the works "glorify criminal activity, have a tendency to corrupt juveniles, and contain descriptions of bestiality, bizarre violence, and torture, dismemberment, death, and human elimination." In 1975, the book was removed from public school libraries in Randolph, New York, and Alton, Oklahoma, and school officials in Westport, Massachusetts, removed the novel from the required reading list in 1977.

In 1978, the novel was banned from St. Anthony Freemont (Idaho) High School classrooms, and the contract of the instructor was not renewed after parents complained about the language in the book. The school superintendent did not read the book, but he collected all copies

from students without attempting to determine its literary or scholastic value. The teacher claimed to have sent home a list of books to be read with the condition that alternative titles would be provided for students who chose not to read a specific assigned book, and no one had objected. The teacher worked with the American Civil Liberties Union to file a complaint in the United States District Court for the District of Idaho, claiming that his rights and the rights of his students under the First and Fourteenth Amendments had been violated. *Fogarty v. Atchley* was filed but not decided. The novel was also challenged in 1982 by parents of students in Merrimack (New Hampshire) High School, where it was removed, but in a 1986 challenge to the novel as part of the honors English curriculum at Aberdeen (Washington) High School, the school board voted to retain the novel.

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ORDINARY PEOPLE

Author: Judith Guest

Original date and place of publication: 1976, United States

Original publisher: Viking Press

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Ordinary People is the story of a family attempting to come to terms with the death of one son and the attempted suicide of another son who blames himself for his older brother's drowning death. The novel begins a month after 17-year-old Conrad Jarrett has been released from the mental institution where he had spent eight months after using a razor blade to cut the vein in his wrist. The suicide attempt came one year after Conrad and his brother Buck had capsized while sailing on unexpectedly rough waters. For hours, they had held onto the overturned hull, one on each side for balance, but Buck drowned while Conrad was rescued despite Buck's greater endurance and greater strength as a swimmer. Conrad's inability to forgive himself for living, coupled with his mother's innately cold nature that deprives her of the

ability to cry even at her son's funeral, created a feeling of helplessness for Conrad.

The novel traces the difficulties that Conrad faces in returning to school and family life. He had always been the "perfect child," while Buck had been the daredevil. Whatever danger signals Conrad sent out before the suicide attempt were missed because no one was watching. After he returns from the hospital, his father watches him constantly for changes in behavior or emotional responses.

Tortured with guilt, Conrad quits the swimming team and isolates himself from his former friends because they were also Buck's friends and the associations are too painful. Describing himself as "Conrad Jarrett, outcast, quitter, *fuck-up*," he is nearly successful in turning everyone away from him, but his salvation comes when he obeys his father and keeps his promise to meet with a psychiatrist to continue the work begun in the hospital. Dr. Berger manages to lead Conrad to recognize that he is punishing himself because of his brother's death. He encourages Conrad to elude the control of others and to say, "Fuck off. . . . Go to hell," if he feels like doing so. He also listens without judging when Conrad admits, "I jack off a lot." Conrad allows himself to become close to Jeanine, a young woman who has her own guilty secret, and his intense physical response to her makes him feel human.

Meanwhile, there appears to be no solution to the marital problems of Conrad's parents, Cal and Beth Jarrett. Beth accuses Cal of allowing himself to be manipulated by Conrad when he refuses to spend Christmas in London. Cal reminds her that they were in Miami the previous Christmas when Conrad attempted suicide. The closer that Cal attempts to become with his wife, the further she pushes him away, until she finally decides to take an indefinitely long vacation in Europe. As the novel closes, Conrad appears to have overcome his past. He has come to terms with Buck's death and seems ready to resume old friendships.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

In 1981, the novel was temporarily banned from junior and senior high school English classrooms in Enon, Ohio, because of the language used by the character Conrad and because he refers to masturbation at several points in the novel. After consideration by a districtwide committee, the book was reinstated as an optional reading choice but not a required reading. In 1982, a parent in Merrimack, New Hampshire, challenged the use of the novel in the classroom as being "obscene and depressing." The parent objected to the topic of suicide and noted that there "is enough tragedy in the world" to not have to subject students to it in their reading. The objection to the language related to the use of "damn," "Goddamn," and the desperate cry at several points in the novel of " . . . who the fuck needs anybody?" Thomas Tryon's *The Other* and Kenneth

Kesey's *ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO NEST* were challenged in the same incident.

In 1985, several parents challenged the novel as an optional summer reading book for 10th-grade students in North Salem, New York, because they believed that the topic of teenage suicide was "too intense," as well as because of "profanity" and "graphic sex scenes." One scene presented as an example occurs between Conrad's parents:

She reaches up to put her arms around him, all tawny, smooth skin, those gray eyes with thick lashes, silent and insistent. She leads tonight, and he follows, moving swiftly down that dark river, everything floating, melting, perfect, and complete. Afterward, she slides away from him, and her hair, soft and furry against his shoulder, smells sweet and fresh, like wood fern."

A second specified scene is more graphic and occurs between Conrad and Jeanine:

Her tongue in his mouth, exploring. He cannot concentrate any more, gathers her against him tightly as his groin hardens, spreads warmth through his whole body. His face in the hollow of her neck, he rocks her slowly, gently in his arms.

They lie drugged and submerged, facing each other on the bed. Conrad's head is on his arm, one hand curved around her breast, eyes closed, shielding himself from the shining look of her. . . . his skin feels branded everywhere that she has touched him . . .

In 1993, parents of students at Anaheim (California) Union High School District challenged the book because it was "degrading to Christians." Cited in the complaint were Conrad's uses of the words *damn* and *Goddamn* and his admission to Jeanine that he did not believe in God. After consideration by a district-appointed review committee, the book was retained with another book that had been challenged for being "obscene and pornographic," Pat Conroy's *The Great Santini*.

In 1994, the book was removed from the required reading list for students at Delta High School in Delaware, Indiana, after parents and students complained of "profanity" and descriptions of "sexual situations," citing those already identified. That same year, the novel was also removed from use in all classrooms throughout the district in Faulkton, South Dakota, because of "profanity."

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THE OX-BOW INCIDENT

Author: Walter Van Tilburg Clark

Original date and place of publication: 1940, United States

Original publisher: Random House

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

The Ox-Bow Incident, a tale of mob justice set in the Old West, warns of the danger that results when people take the law into their own hands. The novel begins much like most western tales, with two young cowboys entering a small town in the spring after spending months cooped up in a shack on the winter range with a herd. Art Croft, one of the two, is the first-person narrator.

Gil and Art, who are well known by the bartender Canby, go through a familiar routine of criticizing the bar service, commenting on a large, grimy painting above the bar and becoming used to some semblance of civilization. Gil calls the painting, which depicts a full-fleshed naked woman lying on a couch with a man in the background, “The Bitching Hour,” and Clark refers to it as the Bitch in the narrative. As they drink heavily, they play poker and bemoan the lack of unmarried women in Bridger’s Wells. The players’ tempers flare, one calls another “bastard,” and the poker game erupts into a fight shortly before a boy runs into the saloon and announces that a ranch foreman named Kinkaid has been killed and that 50 head of cattle have been stolen. The group of men begin to call for justice, and a mob forms to track down the killers and lynch them.

Twenty men join the vigilante group, but only two enthusiastically call for revenge. The rest are indecisive, and most are simply too morally weak to refuse to participate or to oppose the action. The men ride out blindly in the middle of the night, with no specific suspects in mind, and they come across three men sleeping soundly in a valley that contains a mountain stream with a course that looks like an ox-bow. They find 50 head of cattle bearing the brand of the reportedly stolen cattle and refuse to listen to the protests of one of the men, who claims to have bought the cattle that morning from the rancher Drew. The mob leaders, Tetley, and the boisterous and belligerent Ma Grier taunt those members of the group who seem hesitant. When the decision to lynch is put to a vote, only three vote against the action.

The hanging occurs at sunrise. On the ride back to town, the lynching party meets the sheriff, the judge, and a much alive Kinkaid, whose head is bandaged. What caused the head wound is never revealed. The mob also learns that the cattle had been bought and not stolen by the hanged men. The realization that they are murderers affects several of the mob deeply, leading a few men to seek affirmation that they did try to stop the act. Two others commit suicide: Young Gerald Tetley hangs himself when they return home, and his father jumps on his cavalry sword to die. The story ends with no legal punishment for any of the participants.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel has been challenged in several incidents by parents of students because of “vulgar” and “objectionable” language. In a 1963 survey of school administrators and high school English department chairpersons on censorship in Wisconsin, Burress reported one incident in which a parent complained about the language in the book and asked that it be removed from classroom use. The words objected to were *bitch*, *bastard*, *shit*, and *nigger*. The school board voted to grant the request. In 1966, in a national survey of high school librarians and high school English department chairpersons, Burress reported one incident in an unidentified state in which a local parent group called for a ban of the novel from the high school English curriculum. They based their objection on the presence of “too many obscene descriptions” and “swear words.” The school board voted to retain the book in the curriculum.

In a 1967 investigation of censorship in Arizona, Burress reported two challenges to the novel. In one incident, parents complained of the “vulgar” language in the novel, citing the term *bastard*, which appears throughout. The school board voted to remove the book from classroom use. In a second incident in the same state, parents challenged the work because of the language, but the school board voted to retain the work.

In 1980, several parents of students in the Johnson City, Illinois, school district requested the removal of the book from the high school English curriculum, citing the same words as in earlier challenges. The school board voted to retain the book.

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THE RED PONY

Author: John Steinbeck

Original date and place of publication: 1933, United States

Original publisher: Viking Press

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

The Red Pony relates the story of 10-year-old Jody Triflin, who learns very important truths about life and death on his father’s ranch. The brief novel is divided into four chapters: “The Gift,” “The Great Mountains,” “The

Promise,” and “The Leader of the People.” Jody is thrilled when his father presents him with his first horse, a red pony that he names Gabilan. Ranch hand and horse-taming expert Billy Buck promises to teach Jody to ride the feisty Gabilan as soon as the pony is fully grown, but until then he shows Jody how to care for the animal. While Jody is at school, Billy leaves Gabilan in the corral during an unexpected rainstorm, and the pony becomes fatally ill.

Still grieving for his pony, Jody meets an old man named Gitano who has come to the Triflin ranch to die. He had lived in an adobe hut on the land years earlier, and he now wants to die at the place that he considers home. Jody’s father, Carl Triflin, reluctantly lets Gitano stay the night, but he insists that the old man must go to relatives and not “die with strangers.” Early the following morning, Jody sees Gitano riding Carl’s old horse toward the mountains, with a rapier glittering in his hand. The reader is left to wonder about Gitano’s fate.

In the third chapter, Carl tells Jody that he will get another horse because Billy Buck has praised Jody’s hard work in training Gabilan. Carl tells the boy to take their mare to the neighbor’s range “and get her bred.” The book graphically describes Nellie’s struggle to free herself from the rope, her high-pitched scream and that of the stallion whose “eyes glittered feverishly” and whose “stiff, erect nostrils were as red as flame.” After the violence in their initial encounter, Nellie’s mood changes, and she becomes “coquettishly feminine. She nibbled his arched neck with her lips. She edged around and rubbed her shoulder against his shoulder.” In the months that follow, Jody learns about the birth process from Billy. The discussion is detailed regarding what constitutes “a good right birth.” As Nellie’s time to “throw her colt” comes near, Jody becomes increasingly anxious. Nellie has difficulty, and Billy reaches inside her to try to turn the colt, but he can’t. He kills Nellie and slits her belly open to save the colt, desperate to recapture Jody’s trust and respect that he had lost when Gabilan died.

In the final chapter, Jody’s maternal grandfather arrives unexpectedly and tells his worn-out stories about leading a wagon train and fighting Indians as a young man. Carl is tired of the stories and says that “nobody wants to hear it over and over,” hurting the old man’s feelings but drawing Jody closer to him.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

In a 1966 survey of a national sample of high school librarians and English department chairpersons concerning school censorship, Lee Burrell recorded only one challenge in an unidentified locale. A parent objected to the “profanity” in the book and requested its removal from the high school library. The request was denied. In 1980, parents of students in Vernon-Verona-Sherill (New York) School District objected to the novel as being a “filthy, trashy, sex novel” in a challenge that also called for the removal of *A FAREWELL TO ARMS*, *THE GRAPES OF WRATH*, *OF MICE AND MEN*, *A SEPARATE PEACE*, and *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD* from a district recommended reading list. Among their objections is

one instance in the book in which 10-year-old Jody “could smell the delicious smell of brandy” on his father’s breath, and the boy later speaks of the “damn mice.” The parents also condemned Billy Buck’s explicit description of the birth process and of his efforts to turn the colt inside Nellie as she struggles to give birth. After reviewing the work, the school board voted to retain the book.

In 1994, parents of students attending schools in Oconee County, Georgia challenged the inclusion of the novel in the school libraries and charged that it contained profanity. Also challenged at that time “due to the filthiness of the material” were 10 books by V. C. Andrews: *Dark Angel*, *Darkest Hour*, *Dawn*, *Flowers in the Attic*, *Garden of Shadows*, *If There Be Thorns*, *My Sweet Audrina*, *Petals on the Wind*, *Seeds of Yesterday*, and *Twilight*. The Oconee school board voted to remove *The Red Pony* and the books by Andrews from the school libraries. Those who challenged *The Red Pony* objected to Jody’s use of the word *damn* and viewed the breeding scene between the mare and the stallion as “filthy.” Parents stated that the details regarding the birth of the colt were unnecessary to the story. A review committee recommended removal of the books from the school district, a move with which the district school board concurred. They further decided to evaluate all 40,000 volumes used in the classrooms and existing in the school libraries and to remove from the district public schools any books and teaching materials that contained “explicit sex and pornography.”

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THE SCARLET LETTER

Author: Nathaniel Hawthorne

Original date and place of publication: 1850, United States

Original publisher: Ticknor and Fields

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

The Scarlet Letter opens with a long, detailed preface entitled “The Custom House: Introductory to *The Scarlet Letter*” in which Hawthorne creates

the illusion that the novel is based on fact. He claims that, while working as a customhouse agent, he found a manuscript and a faded and worn red letter “A” in one of the upper rooms. The manuscript, written by Jonathan Pue, a predecessor of his in the Custom House in Salem, Massachusetts, detailed the story of a Mistress Hester Prynne, who had been found guilty of adultery in Boston two centuries earlier and punished. In addition to creating the premise for the novel, the section also makes reference to Hawthorne’s ancestors and provides insight into his daily work as a civil servant.

The story of *The Scarlet Letter* is that of a romantic triangle. Hester Prynne, the beautiful young wife of an old and introverted scholar, is separated from her husband for two years after being taken from her home in England to the wildlands of the New World. Lonely and without friends, she falls in love with Arthur Dimmesdale, an attractive young minister, and bears his child, whom she names Pearl, for she “was purchased at great price.” Condemned by the townspeople, especially the women, who feel that jailing Hester, forcing her to stand on a scaffold in the middle of town, and making her wear the scarlet letter “A,” for adultery, for life are not severe enough, Hester carries herself with dignity.

True to her strong character, Hester bears the shame and punishment alone and never reveals her child’s father, although to do so would alleviate a great part of her punishment. Instead, Hester creates her own world for Pearl and supports herself by her excellent needlework skills. Her husband appears as a physician just returned from the frontier, but they agree to keep his identity a secret as the bitter and physically misshapen man takes the name Roger Chillingworth. He treats the physical ailments of Dimmesdale and eventually uncovers the identity of Pearl’s father. The evil Chillingworth, feigning friendship, slowly destroys the minister. As Dimmesdale sinks into physical decay and Chillingworth decays morally, Hester wins the respect of the townspeople, who begin to view the “A” as representing “angel” for the many kind deeds she performs.

At the end of the novel, the dying Dimmesdale confesses publicly that he is Pearl’s father as he stands holding hands with Hester and Pearl, on the same scaffold on which Hester alone stood soon after Pearl’s birth to display her shame to the townspeople. Dimmesdale dies, and Hester takes Pearl to Europe, then returns years later to her small cottage. After she dies, Hester is buried under the same grave marker as Dimmesdale.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel was a success when it was first published, selling out a first printing within a few days. Although critics and literary figures praised the novel, religious journals and clergymen denounced it as “a dirty story” that belonged only in “a Brothel Library.” A review in *Brownson’s Quarterly* declared that neither Dimmesdale nor Hester exhibited “remorse” or “really

repents of the criminal deed” and that “it is a story that should not have been told.” In *Church Review*, Rev. Arthur C. Coxe also condemned the two main characters as not being sufficiently repentant and stated that “the nauseous amour” was not appropriate subject matter for fiction. In 1852, Coxe called for the banning of *The Scarlet Letter* as he launched a savage attack, proclaiming that he was against “any toleration to a popular and gifted writer when he perpetrates bad morals—let his brokerage of lust be put down at the very beginning.” He stated that he could not tolerate a novel that dealt with an “illicit relationship.”

The main complaint of those who wanted to ban the novel at the outset was that Hawthorne sided with Hester and condemned her husband’s revenge. Strict morality required that Hester suffer in more painful and obvious ways than Hawthorne provided. The citizens of Salem were so incensed by Hawthorne’s novel that he moved his family out of the city to a farmhouse in the Berkshires. In 1852, the novel was banned in Russia by Czar Nicholas I in a “censorship terror,” but the ban was lifted four years later when Czar Alexander II came into power.

Little attention was paid to the novel for nearly a century. In 1949, in stating the deciding opinion in *Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. Gordon*, 66 D. & C. 101 (1949), Judge Curtis Bok used the novel as an example of the manner in which public morals change, when he noted that when first published, “Hawthorne’s *Scarlet Letter* was referred to as ‘a brokerage of lust,’” but it had become fully accepted by 1949.

In 1961, parents of students in Michigan objected to the assignment of the novel in high school English classes, claiming that it was “pornographic and obscene.” They demanded that the book be taken out of the curriculum, but the request was denied. In a 1966 national sample of school librarians and English department chairpersons conducted by Lee Burress, four challenges were raised in locales unidentified by the investigator. In one, a student challenged the assignment of the book to freshman high school students, but no action was taken on the complaint. In a second challenge, a parent complained that the book was “immoral” because it dealt with a “misbegotten” child. The school board denied the request for removal of the book from the curriculum. In a third request to have the book removed from a reading list because it dealt with adultery, the request was also denied. The only successful challenge reported in the survey occurred when a high school principal declared the book too “frank” and “revealing” and removed it from the recommended reading list. A 1967 survey of high school censorship in Arizona conducted by Kenneth Donelson and Retha K. Foster reported one challenge by a parent who demanded the book be removed as a required reading because it discussed adultery. The request was denied.

In 1977, a parent and a principal in Michigan objected to the inclusion of the novel in the high school English curriculum because it dealt with a clergyman’s “involvement in fornication.” The book was removed from

classroom use and from the recommended reading list. That same year, a parent in Missouri condemned the book for its use of “4-letter words” and “other undesirable content” and demanded its removal from the high school library. The school librarian recognized that the parent had not read the book because no obscenities appeared in the novel, and she convinced the parent of his error. The book was retained.

In a 1982 survey of English department chairpersons in Ohio, James Davis reported one challenge to the novel in which a parent claimed that the book was about “adultery,” a “womanizing preacher,” and “prostitution” and requested its removal as an assigned reading in a high school English class. The school board denied the request.

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A SEPARATE PEACE

Author: John Knowles

Original date and place of publication: 1960, United States

Original publisher: Macmillan Company

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

A Separate Peace takes place at a small New England preparatory school named Devon, where the narrator, Gene Forrester, has returned 15 years after graduation. He visits the tree from which his close friend Finny fell and broke his leg the first time and the First Academy Building, where the second break occurred. These locations stimulate a flashback to the summer of 1942, between his junior and senior years, when the novel really begins.

The main character is Gene's friend Phineas, "Finny," who forms the Super Suicide Society of the Summer Session. Seemingly fearless, his foolhardy behavior, athletic prowess, and quirky sense of humor make him a leader of the boys, whom he repeatedly challenges to jump from a tree on the riverbank into the cold water below. As the summer progresses, all except Finny speak of the threat of enlistment after graduation.

Despite their friendship, a rivalry exists between Gene and Finny. Gene tries to do well academically, but Finny's games interfere with his studies. When Gene fails a math test after Finny convinces him to go to the beach rather than study, he believes that his friend wants him to fail. Finny again distracts Gene on the evening before an important French examination by leading him to a jumping session at the riverbank, and Gene becomes vengeful. As the two boys crawl out onto a tree limb, Gene moves on the branch and causes Finny to fall and break his leg. This incident drastically changes Finny's life because he can no longer participate in sports, so he returns home.

As fall term begins, Gene decides that he might as well enlist in the army, but when Finny returns with his leg in a cast, Gene changes his mind and serves as the injured boy's guide and helper. As the year progresses, the two boys make their peace with each other, and Finny's leg heals imperfectly. Other students who are jealous of Gene's attention to Finny decide to hold a mock trial to determine what really happened. One student testifies that Gene shook the tree limb, a statement that upsets Finny and sends him racing out of the room toward a flight of marble stairs, where his cane slips and he falls, breaking the same leg. Finny dies when the doctor sets the bone a few days later; the official diagnosis is that some of the bone marrow must have escaped into his bloodstream and stopped his heart.

After graduation, Gene and many other Devon graduates enlist, but for Gene the war is of little consequence compared with the enemy he has overcome in trying to achieve a separate peace with Finny's death. He observes at the end of the novel, "my war ended before I ever put on the uniform; I was on active duty all my time at the school; I killed my enemy there."

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel was challenged in 1980 by parents in Vernon-Verona-Sherrill (New York) School District for being a "filthy, trashy sex novel." In their challenge, the parents claimed that the novel contained homosexuality as an underlying theme, which "encourages homosexuality." They also complained of "swear words" to which their children should not be subjected, including "bastard," the barely disguised "f—ing," and "damn." The school board voted to offer students another selection and to remove the book from classroom use. In 1985, parents of students at Fannett-Metal High School in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, challenged the book because of "offensive language." They

claimed that the book was “too adult,” for high school students and asked that it be removed from the required reading list. The request was denied, but students whose parents objected to the book were given an alternative assignment. In 1989, the novel was challenged by parents of students in the Shelby County, Tennessee, school system who felt that the “offensive language” in the novel made it inappropriate for the high school reading list. The school board replaced the novel with another book, and the issue ended.

After 22 years of being assigned in the local schools in Champaign, Illinois, without complaints, the novel was challenged by three parents who claimed that “unsuitable language” in the novel made it inappropriate for assignment in high school English classes. The parents specified the use of “damn” and “goddamn” in their complaint. The school board appointed a curriculum review committee to respond to the complaint and agreed with the decision of the committee to retain the novel. In a 1991 challenge to the novel issued by the parent of a high school student in Troy, Illinois, profanity and negative attitudes were cited in the request that the novel be removed from the classroom. The parent identified 34 “profane references” in the book, including “God damn,” “Shut up,” and “I swear to God.” Students were offered alternative assignments while the school board took the matter under advisement, but no further action was taken on the complaint.

A more extensive challenge emerged in 1992, when a parent in Jacksonville, Florida, learned that the high school library contained a copy of *A Separate Peace* and challenged it as being “unsuitable for youth” and “encouraging rebellion against authority.” The challenge cited “vulgar language” and characters who skip classes, break school rules, and trespass on school property as offering inappropriate models for students. The “objectionable language” identified includes “for God’s sake,” “damn,” “hell,” “Christ,” and “Oh God.” The district review committee considered the challenge and voted to retain the work that it characterized as “truly a well-written piece of art.” In the report of the decision to retain the novel in the high school library, the committee wrote: “To ban or restrict this book reflects the paranoia existing in today’s society. Reasons conjured for the banning of the book are unjustifiable.”

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SISTER CARRIE

Author: Theodore Dreiser

Original date and place of publication: 1900, United States

Original publisher: Doubleday Page

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Sister Carrie relates the story of a young Wisconsin girl who leaves her smalltown home and travels to Chicago, where she hopes to make her fortune. Eighteen-year-old Caroline Meeber, the naive “Sister Carrie” of the title, desires the fine clothes and financial success that she sees in the fast-paced city, and she views with scorn the impoverished life of her sister Minnie and laborer brother-in-law Hanson, with whom she lives. When she meets again the flashy and seemingly affluent Charles Drouet, a salesman whom she had first met on her train journey to Chicago, she realizes that her rise in society can only occur through her associations with men.

Life in Chicago depresses Carrie at first, as she attempts to find work but learns that her lack of training and inexperience in business make the sweatshop her only job option. Desperate to escape her misery, Carrie eagerly becomes Drouet’s mistress, grateful for the modest apartment and equally modest allowance that accompany her new role. Her comfort and contentment soon turn to dissatisfaction as she views the grand homes that line Chicago’s Lake Shore and her desire for material items increases. Introduced by Drouet to George Hurstwood, the polished and well-dressed manager of a fashionable restaurant-bar, Carrie leaves Drouet to become the mistress of the married Hurstwood, who risks his family and reputation for her. With money stolen from his employers, Hurstwood runs off with Carrie, first to Montreal and then to New York, where he invests in a bar. As Carrie’s dreams become increasingly expensive, Hurstwood experiences economic reversals that drive Carrie to find her own success. She becomes a member of the chorus line in a dance review and, through clever use of her associations with successful men, achieves a stage career. Carrie leaves the now-impoverished Hurstwood, who survives by eating in soup kitchens and sleeping in flophouses before taking his own life.

As she enjoys her success, Carrie becomes close to yet one more man, an electrical engineer named Robert Ames, who reveals to her the emptiness of her life despite her material success. Immune to her desire to forge a physical relationship, Ames exerts the greatest influence over her life of all her relationships by making her see that she has achieved a hollow success. As the novel ends, the materially successful and calculating Carrie realizes that her life remains as empty and unfulfilled as when she first arrived in Chicago.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel became an object of censorship before it was even published. Dreiser first sent it to Harper & Brothers, which praised the work but said that they could not publish *Sister Carrie* because of its subject. The returned manuscript contained praise for the work as a “superior piece of reportorial realism,” even as the company rejected it. The reader’s report noted that the author’s touch was “neither firm enough nor sufficiently delicate to depict without offense to the reader the continued illicit relations of the heroine.” In response, the author asked his friend Arthur Henry to excise “offensive” passages; in other words, to cut those that alluded in even an indirect way to sexuality.

Dreiser next sent the manuscript to Doubleday Page, which offered the author a contract because of the enthusiasm shown toward the novel by the publisher’s reader, author Frank Norris. Despite having signed a contract with Dreiser, firm owner Frank Doubleday tried to stop publication of the novel and contended that the story should not be published by anybody “because it is immoral.” Rumors emerged that Mrs. Frank Doubleday had read the manuscript and “was horrified by its frankness.” A social worker and moral reformer, she insisted that her husband withdraw the novel from publication, but the legal contract was binding. The firm published the novel, according to contract, but did not make an effort to distribute the book, and no copies were sold by Doubleday Page. In 1901, Heinemann in London published an abridged version of the novel, but the uncut version was not published until 1907, when Dreiser persuaded the newly formed publisher B. W. Dodge Company to take a chance. In 1908, Grosset and Dunlap created public outrage when it published the novel, but no legal restraints emerged, and the controversy was good for sales. By the time that Harper & Brothers reissued the novel in 1911, public outrage had turned to other subjects.

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SOUL ON ICE

Author: Eldridge Cleaver

Original date and place of publication: 1968, United States

Original publisher: McGraw-Hill

Literary form: Collection of autobiographical essays

SUMMARY

Soul on Ice conveys Cleaver’s experience of what it meant to be a black man in the ghetto, in prison, and in the society of the 1950s and the 1960s. Writ-

ten while he was in prison, the book is divided into four parts: “Letters from Prison,” “Blood of the Beast,” “Prelude to Love—Three Letters,” and “White Woman, Black Woman.” Contained within each part are essays that focus on Cleaver’s specific concerns and experiences, from his days as a street hoodlum in East Los Angeles through his long prison career to the emergence of a man who has shaken off his own feelings of bigotry and writes love letters to a white woman, a San Francisco lawyer who assisted in his appeals and in respect for whom he stopped calling women “bitches.”

The essays contain a raw edge that reflects the reality of Cleaver’s life. The first essay, “On Becoming,” relates his experience in 1954 as an 18-year-old who had just begun to serve a sentence in Folsom Prison for a marijuana charge, one month after the Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation. He becomes aware of the sharp divisions of society and makes the connection between race and the burdens of poverty and powerlessness. Released from prison, Cleaver relates that he became a rapist, for whom “rape was an insurrectionary act.” Back in prison, he reads voraciously from the Greek classics, American history, the psychology of Freud and Jung, and the works of African-American writers. Cleaver also refines his own views of the Civil Rights movement, Black Muslims teachings, and the Black Power movement in a way that exhibits his own mental evolution regarding the black struggle.

The final section deals with Cleaver’s perceptions of the relationships that black men establish with black women and with white women. He explores the myth of “the walking phallus symbol” of the “Supermasculine Menial” black male with “the fiery steel of his rod,” who “wets the juices” of the “Ultrafeminine Doll,” the pure white southern woman. Cleaver perceives them as the embodiments of a racial caste system as he condemns the “Amazon” black women for viewing the black man as only “half a man.” In the final essay, Cleaver rants that he is a “Black Eunuch, divested of my balls,” but he makes peace with the African-American woman whom he calls “my Queen” and urges her to join him in building a new civilization “on these ruins.”

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Soul on Ice provoked controversy from its first publication, earning rave views from social critics who hailed Cleaver as a man who “throws light on the dark areas we wish he would leave alone” and calling his work “an exceptional volume both in what it says and how the author came to say it.” Reviewers also acknowledged that the book “makes you twist and flinch because he is no damned gentleman.” The discomfort that the book caused led some groups, such as Save Our Children, to label it “trash” and to call for its removal.

In 1969, California Superintendent of Instruction Max Rafferty, with the backing of the state board of education, barred Cleaver’s book and *Dutchman* by Imamu Amiri Baraka from elective courses in black studies. The board

claimed that the works contained “obscene” language and images that made them unsuitable for use in the school curriculum.

In 1973, Ridgefield, Connecticut, school board member Leo Carroll, retired after 33 years on the state police force, started a movement to ban *Soul on Ice* and a report on police relations entitled *Police, Courts and the Ghetto* by Marjorie Kilbane and Patricia Claire from the school curriculum. The first book was being read in a senior high school ethnic studies class, while the second book was being read by eighth-grade students in a social studies course. Carroll asserted to reporters that he found “nothing of redeeming social or educational value in the books. I find nothing in Cleaver’s book but a horrible hatred of the white man and the law-abiding black man.” After a two-hour meeting in the East Ridge Junior High Auditorium, attended on February 6, 1973, by 500 residents of the town, the school board decided in a vote of 5-4 against banning the two controversial books from the classroom. Moments later, however, the board decided in a vote of 5-3 to eliminate the courses in which the books are being used, effective with the end of the school year in June.

In 1975, parents of students at Greenwich (Connecticut) High School asked for the removal of the book from the school library, charging that it was “crime provoking and anti-American as well as obscene and pornographic.” That same year, a group called the Concerned Citizens and Taxpayers for Decent Books in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, called for the removal from libraries and schools of 65 books, including *Soul on Ice*, which they viewed as being “pornography and filth.” The books were retained in both incidents.

In a survey of a national sample of English department chairpersons conducted in 1977, Lee Burrell recorded one instance in which parent complaints had resulted in the restriction of the work to only the upper grades. In a similar survey of librarians in 1982, Burrell reported that a high school principal of an Ohio school district had ordered the book placed on a closed shelf in the high school library because of complaints that the “obscene language and criticism of whites stirs up trouble.” Parents of students in Omak, Washington, challenged the use of the book in the classroom in 1979 because of “profane language,” but it was retained.

The most extensive challenge to *Soul on Ice* began in 1976, when two school board members in Island Trees Free School District No. 26 in New York ordered librarians to remove the title and 10 others from the school library (see THE BEST SHORT STORIES BY NEGRO WRITERS) in 1982. With the others, *Soul on Ice* was charged with being “immoral” and “just plain filthy,” and the following passage was specified in the court record as representative of “objectionable” passages:

There are white men who will pay you to fuck their wives. They approach you and say, “How would you like to fuck a white woman?” “What is this?” you ask. “On the up-and-up,” he assures you. “It’s all right. She’s my wife. She needs a black rod, is all. She has to have it. It’s like a medicine or drug

to her. She has to have it. I'll pay you. It's all on the level, no trick involved. Interested?"

The work was returned to the library after the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 et al. v. Pico et al.*, 457 U.S. 853 (1982) that the First Amendment rights of students had been violated in the banning.

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STEPPENWOLF

Author: Hermann Hesse

Original dates and places of publication: 1927, Germany; 1929, England; 1929, United States

Original publishers: S. Fischer Verlag; Secker; Holt

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Steppenwolf begins with a preface narrated by a young businessman who claims to have edited a sheaf of notes left several years before by a lodger in the attic room of his aunt's home. The notes relate the strange adventures of Harry Haller, the eccentric lodger, who refers to himself as a wolf of the steppes, or the Steppenwolf. The preface recounts the narrator's few meetings with Haller—on the stairs in the house, at a concert, in a tavern, or at a lecture. He decides to publish the manuscript, subtitled "For Madmen Only," even though he does not know if Haller's account is fact or fiction.

"For Madmen Only" begins as Haller takes a walk at dusk. He follows a flickering sign to a door in a church wall; the door leads into an imaginary

world and a peddler who carries a placard that advertises “Magic Theater—Entrance Not for Everybody.” Before vanishing, the peddler hands Harry a pamphlet entitled “Treatise on the Steppenwolf.” Back in his room, Harry reads the pamphlet and learns that it contains a psychological portrait of men like him, analyzing them as two selves in conflict—half man and half wolf. The pamphlet explains the role in middle-class society of the Steppenwolves, the artists and intellectuals, as well as the role of the geniuses who break free and become the Immortals, those above ordinary social rules. Harry recognizes that he has hundreds of selves, and the pamphlet assures him that he may one day see himself in the magic mirrors of the Immortals or learn in one of their magic theaters what he needs to free his soul.

After reading the treatise, Harry realizes his loneliness. He begins a nightly search, eventually finding again the peddler who leads him to a seedy tavern where he meets a sensuous bar girl named Hermine, the prostitute Maria, and the androgynous jazz musician Pablo. Through Hermine, Harry learns to dance and to enjoy sex and the nightlife of the city. He also enjoys the pleasures of various drugs, including cocaine and opium, supplied by Pablo, who “was a master in mixing and prescribing them.” Hermine, who “cast the spell of the hermaphrodite,” also hints of sensuous nights spent with Maria and tells Harry of having seduced a woman at the masked ball “with the spell of Lesbos.” Pablo invites Harry into the Magic Theater, where he experiences a series of surreal adventures and learns that he is condemned to continue living. As the manuscript ends, Harry resolves to go on confronting his inner self and to work toward becoming one of the Immortals.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Steppenwolf, the most autobiographical of all Hesse’s novels, was severely criticized by critics and readers for its jazz, drugs, and sexual practices, including lesbianism and androgyny. Mileck writes that German critics called the book “pornographic” upon its first publication and Hesse “a man without morals.” No formal attempts to suppress the book occurred at its publication in Germany nor when it first appeared in England and in the United States, although the novel appeared on a list of books condemned by the Boston Watch and Ward Society in 1930. In 1932, an increasingly conservative populace focused attention on Hesse, who was openly accused of “wallowing in filth.”

Freedman notes that in 1932 Hesse wrote to a friend, H. Zwissler, that “A young adherent of Hitler from Swabia wrote that [the book] was merely an expression of the lewd lustfulness of an aging man and that he hoped I would soon kick the bucket.” In 1943 and 1944, Hitler’s dictatorship made all of Hesse’s books forbidden reading in Nazi Germany; some, like *Steppenwolf*, for their “lewd lustfulness,” and others because he did not take a stand and publish pro-Nazi propaganda nor did he speak out against the Nazis.

The novel was accepted again in Germany after World War II ended and became a counterculture favorite in the late 1950s and the 1960s in the United

States. The Beat Generation made it an urban underground classic, “a bible for all.” Drug proponent Dr. Timothy Leary wrote that *Steppenwolf* was “a psychedelic journey” and offered a “heightened sensibility” that was a response to “a corrupt and menacing external ‘reality.’ ” No formal efforts to suppress the book in the United States occurred until 1982, when the parents of several students attending Glenwood Springs (Colorado) High School demanded that the novel be removed from the high school library. In their complaint to the school board, the parents cited as the reasons references in the book to “lesbianism,” “hermaphroditism,” “sexual perversion,” “drugs,” “murder,” and “insanity.” A committee created by the school board reviewed the novel and voted to retain it.

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STRANGE FRUIT

Author: Lillian Smith

Original date and place of publication: 1944, United States

Original publisher: Harcourt, Brace & World

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Strange Fruit deals with the topic of miscegenation and details a relationship between a young, white college dropout, Tracy Deen, and his college-educated black girlfriend, Nonnie Anderson, who works as a servant and is carrying his child. The setting is Maxwell, Georgia, a town divided into “White Town” and “Colored Town,” where marriage between the races is still against the law. The other black citizens of the town look upon the “Anderson niggers” as odd because they are all college educated, but the Andersons are tolerated because they “work hard and know their place.” The white women envy Mrs. Brown for having a college-educated servant, and the white men in town desire the physically attractive young woman.

As the novel opens, the reader learns that Nonnie and Tracy have been sexually intimate since she was 14 and he was 20 and had recently dropped out of college. Nonnie’s sister Bess had hoped that the doomed relationship would end when Nonnie went to Spelman College and Tracy left Maxwell to

serve in the army during the war, but it continued once they were together in Maxwell. Tracy served in France and saw racially mixed couples there, but he realized that the same was impossible in his hometown. Nonnie clings to the hope that she and Tracy will be able to marry, but the weight of family opinion and his mother's dominance of his life are too strong for him. His minister counsels Tracy to give up Nonnie, as many white men before him have given up their "colored women," and tells Tracy that Nonnie, like other "colored women," will manage all right. He states that "most of them sooner or later gets a man their color, maybe marry them. Live a fairly decent, respectable life—that is, if a nigger woman can live a decent, respectable life. . . . You have to keep pushing them back across that nigger line." Told that Nonnie is pregnant, the minister urges Tracy to "find some good nigger you can count on to marry her" and suggests that Tracy sweeten the deal with money.

Nonnie's family is not any happier with the situation. Her sister Bess wants her to have an abortion. Her brother Ed, now a government employee in Washington, returns for a vacation week and questions Nonnie's willingness to remain subservient when she has a college education and wonders why she remains in Maxwell.

Despite protestations of love, Tracy takes the minister's advice. He arranges a marriage for Nonnie with Henry McIntosh, a man who had exposed himself to her when she was 11 years old and asked her, "How about fuckin' with me?" Henry works for Tracy's parents, Dr. Tutweiler and Mrs. Alma Deen, and used to be Tracy's playmate. One night, Nonnie's brother flies into a rage and shoots Tracy to death. "White Town" blames Henry, who had flashed money only days before and bragged about a "deal" with Tracy. They lynch and burn Henry, despite the efforts of several white men to save him. The novel ends the day after the tragedy, with everything returning to its old routine, appearing on the surface that nothing had happened. One marked difference is that the black citizens of Maxwell are now more deferential than before.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel was strongly criticized soon after publication for its references to sexual intercourse, the sexual assault of a young girl, a murder, a lynching, and physical descriptions that were perceived as too frequent and designed to titillate. Moreover, the unconventional behavior of the couple unable to marry because of their racial differences and the sexually related language, including the use of the word *fuck* in two instances, also motivated significant complaint. Words like *bitch* and *whore* are common in the novel, *tail* and *teat* are each used once in reference to a woman, and one description of "nice little rumps, hard from chopping cotton" is given. Also identified as obscene were the references to urination, the discussion of a rich white man's penchant for deflowering young schoolteachers because he is afraid of syphilis, and the use of the words *coition* and *orgasm* in discussing the frigidity of white women.

On May 16, 1944, the U.S. Department of the Post Office declared that *Strange Fruit* could not be sent through the mails without risk of prosecution under Section 598 of the Postal Laws and Regulations, 1940, which prohibited “the mailing of lewd books, pictures, advertisements and other matter.” Magazine and newspaper companies were also warned in a letter from Postmaster Arthur Goldman that they could not continue to print advertisements for the banned book without risk. Curtice Hitchcock, president of the publisher Reynal & Hitchcock, consulted with his attorneys and learned that the company had 15 days until the ban took full effect and decided to continue to advertise and to sell the book until a formal charge emerged. A *New York Times* article published on May 16, 1944, states that “Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt was quoted in advertisements on March 12 as describing *Strange Fruit* as ‘a very moving book and a very extraordinary one.’” The editor of the *Saturday Review* held an equally high opinion of the book—and of the right of the publisher to advertise the work—and wrote to the U.S. Department of the Post Office:

We feel obliged and privileged to state that it is our intention to continue advertising for “Strange Fruit” should the publishers request space. In the event the publishers do not request space we will seek permission to publish such advertisements without charge to them. Censorship is no trivial matter, Mr. Goldman. So far as Americans are concerned it involves their very traditions. Who in the post office is charged with the responsibility for seeing that these traditions are not easily and ignorantly brushed aside. We not only protest your order, we refuse to follow it without due process of law. If, after a properly constituted hearing or trial, it is decided that “Strange Fruit” is “obscene” we will of course abide by the decision of the court. Until that time we hope our readers will not blame us for seeing it through.

The post office lawyer who assessed the book acknowledged that it was a plea for social equality, noting that “the book aspires to fill the role of ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin’ in the life of the modern negro problem.” Despite the social intent, the book was labeled “obscene” because “it deals with the sexual relations of a ne’er-do-well son of a respected white southern family with a mes-tee [sic]. Some incidents are too much detailed but the worst part is the filthy language. . . . It is obscene in that it is disgusting, repulsive, nauseating.” In the report, the post office lawyer admitted that, under the standards set by the Supreme Court in the 1933 *Ulysses* case, “this book would not be held to be obscene in that the sexual scenes are merely incidental to the principal theme of the book—the social degradation of the negro in the South.” Despite this acknowledgment, he found that the book was simply too strongly obscene by his own standard, so he recommended that it be excluded from the mails, even though it was sold in many states in the United States. The solicitor general of the postal department accepted the recommendation.

Strange Fruit was also declared obscene in 1945 in a Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts decision rendered by Judges Field, Qua, Ronan, and Wilkins. In *Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. Isenstadt*, 318 Mass. 543 (1945), a

bookseller named Abraham A. Isenstadt was charged with the possession and sale of a book that was “obscene, indecent, or impure, or manifestly tends to corrupt the morals of youth,” under Massachusetts statutes. The case came about because a noted literary critic of the time, Bernard DeVoto, sought to test the statute and the concept of extralegal censorship, after *Strange Fruit* was informally banned in Massachusetts. The critic purchased the book, and the bookseller was arrested and convicted by a Massachusetts Superior Court judge without a jury. In an appeal to the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, the book was again declared “obscene” by four of the five judges presiding. Judge Qua delivered the majority opinion and accepted the work as possessing literary merit, but he noted that “obscenity may sometimes be made even more alluring and suggestive by the zeal which comes from sincerity and by the added force of artistic presentation.” Rather, “a book that adversely affects a substantial proportion of its readers may well be found to lower appreciably the average moral tone of the mass.”

Judge Lummus, the dissenting judge in the case, acknowledged that the book “is blemished by coarse words and scenes, none of which appear irrelevant to the plot.” He stated that, rather than providing erotic allurements, “their coarseness is repellent.” He declared further that the book was a serious study of race relations, “a grim tragedy” in which “virtue is not derided, neither is vice made attractive.” Judge Lummus ended the dissent by observing that rather than being titillated by the book, “the reader is depressed, unable to solve a tragic problem.”

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STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND

Author: Robert A. Heinlein

Original date and place of publication: 1961, United States

Original publisher: G. P. Putnam’s Sons

Literary form: Science fiction novel

SUMMARY

Stranger in a Strange Land relates the story of Valentine Michael Smith, conceived by adulterous lovers on the first human expedition to Mars, a three-

year journey. The novel consists of five parts: His Maculate Origin, His Preposterous Heritage, His Eccentric Education, His Scandalous Career, and His Happy Destiny. Orphaned soon after birth, the main character is raised by Martians in their culture and returns 25 years later to his home planet as an alien being who becomes the messiah of a new religion. The novel, which became an underground classic and campus cult favorite in the 1960s, attacks human folly under several guises, especially in the person or persons of the Establishment. The government, the military, and organized religion are skewered as the author advances a religion of love aimed at revolutionizing human affairs and bringing about an apocalyptic change for the better.

The original *Envoy* expedition of four married couples makes a successful entry into the orbit of Mars, then is never again heard from. World War III prevents an immediate search of space, and 25 years pass before another manned expedition is sent to Mars. When it arrives, the crew finds that Mars is inhabited and that only one survivor of the *Envoy* remains, Valentine Michael Smith. The government views the survivor as “a treasure trove of information” and hopes to study him, but the young man’s body must first become acclimated to the increased pull of gravity and changed air pressure. The doctors soon learn that Smith is able to slow his respiration, heartbeat, and blood pressure to the point where he appears in shock. This and other observations lead the captain of the expedition to observe that “Smith is not a *man*. He is an intelligent creature with the genes and ancestry of a man, but he is not a man. He’s more a Martian than a man. . . . He thinks like a Martian, he feels like a Martian.” The differing influences of his human ancestry and his Martian environment form the basis for social criticism in the novel.

Dubbed “Mike,” the reclaimed Earthling receives training in human social life from wealthy eccentric Jubal Harshaw and his brain trust in the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania. In contrast to the more usual wise adviser in literature, who guides the mythic hero in learning the good of civilization, Harshaw focuses on revealing what is wrong with the world. Mike comes to understand American culture, but from his Martian viewpoint human religion, fear of death, and sexual inhibitions seem absurd.

Conversely, other humans view his Martian heritage as absurd, as he reveals his capabilities of suspended animation, astral projection, telekinesis, and the ability to will objects and people out of existence. He also exhibits a capability that is even more frightening, “grokking,” the total and immediate understanding of people, situations, and love. A central term of the Martian language, “to grok” signifies the ability to know in a holistic way that includes intellect and intuition, a knowledge that is as absolute, unambiguous, and instant as a god’s or an angel’s knowledge. Mike can also read minds and change his body shape, but many are more disturbed by his revelation that Martians practice ritual cannibalism.

As Mike becomes comfortable in his new home, he discovers money as an idea, a symbolic structure. He also gains a following as the leader of a new cult, the Church of All Worlds. Water-sharing rituals and guilt-free sexuality characterize the new religion, as does instruction in the psycholinguistic powers and perceptions of Martians. The importance of water sharing and the concept of the “water brothers,” both male and female, emerge from the importance of water on a dry planet where its sharing is an intimate ritual between those who seek to grow so intimate that their “eggs share the same nest.”

Sexual promiscuity is the norm, marriage is irrelevant, and promiscuous group sex is among the religion’s ceremonies. Mike fathers several children among his followers, as does his mentor, Jubal, the man whom he calls “Father.” After several years, a mob burns down the cult’s temple, but Mike, Jubal, and their followers escape, only to be threatened again by another mob. In an effort to calm the mob, Mike strips himself and offers himself up to the crowd, which martyrs him by stoning him to death. In their acceptance of his “discorporation,” Jubal and the followers make a broth of Mike’s body and “share it and grok together. . . . Slowly they drank the broth, stretching it out, savoring it, praising and cherishing it and grokking their donor.” The novel ends as the followers join Jubal in planning ways of profiting from Mike’s death, from creating a public shrine where he died to writing a stereo-play about his life.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Stranger in a Strange Land has an unusual case history. The novel did not sell well when it was first published, but it collected a Hugo, the award for best science fiction novel of the year, and a short time later became a campus best seller. When Heinlein delivered the original manuscript to editors in 1960, it contained 220,000 words. Editors at G.P. Putnam’s Sons asked him to cut the size of the novel by one-fourth and to remove sexual scenes that they considered offensive to public tastes of the time. The novel was published with these changes and remained in print in that form for 28 years. When Heinlein died in 1988, his widow took advantage of the 1976 Copyright Law that stated all old contracts were canceled when a surviving widow or widower renewed the copyright of a spouse’s work. Renewing the copyright for *Stranger in a Strange Land* in 1989, Virginia Heinlein obtained the original typescript that her husband had placed on file at the University of California at Santa Cruz, then negotiated a contract with Putnam’s to have all 220,000 original words published in a restored version of the novel.

The novel has long been characterized as appealing to unbalanced minds, and the unrestrained sexual activities of the Church of All Worlds, as well as the emphasis upon commune life, were at first responsible for its exclusion from most school reading lists. Its later infamous association with Charles Manson resulted in its exclusion from both school lists and school libraries

during the 1970s and 1980s, an action automatically taken by teachers and administrators to prevent what were viewed as inevitable challenges. Lee Burrell recorded only one challenge to the book in which a teacher in an unnamed Pennsylvania school district in 1977 objected to the nudity and the inferences that could be drawn from the word “grok,” as well as to the sexual references that appear in the last quarter of the book when the cult leader Mike begins to take advantage of his positions.

The book achieved unwanted notoriety during the trial of Manson, who, along with his “family” of followers, perpetrated the vicious Tate–La Bianca murders in 1969. Manson claimed that the book, along with the Beatles’ song “Helter Skelter,” formed the cornerstone of his religion of love and hate. Biographer Ed Sanders wrote in 1971 that Manson borrowed a lot of the book’s terminology and ideas and identified with the character of Valentine Michael Smith, so much so that he named the first child born to one of his followers Valentine Michael Manson. Other aspects of the Manson family were borrowed from the novel, including the water-sharing ceremony. The “water brother” rituals, as well as the sexual sharing of followers, attracted the attention of other fringe groups who claimed to use *Stranger in a Strange Land* and other Heinlein books as their sacred texts.

In 2003, parents of students attending a summer science academy in the South Texas Independent School District in Mercedes, Texas, challenged the use of this novel and *BRAVE NEW WORLD* by Aldous Huxley in the curriculum. They objected specifically to the themes of sexuality, drugs, and suicide in the novels and asserted that such adult themes were inappropriate for students. School officials retained the novels in the summer curriculum. The school board considered the matter further and voted to require school principals to automatically offer an alternative to any challenged books in order to provide parents with greater control over their children’s readings.

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THE SUN ALSO RISES

Author: Ernest Hemingway

Original date and place of publication: 1926, United States

Original publisher: Charles Scribner's Sons

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

The Sun Also Rises created a sensation when it first appeared because it was the first novel to depict the lives of American expatriates in Paris in the 1920s. It was viewed as a statement of the “lost generation,” expressing the disillusionment and the hedonistic attitude brought on by World War I. Young Americans imitated its dialogue, and the novel started a fashion trend, as young women cut their hair and adopted the clothing worn by the female protagonist, Lady Brett Ashley.

The novel is divided into three sections and narrated by Jake Barnes, an American correspondent in Paris. Jake had suffered a severe groin wound in the war that left him sexually impotent, and this makes the love between Jake and Brett torturous because they are unable to consummate it. Thus, Brett seeks physical satisfaction with numerous men, while maintaining her emotional bond to Jake. In reality, all of Jake and Brett's friends are suffering from wounds, most of them psychological. Brett seeks happiness through romantic conquest, Princeton graduate Robert Cohn through romantic novels, and others through frantic and continuous celebrating. Psychological turmoil dominates Jake's days and nights, making him an insomniac as well as emotionally unstable when “his head starts to work.” Brett has her own tragedies: the death of her fiancé from dysentery during the war, a later bad marriage to acquire a title, and present plans to marry the bankrupt Mike Campbell, who drinks heavily, despite her real love for Jake.

In the second section of the novel, the action moves to Spain, where Jake and his friends go for the fiesta and bullfighting. Jake and Bill Gorton spend a few peaceful days fishing and discuss numerous serious subjects before they go to Pamplona for the running of the bulls. During this time, Brett has spent a romantic weekend with Robert Cohn, who becomes possessive of her. When Brett expresses an interest in the young bullfighter Pedro Romero, the competition becomes too much for Cohn, who fights with Jake and Mike and then beats Pedro badly. After heroically fighting the bulls the following day, Pedro runs away with Brett.

With the end of the fiesta, members of the group separate, and Jake goes alone to San Sebastian. He receives a telegram from Brett, who has left Pedro and wants Jake to meet her. Pedro is only 19, and she has left him for his own good. As they drive away in a taxi, Brett tells Jake, “You know it makes one feel rather good deciding not to be a bitch.” The novel ends as it began, with Jake and Brett together, locked in a hopeless love for each other.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The Sun Also Rises was the only novel that Scribner vice president Max Perkins had ever contracted for completely unseen, and he had only the vaguest idea of its content. He was concerned about the opinion of the 72-year-old head of the publishing firm, Charles Scribner, “who was formidable on certain topics like obscenity.” As editor John Wheelock reminded Perkins, “Charles Scribner would no sooner allow profanity in one of his books than he would invite friends to use his parlor as a toilet.” When the manuscript was completed, the old-fashioned and gentlemanly Perkins told Scribner that three words might give the firm difficulty, but he could not bring himself to speak the words. Scribner then insisted that Perkins write them, and Perkins hesitantly wrote two of the words, *damn* and *bitch*. He only wrote the third, *balls*, when Scribner insisted that he do so.

In correspondence with Hemingway, Perkins asked the author to modify the language because “it would be a pretty thing if the very significance of so original a book should be disregarded because of the howls of a lot of cheap, prurient moronic yappers.” In addition to the words *damn* and *bitch*, Perkins, yet unable to write the offending word, asked the author to consider reworking the statements that referred to the “bulls being without appendages.” He also expressed concern about Hemingway’s comic passage in which Bill Gorton and Jake speak of a purported accident on a bicycle or tricycle, which left Henry James permanently injured and impotent, as Jake explains his own war wound. Perkins protested because the matter “is peculiarly a personal one” that the publisher would not dare to include had James been alive and that seemed even more tasteless since James was now dead. In the final version, the story remains but just the name “Henry” is used, to which Bill adds he “was a good writer.”

Hemingway claimed to have eliminated as many potentially offensive words as possible, but he retained the phrase, “Tell him the bulls have no balls,” that Mike Campbell shouts four times in two pages. Although the publisher did not feel comfortable with the work as it stood, the firm hesitated to turn down the novel because “young writers, who were the future of the firm, would avoid them for their conservative position.” After the novel was published, reviewers labeled it “a dirty book.” Hemingway’s mother wrote him and asked him if he was happy now that he had published “one of the filthiest books of the year” and stated that he must know other words besides *damn* and *bitch*. In 1927, the Watch and Ward Society of Boston added the novel to its list of “obscene” books and requested that booksellers agree not to advertise or to sell the book. (See ELMER GENTRY.) In 1953, the novel was banned in Ireland for the “dissipated lives” of its characters, as well as for “profanity.”

In 1960, parents of students in the San Jose, California, school district asked the school board to remove the novel from the class curriculum. They expressed concern with the “personal nature of the one character’s [Jake’s] wound,” as well as the “profanity.” The school board banned the novel from the schools. That same year, the Riverside, California, school board withdrew all of Hemingway’s works from the school libraries after receiving repeated

parent complaints regarding the “obscenities” and “sexual situations” in the books.

In a 1977 national survey of high school librarians and English department chairpersons, Lee Burress reported one challenge by a parent in Virginia who requested that the novel be removed from the recommended reading list. The parent claimed that the characters were “too flagrant” in behavior and that their language was “too explicit.” After a review committee considered the parent’s complaint, the book was removed from the recommended reading list. Burress also reported in a 1982 national survey of librarians that a parent in Indiana challenged the assignment of the book in the classroom because of the “obscene” language. The school board reviewed the book and removed the material from the classroom.

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TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT

Author: Ernest Hemingway

Original date and place of publication: 1937, United States

Original publisher: Charles Scribner’s Son

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

To Have and Have Not is Ernest Hemingway’s most experimental novel and his financially least successful. The work began as two short stories about

former Miami police officer Harry Morgan, who runs a charter boat business between Florida and Cuba during the Depression. Hemingway added a third section to create a novel in three parts: “Harry Morgan—Spring,” “Harry Morgan—Fall,” and “Harry Morgan—Winter.” He sought to examine economic and social status and to contrast the “haves” with the “have nots.”

Harry Morgan is a tough and resourceful figure who struggles to make a living. Desperate for money, he accepts a dangerous mission to transport Chinese refugees from Cuba to Florida. With alcoholic Eddy Marshall as crew, Harry locks the refugees below deck and kills the smuggling organizer after receiving payment. He then forces the 12 men onto the beach and returns home.

The second part opens with Harry Morgan and a black crew member named Wesley suffering gunshot wounds—Harry in the arm and Wesley in the leg—while illegally transporting rum. Fearing that Customs will spot them, they pull close to shore and dump the liquor bottles. Seen by a government official on another boat, they escape temporarily. Harry loses his boat to Customs, but they cannot identify who was piloting the craft.

In part three, Harry has lost his arm after being wounded, and his boat has been taken from him. He agrees to use a borrowed boat to transport Cuban revolutionaries from Florida to Cuba after they rob a bank. The night before he leaves, he and his wife make love, and she later thinks, “I could do that all night if a man was built that way.” On the boat, Harry considers the Cubans’ ideals and thinks “F—— the revolution” as he plans to take the money, but one shoots him. As he lies dying, he worries that his wife is “too old to peddle her hips now.”

Contrasted with Harry’s desperate efforts to scratch a living are the problems of other characters—a playboy writer and his adulterous wife, a Hollywood director’s frustrated wife who masturbates in the night, a grain broker who cheats on his tax returns, and a homosexual couple ending their relationship—tourists in Key West who are financially well off but morally and emotionally empty. Helen, the embittered wife of writer Richard Gordon, conveys their cynicism: “Love is that dirty aborting horror that you took me to. Love is my insides all messed up. It’s half catheters and half whirling douches. I know about love. Love hangs up behind the bathroom door. It smells like lysol [sic]. To hell with love.” Hemingway contrasts their continued survival with the defeat of the relentless individualist Harry Morgan, who is no match for a hostile social and economic environment.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The first submitted draft of the novel contained material that publisher Charles Scribner’s Sons told Hemingway to excise before the work could be published. In an extended section, the author had used character Tommy Bradley, husband of the sexually promiscuous Helene Bradley, as a vehicle

for savaging writers that he had known. In that initial version, Hemingway spoke of Hart Crane as “an unfortunate bugger, always propositioning the wrong sailors and getting beaten up.” Harry Crosby was “a silly ass,” and F. Scott Fitzgerald had “jumped from youth to senility. . . . Might pull out of it yet if he wasn’t so sorry for himself.” Hemingway said of James Joyce that he “wrote two fine books and a very great book and went blind. You cant [sic] blame a man for going blind.” The publisher was uncomfortable with the criticism of other writers and asked Hemingway to eliminate the passages or to heavily disguise the individuals. As a result of the revision, the character of Tommy Bradley does not appear and is only referred to in the novel. Another change involves the masturbation scene of Dorothy Hollis. More straightforward in the initial version, it was changed to include an awkward and convoluted soliloquy that suggests rather than states her actions.

Even with the revisions, the language and the sexual suggestiveness of the novel raised cries for censorship after publication. Labeled “obscene” is the frequent reference among the monied tourists to the promiscuous Helene Bradley as a “bitch” or a “whore.” Other words that have drawn criticism are *fuck* or *fucking*. Midway through the novel, Hemingway uses dashes when Harry thinks “F—— the revolution,” yet in Harry’s dying thoughts the word is fully spelled out: “No matter how a man alone ain’t got no bloody fucking chance.” In 1938, the novel was banned in Detroit, Michigan, by the local prosecutor, who first ordered it removed from the Detroit Public Library. Booksellers in Detroit were also prevented from selling the book under the ban, an order that they contested. The Wayne County prosecutor had acted after receiving complaints from Catholic organizations that it was “obscene” and contained “sexual situations” that were “corruptive.” Harry Schuman, a rare book dealer, and Alvin C. Hamer, a well-known Detroit bookseller, contested the order, and two years later the book was available for sale in Wayne County. The public libraries, however, placed the book on shelves containing works by “writers of standing,” meant for the request of adults alone.

That same year, law-enforcement authorities in Queens, New York, forbade the sale and distribution of the novel after receiving complaints from local Catholic organizations. Concerns raised over the “obscene” language and the sexual promiscuity (mostly implied) of the characters were the basis for the ban. The American Civil Liberties Union reported that *To Have and Have Not* was the only novel suppressed in the United States in 1938.

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TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

Author: (Nelle) Harper Lee

Original date and place of publication: 1960, United States

Original publisher: J. B. Lippincott

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

Harper Lee's only novel touched a nerve in American society when it was first published, becoming a best seller as well as a critical success that won the Pulitzer Prize in 1961. The author claimed that her story of racial bias in the sleepy fictional Alabama town of Maycomb was pure imagination, but reporters who visited her hometown of Monroeville, Alabama, on the 30th anniversary of the book's publication found remarkable similarities to the novel in both setting and character. In essence, the racial ills chronicled in the novel appear to have been realistically drawn from the author's life.

The novel is told from the point of view of the adult Jean Louise Finch, known as Scout to her friends, who relates the events of three years, beginning with her sixth summer. With her brother Jem, four years her senior, and summer visitor Dill, modeled after a real-life summer playmate who grew up to be the writer Truman Capote, Scout devises a series of projects to make their mysterious next-door neighbor, Arthur "Boo" Radley, emerge from his house. The early chapters of the novel detail the comfortable cocoon of childhood that Scout enjoys, as she enters school, engages in fistfights with boys, and shares confidences with her father, lawyer Atticus Finch.

Scout's comfortable world is shattered when her father agrees to take the unpopular defense of black laborer Tom Robinson, accused of raping white Mayella Ewell. The townspeople want Tom to die, but Atticus believes that Tom is innocent and establishes that Tom's withered left arm could not have made the bruises on the right side of Mayella's face.

As bitterness engulfs the town, Atticus must defend his client not only in court but also from a lynch mob. Atticus manages to prove that Tom is physically incapable of committing the crime, yet the jury brings in a verdict of guilty despite the revelation that Mayella had made sexual advances to Tom that he had refused out of fear for his life. In addition, townspeople are angered because Tom expresses pity for a white woman.

Atticus plans to appeal the decision, but Tom is fatally shot while trying to escape during a jail exercise period. The final chapters of the novel contain

Bob Ewell's attempted revenge against Atticus for having defended Tom and the emergence of Boo Radley from his house to save Jem and Scout from Ewell's knife.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Despite its strong annual sales and appearance on required reading lists in numerous high schools throughout the United States, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has frequently been challenged by parents and groups who object to either the language or the way in which race is represented. The Committee on Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association listed the novel as being among the 10 most frequently challenged books. In 1977, Eden Valley (Minnesota) School District temporarily banned the book because the words *damn* and *whore lady* appeared in the text, and parents in Vernon-Verona-Sherill (New York) School District challenged the book in 1980 as being a "filthy, trashy novel." Black parents in Warren Township (Indiana) schools charged in 1981 that passages in the book that portrayed the submissive behavior of Tom Robinson, Calpurnia, and other blacks and the frequent use of the word *nigger* advocated institutionalized racism and were harmful to the integration process. Despite their vehement efforts, the attempt to censor the book was unsuccessful. As a result, three black parents resigned in protest from the town's human relations advisory council.

The novel was also challenged in 1984 in the Waukegan, Illinois, schools for inclusion of the word *nigger*; and in 1985, Park Hill (Missouri) Junior High School parents challenged the novel because it contained racial slurs and offensive language. In 1985 in Casa Grande (Arizona) Elementary School District, black parents and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People protested that the book was unfit for use in the junior high school. School officials there changed the status of the book from required reading to retention on a supplemental reading list.

In 2001, a school board member in Glynn County, Georgia, challenged the use of the novel in the classroom because it contains profanity, but no action was taken, and the book was retained.

In August 2002, Terry Saul, the principal of Muskogee High School in Oklahoma, removed the novel from the high school reading list after African-American parents and students complained about racial slurs in the novel. The Muskogee Public Library created a program in response to the action, including showing the movie in two screenings and sponsoring two read-and-discuss programs led by local black educators. The library also adapted the One City–One Book program from the Chicago Public Library and staged a musical and reading program with reminiscences by the child stars of the movie after raising \$7,000 in donations. The resulting coalition of participation by community leaders led the school board to vote in October 9, 2002, to reverse the ban.

In 2003, parents of students enrolled in the sophomore literature class in Community High School in Normal, Illinois, challenged the use of the novel and claimed that it is degrading to African Americans. After review by a school district committee, the school board voted in 2004 to retain the novel.

In 2004, the novel was challenged by parents of students attending the Stanford Middle School in Durham, North Carolina, because the work uses the word *nigger* extensively. No action was taken.

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UNLIVED AFFECTIONS

Author: George Shannon

Original date and place of publication: 1989, United States

Original publisher: Harper & Row

Literary form: Young adult novel

SUMMARY

Unlived Affections is a novel about secrets and about the people who are hurt by these secrets and by their refusal to love others as they are and not as they wish them to be.

Willie Ramsey has never known his father, and his mother died when he was two, leaving his maternal grandmother ("Grom") to raise him. A rigid woman who works as a school nurse while he is young, Grom has created a

museum of her house, in which everything is neatly ordered and nothing is thrown away, and the subject of Willie's father is never raised. Despite his love for Grom, Willie cannot wait to escape the smothering atmosphere of her house and attend college in Nebraska. "He just meant to leave his grandmother, Ottawa and everything else like his parents had left him."

The novel opens with a bereft Willie preparing to empty the contents of the house for a yard sale of his grandmother's belongings. Only weeks before he was supposed to leave for college, Grom had a heart attack and died, leaving him the house, money for college, and many unanswered questions. Throughout the novel, as Willie sorts through the many items that fill every closet and corner of the house, he learns the truth about his parents and achieves a level of peace with himself. In numerous flashbacks, the reader also learns of Willie's intense desire to love and to be loved and of the fear of being hurt by love that has made him avoid Libby, a young woman from school whom he likes and whose patient understanding eventually breaks through his shell. "He was so frightened of being left that he truly believed if he left Libby, she couldn't leave him. She meant too much to him."

Willie methodically sorts items for the yard sale, hoping that he will find some clues about his father and his mother. He finds stacks of carefully arranged issues of magazines dating back to 1967, boxes of letters and cards arranged alphabetically in shoeboxes, and photographs in a box marked "Grateful Patients." "Pictures of every friggin' kid who ever skinned a knee at school, but no pictures of my father. Nothing."

As Willie works, memories of his grandmother sitting in the living room, watching television, smoking, and crocheting come to mind, and he remembers the softer side that came out when she would touch the old cigar box in which she kept her crocheting supplies. The box had been her husband's, his grandfather's, as well as the source of her rigidity and rules for shutting off lights, saving water by taking short showers, and warnings against running in the house. He also thinks of her passion for the multitude of flowers in her garden and her celebrations when the gladiolas bloomed and the poppies produced their profusion of color. The memories make Willie wish that he could have learned more about the secrets that his grandmother kept.

One of those secrets is his late mother's bedroom, which Grom kept locked and which she warned him never to enter. She entered it one Saturday each month for one hour in order to clean the room, then carefully locked it as she left. Willie recalls picking the lock when he was in fourth grade and entering the room, which he found in the same condition as it was the day his mother died. Her clothes were in the closet, letters and postcards were tucked around her mirror, and a smell that he imagined was hers lingered. As he left the room, Grom caught him and warned him to never enter it again.

Grom told him that his father was dead and that his mother had died of a heart attack, but he overhears her telling a teacher in school: "It's the saddest story you'll ever hear. . . . His father ran off and died before he was born; then my daughter and the fool she was dating were killed when a truck crashed

into their car. I'm all he's got in the world." Whenever Willie asked about his father, his grandmother simply told him that he was dead and better off that way. When Willie asked about his mother, Grom only talked about the perfect little girl she was and praised her beauty and talents, but she refused to speak about the adult Kate Davenport Ramsey.

The yard sale is imminent, so Willie completes the inventory of the entire house and saves the locked room—his mother's room—for last. Willie searches for some clue to his origin, to the father whom he has never known and the mother who was only presented to him in an idealized light. He looks through his mother's address book, but finds no evidence of any relatives: "Willie thumbed to the R's. No Ramseys. Then the D's. No Davenports either." That leaves him feeling even more alone.

Willie unloads the drawers of the desk and finds a shoebox wedged tightly in the back that contains a six-inch stack of letters, all with the return name of "Bill Ramsey," sent from Kentucky and addressed to his mother's married name, Kate Ramsey. The realization that these letters are from his father to his mother frighten him, even as he understands that they will probably provide the answers to his many questions.

The letters begin before Willie was born and are written by a man who was obviously very much in love with his wife and who left her in Kansas to become an apprentice to a fine furniture maker in Kentucky. Willie reads the first few letters, and periodically questions what could have happened to make his grandmother hate a man who had so loved her daughter. As he reads later letters, he learns that his father became infatuated with another man, Larry, whose picture is in one of the envelopes. He learns that Kate did not condemn Bill but loved him so much that she tried to wait out the infatuation. In one of her visits to Bill, Willie is conceived, but Kate keeps her pregnancy a secret and, instead, paints a happy picture that she is dating several men and even considering marrying again. Willie also learns in the letters that the rocking chair in his room, in which Grom would never sit, was made by his father for his mother. The letters reveal that his mother did not tell Grom that his father was leaving her for a man; Kate lied that he was leaving her for another woman, as Grom's husband had "run off to Kansas City" with another woman.

The realization of the many lost opportunities for love makes Willie angry, first at his grandmother, then at his mother, and, finally, at his father. He rereads his father's letter reassuring his mother that the choice had nothing to do with her: "I'm doing what I'm doing because I do love you. And because I finally like me. You can't really believe that this has anything to do with your looks or brains. You're wonderful!" His father urges Kate to divorce him and to find a man who can fully love her. "Tell the lawyer I'll sign anything he wants me to. Tell him whatever you want to. Tell anything that makes it easier on you. People will talk no matter what. Tell them the truth about me like you finally did to your mother." As he reads a later letter in which Bill tells Kate that he has found the love of his life, a dentist named

Evan, Willie realizes that the dates of the letters are coming closer to his mother's date of death and mutters "Damn queers" and becomes deeply sad. He has received answers to questions that have plagued him for most of his life, but he is no longer certain that the lies may not have been better.

On the day of the yard sale, Willie places the letters and the rocking chair aside, the only two items that link him to his mother and his father, and prepares to deal with the crowds. He is surprised to find Libby at the door when the sale begins, and he reluctantly tells her what he learned from the letters. Rather than expressing shock, Libby offers sympathy and tells him that his father did not abandon him because Kate never told Bill that she was pregnant. As they speak, Willie also realizes how much his grandmother really loved him and how much pain she experienced in being abandoned by her husband, then watching her daughter have the same experience before dying very young. In a final gesture, Willie visits his mother's and Grom's graves, to cry and to bury the shoebox of letters in one and the cigar box of crochet threads in the other.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Unlived Affections is a coming-of-age novel that does not contain an active gay character, has no mention of homosexual activity, offers no approval of homosexual relationships, and does not proselytize about the homosexual lifestyle. However, controversy has ensued over Willie's recognition through letters two decades old that his father realized his own homosexuality after having married and fathered a child (albeit a child he did not know existed).

In 1993, the mother of a sixth-grade girl attending Lundahl Junior High School in Crystal Lake, Illinois, discovered that her daughter's teacher was reading *Unlived Affections* aloud in class. She became upset when she learned that it contained references to homosexuality. The mother wrote a formal letter of complaint to the school district and charged that the references to homosexuality in the book made it unsuitable for students in junior high school. The matter was referred to a book review committee at Lundahl Junior High School, which voted to remove the book from library shelves. The Crystal Lake District School 47, which includes Lundahl Junior High School, had a committee composed of teachers, administrators, and librarians also review the book. The committee voted to ban the book because they believed it "was unfit for junior high students."

School Superintendent Richard Bemotas spoke to reporters for the committee members, who declined to comment, and concluded, "The building-level committee said it was not age-appropriate. Something that is appropriate for one age level may not be appropriate for another." Supporters of the book, including the school librarian who was one of two dissenters on the book review committee, planned to take the decision before a district-wide committee, then, if necessary, to the school board. The ban of *Unlived Affec-*

tions initiated a debate over the issue of freedom of speech versus parental rights to decide what is best for children, and it also raised questions as to how library materials are selected.

George Shannon, author of the novel, told a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* that despite the criticism of his book, he believes that “a parent has the responsibility or right to know what their own child is reading or viewing or listening to. Every family has different religious views on what is right and what is wrong.” Although he acknowledges that standards do vary from family to family, Shannon asserts, “I am against any individual deciding what another group can or can’t do, or know or believe.” At the same time, the author expressed surprise that the book created debate, and he decided to simply stay out of the fray. He told a reporter that his part was writing the book and “in general supporting intellectual freedom in my daily life. I can’t decide if it’s right or wrong for the school; that’s for the community to decide.”

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WE ALL FALL DOWN

Author: Robert Cormier

Original date and place of publication: 1991, United States

Original publisher: Delacorte Press

Literary form: Young adult novel

SUMMARY

In *We All Fall Down*, Robert Cormier examines the issue of vandalism and violence in an upper-middle-class neighborhood. In a suspenseful plot that contains numerous unexpected twists and turns, the novel leads readers to question why somebody would commit such acts of random violence and explains the motivation that might lead people to act in unexpected ways.

The setting of the novel is the small suburb of Burnside, a well-kept, upper-middle-class residential area at Cape Cod, with “neat houses, with shutters and rose arbors, birdbaths on front lawns, and the lawns carefully manicured.” This area, especially Arbor Lane, the street on which the Jerome family lives, has a quiet atmosphere of friendly neighbors and a feeling of safety: “People waving hello to each other, evening barbecues in the backyards and the aroma of burning charcoal or wood smoke from chimneys. A neighborhood of station wagons and vans, family cars.” This is not a neighborhood where violence, vandalism, and terror usually occur. Yet it is precisely in this idyllic setting that the Jerome family and their daughter Karen become victims of a random act of violence committed by four high school seniors. The novel examines the consequences that the act of violence has for both the perpetrators and the victims.

The novel begins in a matter-of-fact tone, detailing the horror that sets the events of the novel into motion:

They entered the house at 9:02 p.m. on the evening of April Fools’ Day. In the next forty-five minutes, they shit on the floor and pissed on the walls and trashed their way through the seven-room Cape Cod cottage. They overturned the furniture, smashed the picture tubes in three television sets, tore two VCRs from their sockets and crashed them to the floor. They spray-painted the wall orange. They flooded the bathrooms, both upstairs and down, and flushed face towels down the toilet bowls. They broke every mirror in the place and toppled a magnificent hutch to the floor, sending china cups and saucers and plates and assorted crystal through the air. In the second-floor bedrooms, they pulled out dresser drawers, spilled their contents on the floor, yanked clothing from the closets and slashed the mattresses. In the downstairs den, they performed a special job on the spinet, smashing the keys with a hammer, the noise like a crazy soundtrack to the scenes of plunder.

As four high school seniors vandalize the home of the Jerome family, the youngest daughter, 14-year-old Karen, arrives home unexpectedly, and three of the boys attempt to rape her while the fourth stands by drunk and stunned. When Karen struggles to get away and pulls open the door to the cellar, one of the boys pushes her with both hands, causing her to fall down the stairs and go into a coma. An unidentified watcher called only the Avenger watches the boys trash the home and vows to hunt them down and punish them, but he fails to see Karen being dragged across the hallway by the boys. In the months that follow, as Karen lies in a coma and the Jeromes cope with the violation of their home, the mentally unbalanced Avenger lurks and waits to carry out his own form of justice. The novel explores the moral responsibilities of people toward others and analyzes the motivation of teenagers to commit such acts of brutal violence against people and their property.

The four young men who break into the Jerome house are Harry Flowers, Marty Sanders, Randy Pierce, and Buddy Walker, four middle-class seniors

in high school in the neighboring town of Wickburg. Harry Flowers is the spoiled son of an architect who is too busy to deal with his son and his problems. Harry's parents have no idea what their son is doing after school and only seem to care about his report cards from school. They try to compensate their own lack of time and interest in him by giving him money. Harry acts as the leader of the group of boys who vandalize the Jerome house; he is constantly looking for excitement, which includes harassing other people, driving around town in his car, and drinking alcohol.

Marty Sanders and Randy Pierce try very hard to imitate Harry and attempt to impress him, but they are simply his lackeys, willing to follow him just to gain his approval. Buddy Walker is different. He is vulnerable because he is still dealing with the shock of learning that his parents are going to divorce, and although he is very much under the influence of Harry, he feels uncomfortable with the behavior of the four boys during their "Funtimes." Buddy is the only one of the four who has scruples about their actions.

The families of these four perpetrators evidence a lack of communication and an unwillingness to address and solve family problems. In contrast, the victimized Jeromes are a warm and close-knit family. Fourteen-year-old Karen, 16-year-old Jane, and their younger brother Artie, as well as their parents, seem to really care about each other, and they share common interests and values. A business manager of the Wickburg telephone company, Mr. Jerome spends every minute he can after work with his family.

A neighbor returning from a monthlong business trip recalls writing down the license plate of a suspicious car parked outside the Jerome home. He provides the police with their only clue as to the identity of the vandals. The car belongs to the Flowers family, and Harry Flowers admits to vandalizing the house but claims that he did it alone and that he had a key to enter the house given to him by Jane. The authorities cannot charge him with breaking and entering, and his father pays for the damage to the house. Jane is devastated by the claim, and her parents realize that she had dropped her house key at the mall months before. After watching her drop the key and retrieving it, Flowers had gained as much information as he could about her and her family, then targeted them, but he did not tell his friends that he had the key.

Remorseful for what he has done, Buddy calls Jane and apologizes but does not give his name. Her voice makes him want to know her better, and he arranges to meet her accidentally at different public places. In a short while, they become friends. Without knowing Buddy's involvement in the trashing of her family's house, Jane falls in love with him. For the first time, Buddy experiences an important relationship, and he works to improve his life. Jane means so much to him that he tries very hard to quit drinking.

Although this relationship is based on a lie, Buddy's character is developed with compassion, and the growing trust makes readers believe that their romance will work out. However, after Jane learns that Buddy was one of the four vandals who had destroyed her family home, placed her sister in a coma, and wreaked havoc with her family's life, she ends the relationship.

Cormier uses the character of the Avenger to provide a second perspective on the issue of moral responsibility. Only at the end does the reader learn that the Avenger is not an 11-year-old boy but the mentally disturbed, 41-year-old Michael Stallings, nicknamed “Mickey Looney” by Jane because he looks like actor Mickey Rooney and acts strange. He observes what happened in the Jerome home and sets out to avenge that act. Although the Avenger’s plans to carry out his vengeance remain unclear, the actions would probably be as brutal and violent as his killing of a bully when he was 11 years old and of his grandfather, a retired police sergeant who suspected the crime. He had stolen his grandfather’s service revolver and shot the bully to death, then later killed his grandfather to avoid exposure. At the end of the novel, the Avenger lures Jane to a shed, ties her up, and frantically threatens to kill her and himself. She manages to calm him and keep them both alive until Buddy and the police arrive.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

We All Fall Down has been challenged in school districts and libraries for its profanity, violence, and the attempted rape at the beginning of the book, as well as the violent suicide attempt near the end of the novel. The American Library Association lists the novel as 35th among the 100 most challenged books from 1990 to 2000.

In 1997, members of Oklahomans for Children and Families (OCAF), an Oklahoma City–based group, charged that some of the materials found in the Oklahoma County Metropolitan Library System were pornographic and obscene. With the support of the Virginia-based Family Friendly Libraries (FFL), OCAF protested at Metropolitan Library System (MLS) meetings over four months and asked library officials to remove the books from the general collection and to place them in a restricted area behind the circulation desk. The groups objected to three works by Robert Cormier—*We All Fall Down*, *Beyond the Chocolate War*, and *Fade*—as well as *Boys and Sex* by Wardell B. Pomeroy and *IT’S PERFECTLY NORMAL* by Robie H. Harris. Lee Brawner, MLS director, said that in his 38 years of library work, he had heard many complaints but never received the complaints in so organized a manner as those submitted by OCAF and FFL. The MLS efforts to keep the materials in the general collection were defended by American Civil Liberties Union lawyers, who called efforts to change the library policy “clear-cut censorship.”

In March 14, 2000, *We All Fall Down* was placed on the restricted list in the Arlington (Texas) Independent School District. During the fall of 1999, Donna Harkreader, the parent of a student in the school district, filed a complaint with district administrators, objecting to the violence in the book. The matter was referred to a panel of school librarians. On March 14, 2000, the panel submitted its recommendation to retain the book in the middle and high school libraries. On March 17, 2000, school superintendent Mac Bernd ordered the book removed from the general shelves in the school library and

restricted it to students who had their parents' written permission to borrow the book.

We All Fall Down was pulled from classrooms in Baldwin City High School by the school superintendent in Baldwin, Kansas, in September 2003, after Lois Krysztof, the mother of a Baldwin freshman, sent a list of excerpts and complaints that the book was not appropriate reading material for a freshman orientation class. School Superintendent James White received the request, in which Krysztof cited more than 50 objectionable paragraphs she had found in the book, and removed the book from the class curriculum. He told a reporter for the *Baldwin City Signal*, "It doesn't look to me like something the kids should be reading at the freshman level." Krysztof had spoken with Baldwin High School principal Allen Poplin about the book in spring 2003 and afterward filled out a "request for consideration of instructional materials" and sent the request and book excerpts to all members of the board of education, as well as to the superintendent. School board member Stacy Cohen, voiced strong objections to the superintendent's action and expressed the view that the book should remain in the classroom until the school board had the opportunity to consider the matter; White wanted the book removed until a review would take place. At a special meeting on September 22, 2003, the school board determined that although a policy existed in the district to review challenges to books in the school libraries, no policy existed regarding books in the classroom curriculum. The board voted 5-2 against returning copies of the book to the ninth-grade orientation class until a review committee could decide if the book should remain part of the curriculum. On September 26, 2003, at an emergency meeting of the school board, members voted 6-1 to dissolve the review committee because the district policy only covered books in the school libraries and the recommendations of the panel would have no bearing on a decision regarding classroom curriculum. On October 27, 2003, the school board then reversed its decision and reinstated the review committee but voted 4-3 to keep the book out of the classroom until the evaluation process was completed. Three days later, on October 30, 2003, four Baldwin High School students who attended a football game between Baldwin and Perry-Lecompton High School brought further attention to the banning by passing out a large number of copies of *We All Fall Down* to spectators.

The issue was finally resolved in November 2003, after the district committee reviewing the book recommended that it be returned to the curriculum and that use of the book should be left to the classroom teacher, school principal, and district curriculum director. The school board voted 5-2 to make the book available to students of the high school's freshman orientation class, not as required reading but as supplemental curricular material.

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WELCOME TO THE MONKEY HOUSE

Author: Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

Original date and place of publication: 1968, United States

Original publisher: Delacorte Press

Literary form: Short story collection

SUMMARY

Welcome to the Monkey House consists of 25 short stories, 11 reprinted from Vonnegut's 1961 short story collection *Canary in a Cat House*. All of the stories originally appeared in such diverse publications as *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Colliers*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Fantasy and Science Fiction Magazine* from 1950 through 1964, but the title story appeared in *Playboy* magazine the same year that the collection was released.

Many of the 25 stories have as their setting Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, where the Kennedy family has long had its compound, and Vonnegut weaves the Kennedy name throughout many of the stories. The settings vary from the present to hundreds of years into the future, but all offer perceptive criticism of contemporary ills. "Welcome to the Monkey House" is the only story singled out for criticism regarding language and sexual situations, but the entire collection has been removed where such cases have occurred.

The story is set in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and its environs, in an unspecified future in which antiaging shots make everyone appear no

older than 22 and the Earth is overpopulated with 17 billion people. The World Government has launched a two-pronged attack on the problem by encouraging “compulsory ethical birth control” and “ethical suicide.” Everyone must take the “ethical birth control pill” three times daily. It is the only legal form of birth control and does not interfere with a person’s ability to reproduce, “which would have been unnatural and immoral,” but it does “take every bit of pleasure out of the sex act.” The pills make people numb from the waist down, and they are so effective that you could “blindfold a man who had taken one, tell him to recite the Gettysburg Address, kick him in the balls while he was doing it, and he wouldn’t miss a syllable.”

The pills were invented by J. Edgar Nation, a pharmacist from Grand Rapids, Michigan, who created them to “introduce morality into the monkey house at the Grand Rapids Zoo.” After he and his 11 children went to the zoo one Easter day and saw a monkey “playing with his private parts,” he rushed home “to make a pill that would make monkeys in the springtime fit things for a Christian to see.” The World Government adopted his discovery after the United Nations announced a population crisis and scientists stated that people had to stop reproducing while moralists declared that society would collapse if people used sex for nothing but pleasure. The pill was the solution. “Thus did science and morals go hand in hand.”

The Federal Ethical Suicide Parlors are run by Ethical Suicide Service (ESS) hostesses, all of whom are six feet tall or more, seductively made up and dressed, “plump and rosy,” skilled in judo and karate, and virgins. They prepare their clients for death by providing pleasant conversation and a last meal before administering the fatal shot with a hypodermic needle.

“Nothingheads,” rebels who refuse to take the ethical birth control pills, threaten society. They are “bombed out of their skulls with the sex madness that came from taking nothing.” The most notorious nothinghead is Billy the Poet, who specializes in deflowering the hostesses of suicide parlors. He usually sends his potential victims “dirty poems” far in advance, then abducts them, forces them to wait the eight hours until their pills wear off, and “deflowers them with a clinical skill.” Afterward, they are “grateful” and join the growing nothingheads movement. After raping Nancy, a 63-year-old virgin ESS hostess, Billy reads a passage from Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s *Sonnets from the Portuguese* to her, tells her that lawmakers throughout history “have been absolutely disgusted and terrified by the natural sexuality of common men and women,” and gives her a bottle of pills to be taken monthly to prevent pregnancy. The label on the bottle states: “WELCOME TO THE MONKEY HOUSE.”

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

In 1970, Marilyn Parducci, a teacher in Montgomery, Alabama, was dismissed for assigning the title story of the collection to her 11th-grade English class.

Three high school juniors of the teacher's 90 students asked to be excused from reading the story, and their parents complained about "vulgarity" and a reference to rape in the story. Objectors stated that the references to the monkey "playing with his private parts" and the phrase "kick him in the balls" were "vulgar." They also objected to lines in two of Billy's poems: "A-goosing statues in the dark," "And when I peed, I peed turquoise" and "Mourn my pecker, purple daughter." The high school principal and the associate school superintendent called the book "literary garbage" and chastised Parducci for teaching a book that promoted "the killing off of elderly people and free sex." Parducci brought suit against the school district in *Parducci v. Rutland*, 316 F. Supp. 352 (M.D. Ala 1970), asking reinstatement and financial remuneration. In rendering his decision, Judge Frank Johnson observed that, despite the "vulgar terms," the story could be considered an appropriate assignment when judged in the larger literary context. He noted that the words objected to were

less ribald than those found in many of Shakespeare's plays. The reference in the story to an act of sexual intercourse is no more descriptive than the rape scene in Pope's "Rape of the Lock." . . . It appears to the Court, moreover, that the author, rather than advocating the "killing off of old people," satirizes the practice to symbolize the increasing depersonalization of man in society.

The presiding judge stated further, "that teachers are entitled to first amendment freedom is an issue no longer in dispute" and such freedoms of expression should only be restricted if evidence exists that school activities would be disrupted. Because only three students had requested to be excused from the assignment, the judge determined that no disruption of the school schedule had occurred and ruled in favor of the teacher, who was reinstated in her teaching position.

In 1977, a parent in Bloomington, Minnesota, perused the books in the junior high school library and discovered three that contained "sexually explicit language." The parent complained to the school board, indicating that he had been concerned for a while about the materials used in the school "but when this came out, I really became uncoiled." The offending books were *Welcome to the Monkey House* and the two-volume science fiction story collection *Again, Dangerous Vision*, edited by Harlan Ellison. The parent raised objections to use of the words *balls*, *peed*, and *pecker* and noted that the word *fucking* was used in two instances as an adjective. The school superintendent stated his own dissatisfaction over "the fact that the obscene books were purchased and made available to students." He explained that the books were supplementary and had not been ordered through the normal purchase authorization channels, so he had not had the power of veto in advance. Although the superintendent promised that steps would be taken to prevent a reoccurrence, the parent removed his seven children from the Bloomington schools.

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THE WELL OF LONELINESS

Author: Radclyffe Hall (Marguerite Radclyffe-Hall)
Original date and place of publication: 1928, England
Original publisher: Jonathan Cape
Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

The Well of Loneliness was the first novel to openly portray a lesbian relationship and, despite an introduction by Havelock Ellis, who characterized the work as possessing “a notable psychological and sociological significance,” it shocked readers. The main character of the novel is Stephen Gordon, a young woman of wealthy parents who strongly desire a son and raise their daughter to become the son that they lack. She mimics her father in every aspect of her life, from mannerisms, abilities, and tastes through possessing a boyish figure that fails to develop significantly as she grows older. At the age of eight, she develops an intense crush on the housemaid. As she grows older, Stephen refuses to wear stereotyped feminine clothing or to take part in feminine activities. She also refuses to become romantically involved with male suitors.

When she turns 20, Stephen's infatuation with the American wife of a new neighbor leads to her downfall. Although the other woman, a former chorus girl, flirts, teases, and accepts several expensive gifts and passionate letters, she stops short at physical involvement beyond kisses with Stephen, who becomes furious that she has been led on. To avoid accusations, the former chorus girl tells her husband about Stephen's infatuation and shows him the letters that he, in turn, hands over to Stephen's mother. The mother's reaction is swift, and Stephen is driven out of her home.

Stephen travels to London and Paris, where she meets other lesbians whose company she avoids because she is eager to be taken for “normal.” The start of World War I provides her with the chance to enjoy the excitement of driving for the ambulance unit, and she also finds romance with a female coworker. Their feelings remain sublimated for a long while, during which

Stephen dashingly protects her love, Mary Llewellyn, as the two drive their assigned ambulance through the battlefields. The valorous Stephen leaves the war with a scar on her right cheek, where a shell splinter had cut it open.

After the war ends, Stephen and Mary set up a household in Paris, and the two vow to remain together, but neither is comfortable with her existence. They shun the bohemian lifestyle of the homosexual community, and they are in turn shunned by conventional society. More sensitive to social criticism, Mary has difficulty living life as an outsider. When an old suitor of Stephen appears and Mary seems to reciprocate the man's show of love, Stephen decides to release her from all promises. Knowing that Mary will remain true to her earlier vow, Stephen decides to force Mary to leave to give her the chance for a normal life, and she pretends to have an affair with the notorious lesbian party hostess, Valerie Seymour. Disillusioned, Mary leaves with her male love to start a new life, and Stephen is left alone and suffering with only her dog David for company.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

The novel achieved notoriety soon after publication when James Douglas, the book reviewer for the *London Sunday Express*, condemned strongly the theme of a lesbian emotional relationship. Douglas railed against the "hideous and loathsome vices" that he felt existed in this story of "female inverts" and claimed that he "would rather place a vial of prussic acid into the hands of a healthy boy or girl than to place the vile and hateful book into a child's hand."

The passages that so disturbed the reviewer and others are those that recount Stephen's physical affection with other women, although none of these passages contains graphic sexual activity. Early in the novel, Stephen greets with a kiss the married woman with whom she has become infatuated and to whom she gives an expensive pearl ring. In a room in which they stand lighted only by the fireplace, Stephen's "strong but unhappy arms went round her . . . and Stephen spoke such words as a lover will speak when his heart is burdened to breaking. . . . she spoke such words as lovers have spoken ever since the divine, sweet madness of God flung the thought of love into Creation." Later in the novel, when Stephen returns from war to begin her life with Mary, several passages describe their passionate kisses and expressions of love, but only one line in the novel suggests sexual activity. After Mary declares that she belongs entirely to Stephen, the reader learns ". . . and that night they were not divided." These passages outraged censors and fueled discussion regarding the immorality of the novel.

Faced with growing controversy, the publishers first printed an expurgated version of the book, then offered to withdraw it entirely at the urging of the home secretary Sir William Joynson-Hicks, despite protests by the author and her supporters. In late 1928, Pegasus Press in Paris prepared an unexpurgated version of the novel, but the first shipment of books was seized by

British Customs and, using the Obscene Publications Act of 1857, the home secretary ordered that the books be destroyed.

At the trial held on November 9, 1929, the presiding magistrate, Sir Charles Biron, refused to hear the testimony of numerous expert witnesses who asked to speak on behalf of Hall and her book. In rendering his decision that the book be destroyed, Biron condemned the novel for glorifying “unnatural tendencies” rather than condemning lesbianism. He voiced particular displeasure that the relationship between the women in the novel was marked by “extraordinary rest, contentment and pleasure.” Hall’s defense counsel, Lord Birkett of Ulverston, claimed that the judge refused to let the author testify in her own defense. In defending the book Birkett stated that he could find little of concern in the novel and “I may add that I had to read that book several times before I could discover the alleged obscenity.” Despite support from many doctors, psychiatrists, and authors, an appeal heard in Quarter Sessions the following year upheld the decision, and copies of the novel were burned. The book was banned in England until 1949.

The novel was originally supposed to be published in 1928 by Knopf in New York at the same time as its English publication. The furor in England convinced Knopf to end their plans, but Covici-Friede published it instead. Based on the counsel of attorney Morris Ernst, Donald Friede decided to take the offensive regarding the possible controversy. He called John Sumner, the head of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, told him that the book would be distributed, and invited him to buy an advance copy from the publisher rather than to arrest a bookstore clerk later. Sumner did so, then returned a month later with his aides, confiscated the publisher’s entire stock of the novel, and arrested Friede. *The Well of Loneliness* promptly became the subject of a court case in *People v. Friede*, 233 N.Y.S. 565 (1929), under which the defendants were charged with the possession and sale of an obscene book. The New York Society for the Suppression of Vice spearheaded the effort to ban publication of the book.

Magistrate Bushell declared in his decision that the novel portrayed the story of a “female invert” whose “sex experiences are set forth in some detail and also her visits to various resorts frequented by male and female inverts. . . . The unnatural and depraved relationships portrayed are sought to be idealized and extolled.” He characterized the novel as “antisocial and offensive to public morals and decency” and noted that it sought to justify and idealize these ideas in a way that “is strongly calculated to corrupt and debase those members of the community who would be susceptible to its immoral influence.”

Numerous well-known authors condemned the censorship and wrote or sent telegrams to the court. Sinclair Lewis wired that he viewed the novel as being “almost lugubriously moral,” while Edna St. Vincent Millay’s husband, Eugene Boissevain, wired the following: “Will not some Christian teach Mr. Sumner to abuse himself instead of us and thus get rid of all this public nuisance?” Calling upon the power of the Hicklin Statute, which allowed that if

certain passages are judged obscene the work might also be judged obscene, Bushell determined that the novel “tends to debauch public morals” and “that it is calculated to deprave and corrupt minds open to its immoral influences and who might come into contact with it.” He concluded that *The Well of Loneliness* was in violation of the statute.

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WHALE TALK

Author: Chris Crutcher

Original date and place of publication: 2001, United States

Original publisher: HarperCollins

Literary form: Young adult novel

SUMMARY

Whale Talk is the story of Tao Jones, better known as T. J., and a group of high school misfits who are brought together to form an unusual swim team for Cutter High School, where earning a sports jacket is the most prestigious of all symbols. Sports jackets create caste levels and symbolize the discriminatory attitudes and close-mindedness by which T. J. has been victimized and which he despises. With a goal of lessening the power that the letter athletes hold in Cutter High and to get revenge for the abuses he has suffered in life, T. J. intends to help every member of the swim team, a group of emotionally and physically handicapped teenagers, earn a jacket.

At the All Night Gym, T. J. meets Icko, a man who lives in the gym, whom T. J. asks to be their swim coach. At the gym, the team acquires a new freedom to simply practice swimming without having to experience the prejudice and verbal abuse that they experience at Cutter High School. As the team members increase their self-confidence, they also experience a sense

of belonging that they have never felt in school. Not only do they attain the revered Cutter letter jacket, but they also gain personal dignity and respect.

Whale Talk is related in the first person by T. J., who is “black. And Japanese. And white.” He lives happily with his adoptive parents, “two white, upwardly mobile ex-children of the sixties.” He explains that only his mother, Abby Jones, is really upwardly mobile. She is a lawyer who works on child-abuse cases for the attorney general’s office. “Dad likes motorcycles; he’s just mobile.”

The main characters in this novel, members of the Cutter swim team, are students who are marginalized in high school because of mental or physical handicaps or as the result of the prejudice and intolerance of others. As the self-appointed leader of the group, T. J. becomes the defender of the down-trodden, including a mentally handicapped young man named Chris Coughlin. His compassion for fellow victims of prejudice is most evident when Chris is harassed by Mike Barbour, the worst bully at Cutter High. Mike slams Chris against a locker for daring to wear his dead brother’s Cutter letter jacket. T. J. quickly comes to Chris’s rescue, using his sharp wit and defiant attitude to save Chris, even though he makes an enemy of Mike.

When Coach Simet approaches T. J. about forming a swim team for Cutter High, T. J. chooses to recruit an unlikely group of misfits to challenge the letter jacket elitists. His first recruit is Chris Coughlin, whom T. J. sees helping a little girl with shriveled arms paddle a kickboard across the pool. He realizes that Chris is capable of great compassion toward the less fortunate. The rest of the team is composed of Daniel Hole, a “geek”; Simon DeLong, a 300-pound young man whose weight makes him the object of ridicule; Jackie Craig, a quiet and totally nondescript young man who never speaks; Andy Mott, a swimmer with only one leg; and Tay Roy, the massive bench presser who is burned-out on wrestling. With this unlikely group, T. J. intends to show up Mike and other Cutter High bullies by earning a letter jacket for every member of the swim team.

Whale Talk takes place in three important settings. The primary setting is Cutter High School in Spokane, Washington, which the author vividly recreates with descriptions of locker-lined hallways and gyms and the feeling of adolescents struggling to establish an identity and often showing intolerance to those who are different. The second setting of the novel, the All Night Gym, offers members of the swim team both a practice space and a private retreat. The third setting of the novel is the swim team bus, which provides a sheltered environment where the boys can reveal their inner fears and share the tragedies of their lives. T. J. learns that he is not the only victim of intolerance and close-mindedness. In one instance, when the bus is stranded in a snowstorm, the boys share their experiences and talk about the abuse, deaths, and family difficulties which have so tragically marred their lives. Chris talks of the pain he feels over the loss of his older brother, a great Cutter athlete. Andy Mott reveals that he lost his leg at the hands of his mother’s abusive boyfriend. T. J. questions what sort of world allows innocent young children,

like a little girl named Heidi, to suffer physical abuse at the hands of a racist stepfather. Although they vent their anger and frustration on one another, they also support each other and find the acceptance each needs to face life.

The themes of the novel are developed through the tragic stories and relationships the characters build with one another. As the team begins practicing in the privacy of the All Night Gym, they find the freedom to be who they really are, and they develop a sense of belonging. Each young man pushes the limits of his physical endurance, and each finds he has a great deal to offer. They are bound both by their common goal and by their need for understanding and acceptance. By the time they reach the end of the season, each member of the team is transformed. Chris is greeting the cheering crowd with waves and confidence. Simon is swimming well and earning the respect of his school, and Jackie Craig stands unembarrassed before a crowd and actually speaks. A self-confident Tay Roy reaches out to form a relationship with a girl, and T. J. feels the pride of accomplishing his goal to earn a letter jacket for each member of his team.

The title of the story represents what the team really learns, although the specific incident from which the title derives involves T. J.'s father. As a young man, he was a truck driver who had a brief relationship with a widow who had a toddler son. After spending one loving night with her, he left in his truck and did not discover until later that the boy had crawled onto the axle of the truck while the lovers were together and was killed when T. J.'s father drove away. Unaware of the tragedy until hours later, his father has never been able to forgive himself for his part in the death of the child, and he is, at times, completely overwhelmed by remorse.

One day, T. J. finds his father, depressed and alone in the dark with a videotape of a group of humpback whales swimming across the screen, "emitting faint whale songs." His father explains that whales, unlike humans, send messages that are not edited. Whales do not attempt to protect other whales from the realities of life; rather, "whale talk" is transmitted as it is felt to all whales for miles around. Consequently, whales know what it means to be a whale, unlike many humans who never discover what it is to be human. By the end of the story, when T. J.'s father is killed accidentally by Heidi's vicious and abusive stepfather, who had been aiming his gun at Heidi, T. J. has learned from his father and his own experiences with the Cutter swim team what it means to be human. His sorrow and the events leading to his father's death transmit a bit of that lesson to Mike Barbour, as well, who approaches him as a friend at the end of the novel.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Whale Talk presents a realistic portrayal of such serious issues as child abuse, racism, prejudice, and intolerance. Critics have complained that the language of the book is "vulgar" and "obscene." They point to such scenes as the one in which, due to pent-up anger, Daniel Hole gives the crowd "a double middle

digit salute,” and they condemn the boys’ conversations, which are filled with sarcasm, sexual references, slang, and profanity. In an interview for *Voices from the Middle*, Chris Crutcher observes that his books are often censored for “bad” language.

Censors love to take language out of context, purposely. On three different occasions, would-be censors have gone through *Whale Talk* and listed what they considered to be offensive words. One counted 128 words. I hope they were counting each usage. I don’t know 128 offensive words. The point is, language out of context can be made to look pretty disgusting, when, in fact, most kids don’t even notice, or when they do, say it makes the story more authentic.

Readers have also objected to the graphic depictions of Heidi’s abuse, as well as to the realistic use of abusive language and profanity in the scene emphasizing the horror of Heidi’s everyday existence and the irrational prejudice some individuals harbor. Concerns have been raised regarding the appropriateness of the private discussions in which the characters examine the real-life questions adolescents have regarding sex, love and relationships, religion, personal values, and the developing sense of self. Each character’s personal story raises serious moral and ethical concerns, including the inadequacy of the justice system, the unpredictability of life, the hypocrisy of adults, and the inequalities which persist in today’s world. Such disturbing questions have led some to challenge the use of this book in schools and to request its ban from school libraries.

In December 2004, parents of students attending the Carvers Bay High School appeared before the South Carolina Board of Education to protest three books that they found to contain “objectionable material.” In a handwritten letter to the school district superintendent Randy Dozier, the parents called for the removal of *Whale Talk*, *A SEPARATE PEACE* by John Knowles, and *Lay That Trumpet in Our Hands* by Susan McCarthy from the school curriculum. Derick Marsh, spokesman for the group, had a daughter in elementary school, but he led the group because, although he did not have a child in high school, he felt “it’s important to get such books out of the school” before his daughter reached high school. When the group met with District Superintendent Dozier, they learned that the books were placed in the school as part of a state-supplied supplementary book list. Therefore, he advised the parents to take the matter before the state board. Marsh told a reporter for the *Georgetown Times*, “We’re Christians, and it’s time that Christians take a stand.” He also said that if the state did not remove the book, he might possibly file a lawsuit against the district. The group told both local and state boards that the books “are full of profanity” and gave both boards handwritten lists of the words and page numbers on which the words could be found. After the first complaints were made, *Whale Talk* was taken out of the classroom as a required reading assignment, but it remains available in the high school library.

In February 2005, Christi Brooks, the parent of a student attending Ardmore High School in the Limestone County (Alabama) School District, submitted a complaint to the superintendent of schools Barry Carroll, stating that *Whale Talk* contains “questionable content” and inappropriate language. The woman expressed concern that T. J.—an adopted, mixed-race boy—refers to his conception as resulting when his white mother had a one-night stand with a sperm donor of black-Japanese descent. Other parents were disturbed by the manner in which Heidi is mistreated by her stepfather, who calls her a “stupid black bitch” and makes her feel so unclean for being biracial that she “vigorously scrubs her brown arms with a bristle brush at the kitchen sink” in the attempt to become white so her stepfather will love her. The superintendent referred the complaint to a school materials review committee, which recommended that the book be retained and which stated in a written report that the message of the book “is more important than the language used.” The report also recommended keeping *Whale Talk* in the school libraries because it presents “a realistic view of life, including the consequences of prejudice, outspoken and malicious people. It highlights the importance of forgiveness over revenge.”

Based on the recommendation of the review committee, Superintendent Carroll recommended that the novel remain in the Ardmore High School library, but his recommendation was rejected by the Limestone County board of education. On March 7, 2005, the board voted 4-3 to remove the book from all five high school libraries in the school system. Members who voted to remove the book cited the use of profanity in the book as their reason. Board member James Shannon told a writer for the *Decatur Daily*, “We can’t allow students to go down our halls and say those words, and we shouldn’t let them read it. That book’s got a lot of bad, bad words in it.”

Whale Talk also came under fire in February 2005 in the Grand Ledge High School in Eaton County, Michigan. The local television station WOOD-TV in Grand Rapids reported on February 14, 2005, that the 1,800 students in the high school were to start the day reading the book and spend the first 20 minutes of each day during two weeks reading. Bad weather on the first day forced a late start to school, so the book was put on hold, giving parents time to rethink the decision. Before beginning the program, school administrators sent home letters, “warning them about the profanity” and offering students the opportunity to read another book if they chose. One parent, Ken Himebaugh, described by WOOD-TV as “a reverend and a parent,” protested use of the book. He asserted, “I’ve chosen not to have this in my home” and claimed that he could not believe that “the staff chose a book with words we’re not allowed to say on TV . . . words kids would get in trouble for using at school.” The principal of Grand Ledge High School told reporters that “taking part in the program will outweigh any language drawbacks” and noted that fewer than a dozen parents had asked that their children read a different book.

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WORKING PEOPLE TALK ABOUT WHAT THEY DO ALL DAY AND HOW THEY FEEL ABOUT WHAT THEY DO

Author: Studs Terkel

Original date and place of publication: 1974, United States

Original publisher: Pantheon Books

Literary form: Collection of interviews

SUMMARY

Working is a collection of interviews with people in a wide variety of occupations who reveal not only what they do but how they feel about their jobs and

their lives. Terkel draws his subjects out and leads them to tell him what they hate and what they like about their jobs, their bosses, and their coworkers. He interviewed such disparate individuals as a hooker, a priest, a farmer, a corporate executive, a writer, a producer, a baseball player, a hockey player, a waitress, a dentist, a supermarket box boy, a steelworker, a nun, and 120 others.

In their sometimes blunt language, the workers reveal their daily humiliations and the violence of their work “to the spirit as well as to the body. In the introduction, Terkel speaks of the ulcers, accidents, nervous breakdowns, and physical fights detailed by many of the people interviewed. He found that “to survive the day is triumph enough for the walking wounded among the great many of us.” Although some are content with their jobs, a great number question the “work ethic” that rewards “the careless worker who turns out more that is bad rather than the careful craftsman who turns out less that is good.” They complain of feeling indistinguishable from their fellow workers and unappreciated.

There are also those who find value in their work, such as Tom Patrick, the fireman who knows that he has the right job for him:

The fuckin’ world’s so fucked up, the country’s fucked up. But the firemen, you actually see them produce. You see them put out a fire. You see them come out with babies in their hands. You see them give mouth-to-mouth when a guy’s dying. You can’t get around that shit. That’s real. To me, that’s what I want to be.

Terkel allows the interviews to reveal the feelings of the workers, without modifying them to serve his own purposes.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

Working has been challenged for reasons ranging from “obscene language” to the perception that it is too depressing for students, despite the fact that the book contains interviews with real workers. In a 1977 survey of a nationwide sample of English department chairpersons, Lee Burress recorded one challenge to the work by a California parent who wanted the book removed from the school library because it was “too negative” and contained “objectionable language.” The request was denied. In 1978, 200 parents of students in Kettle Moraine High School in Wales, Wisconsin, signed a petition that called for the banning of *Working* because of the “obscene language” used by many of the workers and because an interview with a prostitute appeared in the book. The challenge was carefully orchestrated by a local group, but, as with many efforts to ban books, the group took great pains to disguise their organization. Teachers were aware that the parents shared an affiliation, although members of the group sat in different parts of the meeting room at board meetings called to deal with the issue. Claiming that “it takes only one paragraph to make a book obscene,” parents blamed the “filth of the book” for the “drug problem” and for the words written on students’ desks. A review committee

appointed by the school board recommended use of the book as a supplemental reading, but alternatives were made available to students whose parents objected to the book.

In a 1982 survey of a national sample of librarians, Burress recorded one challenge by a Michigan parent who asked that the book be removed from the classroom because it contained “obscenities,” but no action occurred because the parent did not follow through. That same year, parents challenged the assignment of the work in the senior vocational-technical English class in Girard, Pennsylvania. They complained that the book was “obscene” and “crude,” but the school retained the book in the curriculum. In 1983, *Working* was removed from the optional reading list at South Kitsap (Washington) High School after parents complained that the interview with a prostitute demeaned marriage and “degraded the sex act.” That same year, parents of seventh- and eighth-grade students in Washington (Arizona) School District demanded removal of the book from the curriculum due to its “profane language.” They claimed that the book required “idealistic and sensitive youth to be burdened with despair, ugliness and hopelessness.” The school board removed *Working* from the curriculum.

FURTHER READING

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Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom (July 1978): 89; (September 1978): 123; (July 1982): 143; (November 1983): 187; (January 1984): 10–11.
 Terkel, Studs. *Working*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1974.

A WORLD I NEVER MADE

Author: James T. Farrell

Original date and place of publication: 1936, United States

Original publisher: Vanguard Press

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

A World I Never Made is the first entry and the only financially successful book in the O'Neill-O'Flaherty pentalogy, which followed Farrell's highly successful Studs Lonigan trilogy. The series is centered around a minor character from the earlier trilogy, Danny O'Neill, an intelligent, thoughtful, and sensitive Irish-American youth who serves as Farrell's autobiographical persona. Set in Chicago in 1911, the novel relates the trauma suffered by the very young Danny when his working-class parents experience financial difficulty and send him to live with his widowed grandmother, Mary O'Flaherty. The move creates a conflict in the young boy, whose thoughts, values, attitudes,

and outlook are shaped by the differing perspectives of his working-class parents and his middle-class grandmother. For Danny, these class differences are personified by his shoe salesman uncle, Al O'Flaherty, and his teamster father, Jim O'Neill. Uncle Al places great stock in the acquisition of education and culture, but Danny's father is afraid that Al's ideas of education and culture will turn Danny into a soft "dude."

The novel deals realistically with Danny's Chicago milieu, citing Chicago landmarks and portraying Danny and a friend discussing whether the Chicago White Sox will win the pennant in 1911. Farrell also allows his characters, both the children and the adults, to freely use such terms as *shit*, *fuck*, *piss*, *balls*, *prick*, *pecker*, and *hard on*. Unlike the earlier Studs Lonigan trilogy, this novel also contains substantial reference to emetic matter. Danny's brother, Bill, described as "farting," states "I got to go and crap." Danny is aware of "the noise from the movement of Bill's bowels." In another scene, Danny's father listens to his wife "urinating into a pot."

The book also includes frankly sexual discussions between six-year-old Danny and his older brother, 11-year-old Bill. Such passages as the one that follows have been cited as "obscene":

When Pa and Ma want a baby, they go to bed. And there is a hole in all women where they pee, and Pa puts his dick into Ma's hole.

And does he pee into her, and does that make a baby? That's funny, I don't believe it. You're teasing me. God makes babies.

The family works hard and, as the novel ends, the O'Neills and the O'Flahertys enjoy temporary prosperity. Danny's uncle talks optimistically about sending him to military school after graduation from Catholic elementary school.

CENSORSHIP HISTORY

A World I Never Made contains expressions and situations that Farrell's earlier novels had avoided, a difference noted by critics and readers alike. In 1936, the *New York Times* refused to sell Vanguard Press advertising space for *A World I Never Made*. The newspaper made its position clear to readers by stating that it did not object to the advertising copy that would appear. Rather, the paper refused the advertising because the publisher believed that the novel was itself "too frank."

In 1937, John Sumner and the Society for the Suppression of Vice took Vanguard Press to court, claiming that the novel was "obscene" and "pornographic," after sending a confederate named Bamberger to purchase a copy. The tone of the trial was more lighthearted than those occurring in other parts of the nation and those that had occurred in New York City in earlier decades. Before the trial began, a reporter passed a copy of the book around the courtroom to be autographed. Sumner wrote, "I thoroughly disapprove of this book" after his name. Literary scholar Carl Van Doren wrote his name beneath Sumner's and the following: "I thoroughly disapprove of John S.

Sumner and his works.” Van Doren joined writer Heywood Broun and literary critic Bernard DeVoto as witnesses for Farrell.

The court seemed to join in the lightheartedness. Ruling in *Bamberger v. The Vanguard Press, Inc.*, docket no. 329, as to whether or not the novel was pornography, Magistrate Henry Curran related the judgment to comparing contemporary swim apparel with what had been acceptable in an earlier age:

I don't think this book is pornographic. I think it is photographic . . . consider the young ladies in their bathing suits nowadays, how they toil not neither do they spin, but the Gibson girl in all her glory was not arrayed like one of these. If one of those lovely creatures of the far away nineties had really appeared in one of the little forget-me-not suits of today, I fancy there would have been a commotion on the beach—and the rockers on the summer hotel piazzas would have rocked hard and long.

The case was dismissed.

In 1948, the novel was one of nine novels identified as obscene in criminal proceedings in the Court of Quarter Sessions in Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania. Indictments were brought by the state district attorney, John H. Maurer, against five booksellers who were charged with possessing and intending to sell them. The other allegedly obscene novels were James Farrell's Studs Lonigan trilogy (*Young Lonigan*, *The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan* and *Judgment Day*), William Faulkner's *SANCTUARY* and *WILD PALMS*, Erskine Caldwell's *GOD'S LITTLE ACRE*, Arnold Robbins's *NEVER LOVE A STRANGER*, and Calder Willingham's *END AS A MAN*. In his determination that the novels were not obscene, Judge Curtis Bok said of *A World I Never Made*:

. . . this book is plastered with the short Saxon words of common vulgarity; they are consistent with the characters who use them and with the quality of their lives and actions that are the subject of the author's scrutiny.

I am not of a mind, nor do I have the authority, to require an author to write about one kind of people and not about another, nor do I object to his effort to paint a complete picture of those whom he has chosen.

Although the book once again had been declared “not obscene” by a court, the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials, usually called the Gathings Committee, condemned the novel in 1953 as pornographic. Authorized by the House of Representatives to hold hearings, the committee established special commissions or licensing bureaus in some communities that informally pressured dealers to withdraw books on their blacklist. *A World I Never Made* was banned in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and St. Cloud, Minnesota, as a result of the committee's efforts. In 1957, the U.S. Information Agency banned all of Farrell's novels from overseas libraries under its control.

FURTHER READING

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- Rideout, Walter. *The Radical Novel in the U.S.* New York: Hill & Wang, 1966.

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILES

ANGELOU, MAYA (1928–)

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, the author is an African-American writer, stage performer, and composer best known for her widely acclaimed autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970), an account of her childhood in segregated Arkansas. She has written several sequels and produced plays, screenplays, songs, musical scores, and books of poetry, including *And Still I Rise* (1978), as well as a collection of meditative essays, *Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now* (1993). Critics have challenged use in the classroom of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* because it describes Angelou's rape as a child, and the imagery of poems in *And Still I Rise* has led to calls for its removal from school libraries.

BALDWIN, JAMES (1924–1987)

Born in Harlem in New York City, the author was a highly acclaimed African-American writer who made his home primarily in France, although he returned to the United States to teach and lecture. Baldwin's writing, which conveys the attitudes of blacks living in a white-dominated society, made him a vital literary voice in the 1950s and 1960s. His first novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), is a partially autobiographical account of his youth. This work, with *Giovanni's Room* (1956) and *Another Country* (1962), has been most frequently challenged as being "obscene" and "vulgar," although other works, including essay collections, a play, and other novels that provide bitter, incisive views of American racism, have also come under attack.

BANNERMAN, HELEN (1862–1946)

Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, Bannerman was a children's book author and illustrator who is best known for her first book, *Little Black Sambo* (1898), one of the most beloved as well as one of the most controversial books in children's literature. She wrote and illustrated 12 other books based on her experiences living in India, but the bright, unrefined illustrations, suspenseful narrative, and rhythmic, repetitive sentences of the first book made it the most popular. The growth of racial consciousness in the 20th century made the book an object of harsh criticism, and critics have charged that it presents a patronizing and stereotypical view of blacks.

BAUER, MARION DANE (1938–)

Born in Ogleby, Illinois, Bauer is the author of many books that deal with the sometimes harsh realities of growing up. Although some of Bauer's novels feature extreme situations and themes, most of her works, such as *Rain of Fire* (1983) and *On My Honor* (1986), focus on young people who must learn to cope with traumatic events in every-

day life and make serious moral choices. Bauer has told interviewers that she draws the plots for her fiction from personal experiences, and her books feature places she has lived in or visited often. In 1994, Bauer edited and contributed to a collection of short stories on gay and lesbian themes, *Am I Blue? Coming out from the Silence*, containing stories by 15 popular young adult writers. Bauer has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the American Library Association Notable Book Award in 1976 for *Shelter from the Wind*, the Newbery Honor Book in 1987 for *On My Honor*, and the Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual Book Award for Literature.

BENCHLEY, PETER (1940–2006)

Born in New York City, Benchley became the most successful first novelist in literary history when *Jaws* stayed on the *New York Times* best-seller list for over 40 weeks. None of the author's succeeding novels achieved the same success or notoriety as *Jaws*. The sexual situations and language have made the novel a target of school censors.

BLOCK, FRANCESCA LIA (1962–)

Born in Hollywood, California, Block created a new direction in young adult literature, beginning with *Weetzie Bat* (1989), which contained stories of 1990s Los Angeles subculture complete with sex, drugs, and rock and roll. The book caused a minor uproar among reviewers and some librarians. In 1995, Block provided a prequel to *Weetzie Bat* with the novel *Baby Be-Bop* (1995). Block's next two books *Girl Goddess #9* (1996), a collection of short stories, and *I Was a Teenage Fairy* (1998) also deal with young people fighting to come to grips with a rapidly changing world and their place in it. In addition to her books for teenagers, Block has published two adult titles, *Ecstasia* (1993) and *Primavera* (1994), which are influenced by Greek mythology and explore much the same ground as the young adult novels. Awards for her books have included the American Library Association Recommended Books for Reluctant Young Adult Readers citations for *Weetzie Bat* (in 1989), *Witch Baby* (in 1990), *Cherokee Bat and the Goat Guys* (1991), and *Missing Angel Juan* (1993), as well as the 2005 Margaret A. Edwards Award for lifetime contribution in writing for young adults.

BLUME, JUDY (1938–)

Born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, the author writes romantic books for young people and has earned a reputation for dealing candidly with problems of early adolescence that traditional children's literature ignores. Most of her 22 books have ignited challenges as to their appropriateness for school libraries and classrooms due to their language, religious references, and sexual content. *Then Again, Maybe I Won't* (1971), *Bubber* (1974), and *Forever* (1975) have been the most frequent objects of challenges.

BRADBURY, RAY (1920–)

Born in Waukegan, Illinois, the author writes science fiction and fantasy and began his career by submitting stories to pulp magazines in the 1940s. Bradbury's works, several of which have been adapted for motion pictures, often comment on the dehumanizing influence of a machine-dominated society, and he is recognized as an innovator in that genre. He has also written stage and screen plays, verse, and children's literature. His

principal theme is the disruptive nature of imagination, and his most frequently challenged book, *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), is ironically a condemnation of censorship.

BROWN, CLAUDE (1937–2002)

Born in New York City, this African-American writer and lecturer presents a realistic portrayal of ghetto life and searing social criticism in his work. The autobiographical *Manchild in the Promised Land* (1965) is candid in its descriptions of the physical and psychological brutalities suffered by Brown in his Harlem boyhood, characteristics that have led many parents to demand removal of the novel from school libraries and classrooms. *The Children of Ham* (1976) is even grimmer, but it has received less attention.

BURGESS, ANTHONY (1917–1993)

Born John Anthony Burgess Wilson in Manchester, England, the versatile English author, who also published under his birth name and the name Joseph Kell, was an essayist, linguist, translator, musician, and comic novelist who wrote contemporary fiction as well as critical studies and several important works in the field of linguistics. He is perhaps best known for his futuristic novel *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), a terrifying view of a violence-ridden world that has motivated parent and school board challenges.

BURROUGHS, WILLIAM SEWARD (1914–1997)

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, into affluence as the grandson of the founder of the Burroughs Adding Machine Company, the novelist achieved distinction for his irreverent themes, related in a multiple-perspective, prismatic, stream-of-consciousness style. Both his first novel, *Junky* (1953), published under the pseudonym William Lee, and his second novel, *The Naked Lunch* (1959), are based on his experiences as a drug addict, and they alone among his works have received sufficient popular attention to motivate legal challenges for their content.

CARROLL, JAMES (JIM) DENNIS (1950–)

Born in New York City, Carroll had already gained a reputation as one of the most prominent poets in the New York-based arts community by the time he was 18 years old, and his “pure” poetry received the praise of Beat Movement founders William S. Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, and Jack Kerouac. Most of his work is autobiographical and describes his life, friends, and acquaintances in New York, as well as the 10-year heroin addiction he eventually overcame. As his reputation as a poet grew throughout the 1960s and the 1970s, Carroll began publishing prose in journals and poetry magazines, describing in harsh detail the beginnings of his 10-year heroin addiction. These were later published in a collection as *The Basketball Diaries* (1973). Carroll later published *Forced Entries: The Downtown Diaries, 1971–1973* (1987), which continues where *The Basketball Diaries* ended. In the late ’80s and early ’90s, Carroll began to combine music and poetry, appearing on the New York City rock-and-roll nightclub scene, and he was among the first poets to perform spoken-word on MTV and VH1. In 1995, a film version of *The Basketball Diaries* that starred Leonardo DiCaprio was released by

East Side Films. In 1970, Carroll received the Random House Young Writers Award for an excerpt from *The Basketball Diaries* published in *Paris Review*.

CARROLL, LEWIS (1832–1898)

Born Charles Lutwidge Dodgson in Daresbury, Cheshire, England, the mathematician, logician, and author is best known for his creation of the fantasy *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. He also published several mathematical treatises under his real name, in addition to works for children written under his pseudonym. Although widely accepted as a classic, *Alice* has had detractors who object to Alice's freedom and to the fantasy of the work.

CHAPMAN, ROBERT L. (1920–2002)

Born in Huntington, West Virginia, the author was a college English professor and served as the supervising editor on *Funk & Wagnall's Standard College Dictionary* (1963) and *The Hold Intermediate Dictionary of American English* (1966). He was also the editor of *The New Dictionary of Slang* (1986) and the *New Dictionary of American Slang* (1987), which has been challenged in numerous schools due to the "obscene" nature of many of its entries.

CHAUCEER, GEOFFREY (1363?–1400)

Born the son of a prosperous wine merchant in London, England, the author is believed to have been a courtier and civil servant to the courts of Edward III and Richard II, as well as to have studied law at the Inns of Court. Best known for *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer is also credited with translations and adaptations of religious, political and philosophical works, and poetry. The *Tales* contain bawdy language and imagery, and "The Miller's Tale" has been declared "obscene" by contemporary standards and has been the subject of challenges.

CHILDRESS, ALICE (1920–1994)

Born in South Carolina and raised in Harlem, Childress was first a playwright whose plays were saturated with alienated poor people. Her first novel, *A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich*, also portrays African Americans who struggle to survive in a basically insensitive and unfriendly world. Unlike her later novels, which include *A Short Walk* (1979), *Rainbow Jordan* (1981), and *These Other People* (1990), *A Hero . . .* warned that black youth were threatened by drugs. The discussion of drugs and the street language have made this novel a target of censors.

CLARK, WALTER VAN TILBURG (1909–1971)

Born in East Orlando, Maine, but raised in Nevada cattle country, the author was a college English professor and writer of prose fiction. His best-known work, *The Ox-Bow Incident* (1940), is set in 1885 in Nevada and presents a perceptive analysis of mob violence. The psychological realism of the novel and the brutality of the men's language and actions have led to removal of the novel from school curricula.

CLEAVER, ELDRIDGE (1935–1998)

Born Leroy Eldridge Cleaver near Little Rock, Arkansas, the author is an African-American activist who presented a vivid, personal view of black experience in a white society in *Soul on Ice* (1968), a collection of essays and letters written in California's Folsom Prison. His later work, *Soul on Fire* (1978), describes disillusionment with radical politics and governments and his spiritual rebirth as a Christian, a topic upon which he lectured. *Soul on Ice* has been challenged because of its raw language and graphic descriptions of violence, including rape.

CORMIER, ROBERT (1925–2000)

Born in Leominster, Massachusetts, the author wrote three novels for adults before turning his talents to fiction for adolescents. Focusing in his novels on the relationship between good and evil and the abuse of authority, Cormier wrote novels, such as *The Chocolate War* (1974), that are disturbing in their realism. Reviewers, educators, and parents have challenged the suitability of *The Chocolate War* for adolescents and have made numerous attempts to ban it from high school and public libraries.

CRUTCHER, CHRIS(TOPHER) (1946–)

Born in Cascade, Idaho, Crutcher taught in tough, inner-city schools and ran an alternative school for inner-city kids in Oakland, California, before becoming a child and family therapist. He used his experiences to write young adult novels that contain serious problems with which adolescents are confronted daily in modern American culture. Critics have described such novels as *Running Loose* (1986), *Stotan!* (1989), *Ironman* (1995), and *The Crazy Horse Electric Game* (1988) as giving readers a clear view of young men, sports, and growing up. The main characters are sensitive and reflective, but they are often forced to confront ugly and painful situations. In *Whale Talk* (2001), Crutcher positions his main character to fight elitism, racism, and arrogance to help a swim team build emotional strength and win. In 2003, Crutcher changed his writing direction with *King of the Mild Frontier: An Ill-Advised Autobiography* (2003). Crutcher has won the Michigan Library Association Best Young Adult Book of 1992 for *Athletic Shorts* (2002), the National Council of Teachers of English in 1998, the American Library Association Margaret A. Edwards for lifetime achievement in writing for teachers in 2000. For *Whale Talk*, he received the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association and Washington State Book Award in 2002.

DAHL, ROALD (1916–1990)

Born in Llandaff, Wales, the author was widely known for both his children's books and his short stories for adults, which he wrote almost exclusively during the 1940s and 1950s, winning three Edgar Allan Poe Awards (1954, 1959, 1980). Dahl's success in children's literature began in 1961 with *James and the Giant Peach*, followed, most notably, by *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964). Dahl's fiction for children is fast-paced and usually contains a theme of harsh punishment, often death, for adult characters who meddle in the lives of his young protagonists, a factor that has led to challenges.

DICKEY, JAMES LAFAYETTE (1923–1997)

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, the author was a major American poet who is probably best known for his novel *Deliverance* (1970), the story of four city-bred men who take a raft trip down a wild southern river only to encounter savagery and death. Dickey used his experiences as a bomber pilot in World War II and Korea to inform some of his best poems, and the themes that are prominent in his poetry—the war, family, nature—appear in his novels. From 1966 to 1968, Dickey was consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress.

DOYLE, SIR ARTHUR CONAN (1859–1930)

Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, the British novelist and physician introduced the world's most famous fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes, in *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), later followed by four novels and 56 stories. Doyle had an inquiring mind that took an interest in history, science, and technology; one of his tales foresaw the use of the submarine in World War I. He later became deeply involved in the study of spiritualism. Doyle did not want to be remembered for his detective stories but for what he viewed as his more notable work, the historical novels. He also wrote other tales of mystery and adventure, including science fiction novels and *History of Spiritualism*.

DREISER, THEODORE (1871–1945)

Born in Terre Haute, Indiana, the American journalist, magazine editor, playwright, and prolific novelist pioneered the literary movement known as naturalism. Dreiser depicted the lives of common people in such novels as *Sister Carrie* (1900) and *An American Tragedy* (1925). *Sister Carrie* was attacked and heavily censored as an immoral treatment of a scandalous woman's rise to success. He also endured failure due to censorship of *The Genius* (1915), an autobiographical novel about power and sex that was labeled “pornography” and attacked by moralists. In 1925, Dreiser published *An American Tragedy*, widely regarded as his finest achievement. Critics labeled it “immoral,” and the novel became the subject of a notorious trial.

DUMAS, ALEXANDRE, JR. (1824–1895)

Born in Paris, France, and known as Dumas *fils*, the author wrote numerous novels and plays and refined a genre known as the problem, or thesis, play. His most famous work is *La Dame aux camélias*, known in English as *Camille* (1848), the story of a Parisian courtesan who becomes morally regenerated by the power of true love. The 1852 theatrical version inspired Verdi's opera *La Traviata*. Dumas attempted to analyze the social ills of his times, but this subject for study in *Camille* made the work a target of censors. He was admitted to the Académie française in 1875.

ELLISON, RALPH (1914–1994)

Born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, this African-American essayist and novelist received international literary recognition with his first and most important novel, *The Invisible Man* (1952), which won the National Book Award in 1953. Its theme is a black man's search for identity in a society where black individuality is “invisible,” and blacks are recognized only in the roles they have been assigned by whites. Challenges to oust the novel from schools have arisen because of the “vulgar” language and “inap-

propriate situations” in the novel. Because Ellison did not take militant public positions on the condition of black Americans, his influence upon the younger generation of black writers has not been widespread.

FARRELL, JAMES THOMAS (1904–1979)

Born in Chicago, the poet, critic, journalist, and novelist often depicted in his fiction the lives of Irish Americans in Chicago from 1990 through the Depression of the 1930s. His best-known novels make up the *Studs Lonigan* trilogy, which, with *A World I Never Made* (1936), were repeatedly subjected to attempts to ban them for their language and sexual situations. Farrell’s fiction is a part of the tradition of naturalistic writing.

FAULKNER, WILLIAM (1897–1962)

Born in Oxford, Mississippi, this major figure of contemporary American literature wrote 19 novels, 80 short stories, two books of poems, and numerous essays. One of America’s most innovative novelists, he depicted ordinary society in terms of ageless human dramas. In 1949, Faulkner won the Nobel Prize for literature. He repeatedly explored the question of human freedom and the obstacles to it—racism, regimentation, shame, fear, pride, and overly abstract principles—infusing his novels with this honesty. Such works as *I Lay Dying* (1930), *Sanctuary* (1931), and *The Wild Palms* (1939) have been attacked as being “vulgar” and “immoral” precisely because they depict realistically how people think, speak, and feel.

FOSSEY, DIAN (1932–1985)

Born in San Francisco, the author was a zoologist known for her field studies of rare mountain gorillas in their natural habitat in east central Africa. *Gorillas in the Mist* (1983) chronicles her observations of three generations of mountain gorillas and includes detailed information of the gorillas’ sexual habits, a factor that has resulted in challenges to the book in classrooms and school libraries. Fossey was murdered on December 27, 1985, at the Karisoke Research Center in Rwanda, which she established in 1967.

FRANK, ANNE (1929–1945)

Born in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, this young Jewish diarist hid with her family from the Nazi persecution in Amsterdam during World War II. She wrote *The Diary of Anne Frank*, producing the major testament of the Holocaust. She and her family lived in a secret apartment in Amsterdam for two years before being discovered. Anne died in a German concentration camp. An abridgment of her poignant diary was published in 1947, a complete English edition appeared in 1995. The work has been challenged in schools because Anne writes frankly of her adolescent longings and because parents view the book as a “downer.”

FRANKLIN, BENJAMIN (1706–1790)

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, the scientist, inventor, statesman, printer, and writer figured prominently in the governmental organization of the emerging American nation. Franklin helped to start the first public lending library, the first fire depart-

ment, a college (later the University of Pennsylvania), an insurance company, and a hospital. Franklin's writings include numerous treatises and essays and *Poor Richard's Almanack* (1732), a collection of aphorisms. His *Autobiography* is among the most frequently expurgated books published in the United States and has been censored from its first publication.

GAINES, ERNEST JAMES (1933–)

Born in Oscar, Louisiana, the African-American author is best known for his 1971 novel *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, a realistic account of the life of southern blacks from the time of slavery to the civil rights movement, as told by its centenarian heroine, Jane Pittman. Objections have been raised against the "obscene" language of the book, as well as the stereotyping of both African-American and white characters. Gaines wrote four other novels, none of which garnered significant attention.

GARDEN, NANCY (1938–)

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, the author has published many books for young people, including the highly acclaimed *Annie on My Mind*, which was selected for the 1982 *Booklist* Reviewer's Choice, the 1982 American Library Association (ALA) Best Books, and the 1970–83 ALA Best of the Best lists. The novel has also been the target of numerous censors, who object to the theme of two romantically involved high school girls.

GARDNER, JOHN (1933–1982)

Born in Batavia, New York, the author, critic, and educator was a professor of medieval literature as well as a novelist. His fiction ranges from fairy tales for children to his imaginative fantasies and contemporary stories for adults, books in which he characteristically poses metaphysical problems. Of his four novels and one short story collection, only the novel *Grendel* (1971), which retells the Beowulf legend from the monster's point of view, gained notoriety. Challenges to its use in the classroom and in school libraries charge that the novel contains "obscene" language and "sexist" passages.

GINSBERG, ALLEN (1926–1997)

Born in Newark, New Jersey, the poet and cultural rebel became a prophet of the Beat generation with his first published work, *Howl and Other Poems* (1956), which sparked the San Francisco Renaissance and defined the generation of the 1950s. In the 1960s, while vigorously participating in the anti-Vietnam War movement, he published several poetic works, including *Reality Sandwiches* (1963) and *Planet News* (1969), then won the National Book Award in 1974 for *The Fall of America*. Ginsberg's works have quietly been omitted from school anthologies and libraries, but *Howl and Other Poems* became the subject of a major trial as well as the object of a decision rendered by the Federal Communications Commission.

GIOVANNI, NIKKI (1943–)

Born Yolande Cornelia Giovanni in Knoxville, Tennessee, the poet has infused her work with the unifying themes of the black struggle and her political activism. As

one of the most noted poets of the new black renaissance that began in the 1960s, Giovanni has combined the raw language of the streets with sensitive imagery in her 15 poetry collections, including *My House* (1972), leading to challenges to their use in classrooms.

GLASSER, RONALD J. (1940–)

A physician, nephrologist, and rheumatologist living in Minnesota, Glasser uses his own experiences as a physician to accurately depict in his works the often complicated relationship between doctor and patient. Glasser also examines the social and ethical problems that influence the decisions doctors make in treating their patients as medicine advances in the age of technology. The author served as an officer in the U.S. Army Medical Corps in the 1960s, stationed at U.S. Evacuation Hospital, Camp Zama, Japan, where he witnessed horrors firsthand. His experiences were detailed on his first and best-known book, *365 Days*. In *Ward 402* (1973), Glasser tackled the issue of health care in a story that centers on a young girl dying from leukemia. The author retained his focus on medicine and war in *The Greatest Battle* (1976), *Another War, Another Place: A Novel* (1985), and *The Light in the Skull: An Odyssey of Medical Discovery* (1997).

GOLDING, WILLIAM GERALD (1911–1993)

Born in Cornwall, England, the prominent novelist, essayist, and poet was one of the most original post–World War II British writers. Winner of the 1983 Nobel Prize for literature and knighted in 1988, he is best known for *Lord of the Flies* (1954), a bleak examination of human nature that is among the 10 most frequently banned books in the United States. The book has been challenged in numerous instances for “obscene” language, violence, and racism. Golding’s later novels did not win the critical praise his earlier works achieved.

GREENE, BETTE (1934–)

Born in Memphis, Tennessee, Bette Greene is a popular and respected author of young adult books that are notable for their sympathetic depictions of young people who are alienated from society. Greene’s best-known novel is *The Summer of My German Soldier* (1973), followed by the sequel *Morning Is a Long Time Coming*, then *Them That Glitter and Them That Don’t* (1978), all featuring young women who must make difficult decisions that conflict with their families’ beliefs. *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* (1991) is based on an actual event and explores the death of a young gay man at the hands of three youths. Lighter in tone than Greene’s other novels, *Philip Hall Likes Me. I Reckon Maybe*. (1989) focused on the rivalry between two successful black sixth-graders, Beth and Philip. In its sequel, *Get on out of Here, Philip Hall!* (1981), Beth learns to cope with failure and forms a friendship with Philip. In 1973, *The Summer of My German Soldier* was nominated for a National Book Award and received the *New York Times* Outstanding Book Award, the Golden Kite Society Children’s Book Writer’s Award, and the American Library Association Notable Book Award. In 1974, *Philip Hall Likes Me. I Reckon Maybe*. received the *New York Times* Outstanding Book and Outstanding Title Awards, the American Library Association Notable Children’s Book Award, the Child Study Association Children’s Book Award, and Kirkus Choice Award and in 1975 the Newbery Honor Book Award.

GRIFFIN, JOHN HOWARD (1920–1980)

Born in Dallas, Texas, the author worked as a photographer, lecturer, and journalist before publishing nine books, including *The Devil Rides Outside* (1952), banned for its frank sexuality, and *Black Like Me* (1961), for which Griffin is best known. The Caucasian author used chemicals and ultraviolet light to darken his skin, then traveled throughout the south as a black man. The resulting realism was disturbing to society.

GUEST, JUDITH ANN (1936–)

Born in Detroit, Michigan, the author is a former grade-school teacher and housewife who achieved success with her first novel, *Ordinary People* (1976). The work reflects the story of a teenage boy who returns to his suburban home from a stay in a mental hospital after attempting suicide. Challenges to the book in the classroom or in school libraries criticize the “vulgar” language of the novel and the theme of suicide as being “unsuitable.” Guest’s later novels include *Second Heaven* (1982), *Killing Time in St. Cloud* (1989), *Errands* (1997), and *The Tarnished Eye* (2004).

HAAN, LINDA DE (1965–)

De Haan and Stern Nijland wrote and illustrated the controversial *King & King* (2002), which was originally published as *Koning & Koning* in the Netherlands by Gottmer and Becht, who provided Tricycle Books with a rough English translation of the story. De Haan met Nijland when the two were in art school in the Netherlands. When their book first came out in the Netherlands in 2000, parents told them they were glad that there was a book that reflected their lifestyle. De Haan and Nijland published a second book, *King & King & Family* (2004), in which the married kings adopt a little girl. *King & King* was a Lambda Literary Award finalist in 2002.

HALL, RADCLYFFE (1880–1943)

Born Marguerite Radclyffe-Hall in Lancashire, England, the author preferred to be known in her private life as “John.” Openly lesbian, Hall identified herself with “the third sex” and was instantly recognizable by her close-cropped hair, tailored jackets, wide-brimmed hats, and ties. The author of five volumes of poetry, one short story collection, and six novels, she is best known as the author of *The Well of Loneliness*, a novel that dealt explicitly with a lesbian theme and was considered by critics to be the most important lesbian novel of the 20th century.

HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL (1804–1864)

Born in Salem, Massachusetts, Hawthorne was the first American writer to apply artistic judgment to Puritan society. He exhibited profound moral and psychological insight into human motivation in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), written while he worked in the Boston Custom House and for which he was roundly criticized for the theme of adultery. *Twice-Told Tales* (1837) was a model for Edgar Allan Poe in his critical analysis of the art of the short story. In 1841, Hawthorne joined the utopian community at Brooke Farm for a time and later became friendly with Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and their circle of transcendentalists. Following quickly upon the

success of *The Scarlet Letter* came *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) and *The Blithedale Romance* (1852).

HEINLEIN, ROBERT A. (1907–1988)

Born in Butler, Missouri, Heinlein did much to popularize science fiction, beginning with a series of stories, first published in the *Saturday Evening Post* and later collected in *The Green Hills of Earth* (1951). Heinlein won science fiction's Hugo Award four times—for *Double Star* (1956), *Starship Troopers* (1959), *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961), and *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress* (1966). The last two novels became cult favorites in the late 1960s and the early 1970s among college students in the United States, and substantial criticism was heaped upon *Stranger in a Strange Land* for its views of marriage and family life that ran counter to those of traditional society.

HELLER, JOSEPH (1923–1999)

Born in Brooklyn, New York, the novelist and dramatist's works are satiric and often criticize the propensity of the military-industrial complex and similar forces to manipulate individuals in the name of reason or morality. His best-known novel, *Catch-22* (1961), uses protest and a sense of the absurd to explore the human condition and underscore the horrors of war and the power of modern society to destroy the human spirit. It has been the object of numerous challenges because of its language and pessimistic view of society. Its sequel, *Closing Time* (1994), takes the now-aged characters through the absurdities of the century's end and, with other of Heller's novels, continues the author's attack on society's values and conventions.

HEMINGWAY, ERNEST (1899–1961)

Born in Oak Park, Illinois, the novelist, journalist, and short story writer is considered one of the most influential authors of the first half of the 20th century. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1954 and created a large and distinguished body of literature, much of it based on his adventurous life. His most memorable novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), became an immediate success and made him a leader of the so-called lost generation, but its references to impotence and perceived undertones of homosexuality motivated efforts to censor the novel. *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) was his most successful novel, but the sexual relationship between the unmarried main characters and hints at abortion made it the target of censors. *To Have and Have Not* (1937) was challenged and barred from sale for its language. *Across the River and Into the Trees* (1950), a novel that used a Venetian locale, was widely attacked for its sexual content.

HESSE, HERMANN (1877–1962)

Born in Calw, Germany, the novelist and poet explored the conflicts of human nature through the application of Eastern and Western philosophy in his writings, which emphasized the human quest for spiritual enlightenment. *Demian* (1919), *Siddhartha* (1922), and *Steppenwolf* (1927) incorporate Jungian psychology and Buddhist mysticism with the influence of Nietzsche, Spengler, and Dostoyevsky. He received the 1946 Nobel Prize for literature. Although Hesse wrote no novels after 1943, his works gained immense popularity during the 1950s and 1960s in the English-speaking world, echoing the growing rebellion of the younger generation in their criticism of

middle-class values and their interest in Eastern religious philosophy. The themes of Hesse's most popular novels, such as *Steppenwolf*, are often at odds with the aims of authority, thus making them targets of challenges in schools.

HOBSON, LAURA Z. (1900–1986)

Born in New York City, Laura Z. Hobson was best known for the novel *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947), which sold more than 2 million copies in the United States, was made into a successful movie, and was translated into at least a dozen foreign languages. The book was filmed by 20th Century Fox, with a screenplay written by Moss Hart. It received the New York Film Critics Award and the Academy Award for best motion picture of 1947. Most of Hobson's other books came about because of her concern with social issues, and she claimed that most of the subject matter reflected her life. She used her background as an outspoken political activist and foe of fascism to write *The Trespassers* (1943), as a crusader for civil rights to write *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947), as the daughter of radical Socialists to write *First Papers* (1964), as an unwed mother to write *The Tenth Month* (1971), as the parent of a homosexual son to write *Consenting Adult* (1975), and she fictionalized her experience as a topnotch advertising copywriter to write *Untold Millions* (2002).

HUGHES, LANGSTON (1902–1967)

Born James Mercer Langston Hughes in Joplin, Missouri, the African-American poet, dramatist, and prose writer was prominent in the Harlem Renaissance movement. From his first published poem, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (1921), through his later critical essay, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Movement" (1925), and his autobiography, *The Big Sea* (1940), Hughes conveys his belief in the commonality of all cultures and the universality of human suffering, which he dramatically projected in *Lament for Dark People and Other Suffering* (1944). Despite his body of work, he experienced censorship for his work as an editor for *The Best Short Stories by Negro Writers*, rather than as a writer.

HUMPHRY, DEREK (1930–)

Born in Bath, Somerset, England, euthanasia rights advocate Derek Humphry is the author of the controversial book *Final Exit* (1991). As a former journalist, he examined race relations in the 1970s in such books as *Because They're Black* (1971) and *Police Power and Black People* (1972). He joined the euthanasia movement after his wife, Jean, contracted incurable cancer; he assisted with her suicide by administering a drink laced with barbiturates in 1975. He then wrote *Jean's Way* (1978), which made Humphry a major figure in the right-to-die campaign. In 1980, Humphry founded the Hemlock Society, whose motto is "Good Life, Good Death," which claims tens of thousands of dues-paying members. *The Right to Die: Understanding Euthanasia* (1986) asks the question: Should human life be prolonged at all costs? Since the publication of *Final Exit*, Humphry has continued fighting for the rights of the terminally ill and has also worked in California, Oregon, Washington, Michigan, and Maine for the passage of laws that would protect doctors from liability when they assist a suicide. Humphry's next two books, *Dying with Dignity: Understanding Euthanasia* and *Lawful Exit: The Limits of Freedom for Help in Dying* (1992), again attempted to raise public awareness about his cause. In 1992, Humphry retired after 12 years as the Hemlock

Society's national director, and in 1993, he started a euthanasia think tank named Euthanasia Research and Guidance Organization. Humphry won the Martin Luther King Memorial Prize in 1972 for *Because They're Black*. In 1997, he won the Socrates Award for right-to-die activism, and in 2000, he was given the Saba Medal for world euthanasia activism.

KESEY, KEN (1935–2001)

Born in La Junta, Colorado, the novelist and screenwriter was a member of the Beat generation and best known for his first novel, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962). The novel, based on his experiences as a ward attendant at a mental institution, has been the target of censors for its raw language and violent action. Kesey also achieved notoriety as an LSD advocate and a member of the Merry Pranksters, an LSD-fueled group that toured the country in a school bus, a trip that Kesey later condemned in *The Further Inquiry* (1990).

KING, STEPHEN (1947–)

Born in Portland, Maine, the writer of suspense and horror novels and stories is one of America's best-selling authors, under his own name and the pseudonym Richard Bachman, whose works have gained both critical acclaim and popular success. At the same time, many of his better-known works, among them *Carrie* (1974), *The Shining* (1977), *Cujo* (1981), *Christine* (1983), *Pet Sematary* (1983), and *The Stand* (1990), have been singled out by censors who have sought to remove these novels and, in some cases, all of King's works from their school and public libraries.

KNOWLES, JOHN H. (1926–2001)

Born in rural West Virginia, the author is best known for *A Separate Peace* (1960) and its sequel, *Peace Breaks Out* (1981), among his seven novels, a collection of short stories, and a travel book. Challenges to *A Separate Peace* have cited "obscene" and "vulgar" language, as well as concerns that the novel contains an underlying theme of homosexuality.

CHARLES KNOWLTON (1800-1850)

Born in Massachusetts, the physician and writer is best-known for his guide to birth control, *The Fruits of Philosophy: The Private Companion of Married Couples*. Knowlton's first book, *Elements of Modern Materialism* (1829), is considered an early Freethinker tract.

KOSINSKI, JERZY NIKODEM (1933–1991)

Born in Lodz, Poland, the novelist wrote in English and used sardonic humor in grimly pessimistic novels published under his own name, as well as two nonfiction works under the pseudonym Joseph Novak. His bitter first novel, *The Painted Bird* (1965), relates the dehumanizing childhood years he spent hiding from the Nazis in Poland during World War II. The pessimistic view of this novel is also evident in six later novels, among them *Being There* (1970), which was banned from high school reading lists for its masturbation scene and homosexual near-experience.

LEE, HARPER (1926–)

Born in Monroeville, Alabama, the novelist is known solely for her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), which relates the impact of a rape trial on a small southern town. The novel remains among the most frequently banned in the United States, and challengers cite the “vulgar” language, discussion of the rape, and racial relationships among their complaints.

LEWIS, SINCLAIR (1885–1951)

Born in Sauk Centre, Minnesota, the novelist was the first American writer to win the Nobel Prize in literature as well as the first American to be awarded both the Nobel and Pulitzer Prizes. He created satirical portraits of middle-class life in the United States during the 1920s in a succession of best-selling novels, including *Main Street* (1920), *Babbitt* (1922), and *Arrowsmith* (1925), which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1926. In 1930, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature, after publishing *Elmer Gantry* (1927) and *Dodsworth* (1929). *Elmer Gantry* and *Kingsblood Royal* (1947), a savage attack on racial discrimination in both the south and north, have been targets of censors who have labeled both books “immoral” because of their language and “suggested” sexual scenes.

LOFTING, HUGH (1886–1947)

Born in Maidenhead, Berkshire, England, the author entered the United States in 1912 and became a naturalized citizen. He became a surveyor and civil engineer, traveling to Canada, Africa, and the West Indies. He served with the British army in World War I, during which he conceived of the Dolittle story, which he wrote in letters home to his children. The first of the 13 books that eventually made up the Dolittle series was published in 1920 and maintained strong popularity until the 1960s, when growing racial awareness caused the books to be labeled racist and demeaning to African Americans.

LOUÏS, PIERRE (1875–1925)

Born Pierre Louis in Paris, the author lived his entire life in that city, leaving it only to travel around the Mediterranean coast, where so many of his works of art were set. He had many close friends among the writers of his day but preferred to remain apart from literary cliques. Louÿs’s evocations of Hellenistic society brought him fame as a writer in both France and England, as much for his skill in recreating the ancient world as for the risqué subjects of such works as *Aphrodite* (1886) and *Les Chansons de Bilitis* (1894).

LOWRY, LOIS (1937–)

Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, Lois Lowry is an award-winning author of young adult novels that cover topics ranging from the death of a sibling and the Nazi occupation of Denmark, to the humorous antics of the rebellious Anastasia Krupnik, to futuristic dystopian societies. In her first novel, *A Summer to Die* (1977), Lowry portrayed an adolescent’s struggle with her older sister’s illness and eventual death. In *Find a Stranger, Say Goodbye* (1978), she documented an adopted child’s search for her biological mother. Memories of her childhood as well as her experiences as a parent led Lowry to her most popular character: Anastasia Krupnik, the spunky, rebellious, and irreverent adolescent who stars in a series of books that began in 1979. In 1990, Lowry received the Newbery Medal for her

distinguished contribution to children's literature with *Number the Stars* (1989), a novel based on a factual story set against the backdrop of Nazi-occupied Denmark. Lowry received the prestigious Newbery Medal a second time for her 1993 novel, *The Giver* (1993). *Gathering Blue* (2000) is a companion piece to *The Giver*, which depicts a technologically primitive world in which "disorder, savagery, and self-interest" rule. Lowry recounted her lifetime of remembrances in *Looking Back: A Book of Memories* (1998).

MALAMUD, BERNARD (1914–1986)

Born in Brooklyn, New York, the novelist and short story writer was best known for his stories of ordinary people whose survival makes them universal symbols of the triumph of the human spirit. *The Assistant* (1957), the author's most highly praised novel, is characteristic in both style and theme, as are *The Tenants* (1971) and *Dubin's Lives* (1979). *The Fixer* (1966), for which Malamud received both a National Book Award and a Pulitzer Prize, is his only work to be challenged by censors, who have labeled the novel anti-Semitic and complained of its language.

MALCOLM X (1925–1965)

Born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska, he was for a time the leading spokesperson for the Black Muslims in the outside world. After a split developed between Malcolm and the more conservative Elijah Muhammad in 1963, Malcolm founded the rival Organization for Afro-American Unity, and he no longer preached racial separation but rather a socialist revolution. He was assassinated in 1965. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, which relates his life, has been attacked by censors who claim that the language and situations depicted are "obscene" and do not belong on high school reading lists.

MANN, PATRICK (1923–)

Born in Chicago, Illinois, as Leslie Waller, the author wrote 28 books for adults under his real name and two pseudonyms, Patrick Mann and C. S. Cody, as well as 16 books for juveniles. *Dog Day Afternoon* (1974), the most notorious of his works and the most successful, has motivated challenges in both school and public libraries for its language, transsexual character, and sexual references.

MITCHELL, MARGARET (1900–1949)

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, the novelist and journalist produced one of the most successful novels ever written in *Gone with the Wind*, which also won the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. The novel, which made publishing history by setting a sales record of 50,000 copies in one day and 1.5 million copies in its first year of release, has been the target of censors who object to its language, the prominence of a female brothel owner, and the marital rape of the protagonist.

MOORE, GEORGE (1852–1933)

Born in County Mayo, Ireland, the novelist and playwright was active in the Irish Literary Renaissance of the early 1900s. His best-known novel, *Esther Waters* (1894), relates the story of a religious young woman with an illegitimate son. The novel was attacked for its subject matter and banned from Mudie's Circulating Library, as were the author's earlier novels, *A Modern Lover* (1883) and *A Mummer's Wife* (1885). A col-

lection of short stories, *A Story Teller's Holiday* (1918), was banned by Customs for its perceived sexual content.

MORRIS, DESMOND J. (1928–)

Born in Purton, Wiltshire, England, the author is a zoologist whose writings have detailed both animal and human behavior. Of his 26 books for adults, including the highly popular *Catwatching* (1986) and *Dogwatching* (1987), and four books for children, only *The Naked Ape* (1967) has generated significant controversy. Critics charge that Morris devotes one-fourth of the book to human sexual habits and ignores language and learning, but the omission did not prevent the book from selling over 8 million copies in 23 countries.

MOWAT, FARLEY (1921–)

Born in Belleville, Ontario, the author is best known for his books about northern Canada. He has published works on other topics, including *My Discovery of America* (1985), which tells of his experience being barred from the United States as an “undesirable,” and *Woman in the Mists* (1987), an account of zoologist Dian Fossey’s dedication to saving mountain gorillas, which was banned because of its “profanity” and discussion of Fossey’s abortion.

MYERS, WALTER DEAN (1938–)

Born Walter Milton Myers in Martinsburg, West Virginia, Walter Dean Myers is considered among the premier authors of fiction for young adults, and his books have won dozens of awards, including the prestigious Coretta Scott King Award for multiple books. While Myers is perhaps best known for his novels that explore the lives of young Harlem blacks, he is equally adept at producing modern fairy tales, ghost stories, and adventure sagas. *Where Does the Day Go?* (1969), his first book, won a contest sponsored by the Council on Interracial Books for Children. Myers turned his attention to producing more picture books, including *The Dancers* (1972), *The Dragon Takes a Wife* (1972), and *Fly, Jimmy, Fly!* (1974). After publishing numerous juvenile fiction, Myers established a reputation as an able author of fiction geared for African-American children. *Fast Sam, Cool Clyde, and Stuff* (1975) and *Mojo and the Russians* (1977) depicted the learning experiences of most youths growing up in a big city where negative influences abound, and they were followed by *It Ain’t All for Nothin’* (1978), as well as Myers’s first Coretta Scott King Award–winner, *The Young Landlords* (1979). Myers has continued to write and win awards through the present with *Fallen Angels* (1988), *The Journal of Biddy Owens, the Negro Leagues* (2001), and *The Dream Bearer* (2003).

NEWMAN, LESLEA (1955–)

Born in Brooklyn, New York, the author published a novel, *Good Enough to Eat* (1986), a poetry collection, *Love Me Like You Mean It* (1987), and a short story collection, *A Letter to Harvey Milk and Other Stories* (1988), before the taboo-shattering *Heather Has Two Mommies* in 1989. The latter children’s book has been the source of vehement community outcry and efforts to ban it from both school and public libraries. Newman has also written *Gloria Goes to Gay Pride* (1991), *Too Far Away to Touch* (1996), and *Felicia’s Favorite Story* (2003), among other books.

NIJLAND, STERN (1976–)

Nijland and Linda De Haan wrote and illustrated the controversial *King & King* (2002), which was originally published as *Koning & Koning* in the Netherlands by Gottmer and Becht, who provided Tricycle Books with a rough English translation of the story. Nijland met De Haan when the two were in art school in the Netherlands. De Haan and Nijland published a second book, *King & King & Family* (2004), in which the married kings adopt a little girl. *King & King* was a Lambda Literary Award finalist in 2002.

O'HARA, JOHN (1905–1970)

Born in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, the novelist and short story writer was one of the most popular writers of the 20th century. His ear for irony and acute powers of observation made his first novel, *Appointment in Samarra* (1934), a great success, and many later novels, including *Butterfield 8* (1935), *A Rage to Live* (1955), *Ten North Frederick* (1955), and *From the Terrace* (1958), became popular films. He set most of his novels in the fictitious community of Gibbsville, Pennsylvania, and infused the works with realistic portrayals of the American upper middle class, including its sex and drinking patterns. *Appointment in Samarra* and *Ten North Frederick* both shocked reviewers and motivated censors, who complained of the “vulgarity” in the novels and their sexual suggestiveness.

PATERSON, KATHERINE (1932–)

Born in Qing Jiang, China, to missionary parents, the author has earned numerous children's book awards for her many books written for juveniles. *Bridge to Terabithia* (1977), winner of four awards, is her most frequently challenged novel because of its language and depressing subject, death.

PECK, ROBERT NEWTON (1934–)

Born in rural Vermont, the author has set many of his more than 50 young adult novels in the 1930s of his boyhood and focuses on the honest simplicity of the time. *A Day No Pigs Would Die* is his first novel, ranked by critics as among the most notable of his works. It is also the most severely criticized and challenged of Peck's works for its honest depiction of the brutality of farm life and the realistic portrayal of the life cycle.

PERRAULT, CHARLES (1628–1703)

Born in Paris, France, the poet and literary critic is better known today for his *Tales of Past Times* (1697) than for his role during the 17th century as the leading champion of contemporary French writers in the “quarrel between the ancients and the moderns.” The fairy tales collected by Perrault are frequently violent, and his version of “Little Red Riding Hood” has experienced several challenges in school districts.

PILKEY, DAV (1966–)

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Pilkey writes with a humorous irreverence that often teaches a moral. His popular books include those in the “Dragon,” “Captain Underpants,” and “Big Dog and Little Dog” series, all self-illustrated, and the “Ricky

Ricotta” series, illustrated by Martin Ontiveros. In his “Dragon” series, Pilkey tells of a lovable but zany dragon and his many adventures. His popular “Captain Underpants” series features a hero who sports underpants while having various adventures. The series capitalizes on the kind of bathroom humor that appeals to young readers. Teachers and parents have expressed concern over the contents of the books. In the “Ricotta” series, Ricky Ricotta is a timid mouse who teams up with a robot to battle various forces of evil, such as vultures from the planet Venus who use a voodoo ray to hypnotize people through their televisions. Pilkey’s individual creation, *The Paperboy* (1996), was named a Caldecott Medal Honor Book. Pilkey claimed that many of his characters are an extension of the humor he made up in grade school and for which teachers repeatedly punished him.

PLATH, SYLVIA (1932–1963)

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, the poet and novelist is best known for her semiautobiographical novel, *The Bell Jar* (1963), the account of a young woman’s mental breakdown, which was published soon after her death. The novel has generated challenges in schools for containing “filthy” material. She published one collection of poetry, *Colossus* (1960), before committing suicide in 1963, but her fame rests on works that appeared after her death. The posthumous publication of *Ariel* (1965) made her a cult hero. Her status was reinforced by two other posthumous collections, *Crossing the Water* (1971) and *Winter Trees* (1971).

RABELAIS, FRANÇOIS (1532–1564)

Born in Chinon, Touraine, France, the scholar and cleric remains best known for *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (1533–1564), his satiric portrait of 16th-century French society. Rabelais began his clerical career at a Franciscan monastery and later transferred to a Benedictine order, where he qualified as a physician. He practiced medicine in Lyon and was credited with performing the first public dissection in France. The first two books of the five-volume *Gargantua and Pantagruel* were condemned by the Sorbonne as “obscene,” and the grotesque adventures of his giants and his comic and often obscene anecdotes made the work the target of censors in the United States.

ROBBINS, HAROLD (1916–1997)

Born in New York City, the novelist produced a large number of financially successful novels that were derided by critics for being sensationalist and poorly constructed. His autobiographical first novel, *Never Love a Stranger* (1948), was the target of censors for its frank language and references to sexuality. *The Carpetbaggers* (1961) suffered attempts at suppression for its blatant portrayal of sexual activity. Changing mores have prevented further censorship of Robbins’s increasingly explicit novels.

SALINGER, JEROME DAVID (1919–)

Born in New York City, the reputation of the reclusive novelist and short story writer is based largely on *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), a novel that is frequently banned by schools on the request of parents who are made uncomfortable by the main character’s “vulgar” language and sexuality-oriented thoughts. The novel gained a large readership among high school and college students who could relate fully to the principal

character, Holden Caulfield. The resulting public attention that came with the success of the book led Salinger to move from New York to the remote hills of Cornish, New Hampshire, to avoid admirers.

SELBY, HUBERT, JR. (1928–2004)

Born in Brooklyn, New York, the author spent two years as a deckhand in the United States Merchant Marine and 14 years as an insurance analyst before publication of his first and best-known work, *Last Exit to Brooklyn*. An amoral exploration of the world of prostitutes, drug abusers, and criminals, the work became the subject of an obscenity trial and other attempts to ban it.

SENDAK, MAURICE BERNARD (1928–)

Born in Brooklyn, New York, the illustrator and writer has been a major influence in children's literature for over three decades, beginning with the publication of *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963), which won the 1964 Caldecott Medal. Sendak has also written and illustrated *Higglety Pigglety Pop!* (1967), *In the Night Kitchen* (1970), and *Outside over There* (1981), in addition to illustrating many books for others. His drawings, described by critics as bizarre, display a nightmarish quality, but only *In the Night Kitchen* has generated controversy, in this case for its illustration of a naked boy that challengers labeled "pornography" and "obscene."

SHANNON, GEORGE (1952–)

Born in Caldwell, Kansas, and also known as George William Bones Shannon, the author is a professional storyteller who combines his interest in folklore and the oral storytelling tradition with his love of literature for children in a series of picture books, including *Lizard's Home* (1981), *Frog Legs: A Picture Book of Action Verse* (2000), and *Tippy-Toe Chick, Go!* (2004). He produced the well-received work *The Piney Woods Peddler* (1980), which won the American Library Association Notable Book Designation in 1981 and became the Children's Choice Book in 1982. Other works include *Dancing the Breeze* (1981) and *Climbing Kansas Mountains* (1993), as well as an award-winning and controversial young adult novel, *Unlived Affections* (1989), which won the Friends of American Writers Award in 1990.

SHULMAN, IRVING (1913–1995)

Born in Brooklyn, New York, the author was a college English professor, novelist, biographer, and screenwriter who adapted his own novel *Children of the Dark* into the 1955 screenplay for *Rebel Without a Cause*. Of his 10 novels, *The Amboy Dukes* (1947) achieved notoriety as a result of efforts to ban it. Its popularity among high school students caused educators and parents to fear that its scenes of criminal activity and sexuality would promote "delinquency."

SMITH, LILLIAN (1897–1966)

Born near Atlanta, Georgia, the author was referred to by contemporary critics as "the Negro's White Joan of Arc" for her founding of *Pseudopodia* (later *North Georgia Review* and *South Today*), the only southern literary journal to showcase African-

American writers in the 1930s and 1940s. As with her nonfiction, Smith protested stereotyped gender and racial roles in *Strange Fruit*, a novel that was branded “obscene” and banned by the United States Department of the Post Office.

STEINBECK, JOHN (1902–1968)

Born in Salinas, California, the novelist and short story writer was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1962. Much of his work focuses on the American poor and the social injustices that the poor and dispossessed face. His first popular success was *Tortilla Flat* (1935), a semihumorous work that was quickly followed by grim, tragic novels and stories, such as *In Dubious Battle* (1936), *Of Mice and Men* (1937), *The Red Pony* (1938), and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), which won both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. In the 1940s and later, Steinbeck wrote numerous screenplays, some from his novels and stories, and moved his focus to the dispossessed in other areas of society. Among his successes are *The Wayward Bus* (1947) and *East of Eden* (1952), which with *The Red Pony* and *Of Mice and Men*, have been challenged for what critics view as “filthy” language, “vulgarity,” and “bad grammar.”

STOKER, BRAM (1847–1912)

Born Abraham Stoker in Dublin, the civil servant, novelist, and drama critic is best known for creating *Dracula* (1897), one of the most powerful Gothic figures in literary history. Other stories of horror written by Stoker have faded from existence, but his Transylvanian Count Dracula has become the subject of numerous films and books, as well as the prototype for most later vampire creations. The sexual overtones of the novel have been recognized from its first publication and underlie attempts to suppress it.

STOPES, MARIE (1880–1958)

Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, Marie Stopes won international acclaim for her work in promoting birth control and opened the first free birth control clinic in the British Empire. Admired by George Bernard Shaw and the Duke of Windsor, she also gained detractors through her crusades that brought violent opposition from the Roman Catholic Church. *Married Love*, which she characterized as “a book about the plain facts of marriage,” sold over a million copies and was translated into 13 languages, but it was strongly attacked for being immoral.

SWARTHOUT, GLENDON (1918–1992)

Born in Pinckney, Michigan, the author wrote short stories, mysteries, film scripts, plays, and children’s books, many of them set in the American West. Although Swarthout’s novels *Where the Boys Are* (1961) and *The Shootist* (1975) achieved success in print and on the movie screen, *Bless the Beasts and the Children* (1970) brought him greater acclaim and was also the source of numerous challenges and attempts at censorship.

TERKEL, STUDS (1912–)

Born Louis Terkel in New York City, the oral historian, radio broadcaster, journalist, sports columnist, lecturer, and playwright has conducted interviews all over the world

with people from all walks of life. He won the Pulitzer Prize in 1985 for *The Good War: An Oral History of World War II* (1984), and he has also dealt with urban unrest in *Division Street, America* (1966), the Depression in *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression* (1970), the dwindling American dream in *The Great Divide* (1988), and the 20th century in *Coming of Age* (1995). Only *Working* (1974) has motivated challenges for its “vulgar” and “offensive” language.

THOMAS, PIRI (1928–)

Born in Spanish Harlem in New York City, the author is a former drug addict and street gang member who served six years of a 15-year prison sentence for an attempted armed robbery in 1950. His memoir, *Down These Mean Streets* (1972), portrays the brutal life of his past in candid language and with vivid descriptions that have led critics to label the book “obscene” and to condemn it.

TROCCHI, ALEXANDER (1925–1984)

Born in Glasgow, Scotland, the author was cofounder of *Merlin*, the first publisher of Romanian dramatist Eugene Ionesco and among the first to publish the work of French dramatist Jean Genet in English. He also wrote erotic novels on a work-for-hire basis for Olympia Press (Paris) while exploring his talents as a serious novelist. *Cain's Book* (1960) features a drug-addicted narrator who is neither remorseful for his addiction nor condemnatory of drugs, factors that led to seizures of the book and a lengthy trial in England.

TWAIN, MARK (1835–1910)

Born Samuel Langhorne Clemens in Florida, Missouri, the humorist, novelist, journalist, lecturer, and travel writer took his pseudonym from a phrase meaning “two fathoms deep” used by Mississippi river boatmen. Although largely associated with life on the Mississippi River because of the literary success of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884–1885), Twain also chronicled his journeys to the West and experiences in California, as well as adventures abroad in *Innocents Abroad* (1869), *Roughing It* (1872), and others. Two of Twain's most popular works are also among the most frequently banned or censored in the United States: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Both books have been criticized as being “racist” and for containing “vulgar” and “profane” language.

VONNEGUT, KURT, JR. (1922–)

Born in Indianapolis, Indiana, the novelist and short story writer combines science fiction, social satire, and black comedy to expose the dehumanizing effects of 20th-century society and the technology and powerful institutions that perpetuate the dehumanization. Vonnegut's colloquial style and rebellious tone made him a campus favorite in the 1960s and the early 1970s, through such works as *Player Piano* (1952), *Cat's Cradle* (1963), *Welcome to the Monkey House* (1968), and *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969). While several of Vonnegut's works have been challenged for their political or religious references, challenges to *Welcome to the Monkey House* have included complaints of “sexuality explicit language” and “vulgarity.”

WALKER, ALICE (1944–)

Born in Eatonton, Georgia, the poet, novelist, and short story writer grew up in a sharecropper family and participated in the 1960s civil rights movement, later using those events in *The Third Life of George Copeland* (1970) and *Meridian* (1976). In 1982, Walker won both the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award for *The Color Purple* (1982), followed by other successful novels, *The Temple of My Familiar* (1989) and *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992). Her most popular novel, *The Color Purple*, has also been frequently challenged for “explicit sexual language,” “insulting” portraits of African-American males, and “vulgarity.”

WENTWORTH, HAROLD (1904–1973)

Born in Homer, New York, Wentworth is a college English professor who has edited or served as consulting editor for various dictionaries, including *Webster’s New International Dictionary*, second edition, and others, in addition to the *Dictionary of American Slang*, which has been banned by school districts for its inclusion of “unacceptable” and “vulgar” words.

WHITMAN, WALT (1819–1892)

Born in West Hill, Long Island, New York, the poet, journalist, newspaper editor, and printer vowed to create a distinctly new form of poetry that would reflect the democratic nature and vastness of the United States. His first book of poetry, *Leaves of Grass* (1855), offended many of his contemporaries with its anatomical references. Whitman served as a hospital volunteer in the Civil War, then published *Drum-Taps* (1865). Two of his most famous works, “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d” and “O Captain! My Captain!” that commemorated the death of Lincoln, appeared in *Sequel to Drum-Taps* (1865–66).

WILDER, LAURA INGALLS (1867–1957)

Born in Pepin, Wisconsin, the novelist’s *Little House* series of autobiographical novels, recounting her childhood growing up on the American frontier, have become classics of childhood literature. The series began with *Little House in the Big Woods* (1932) and includes *Little House on the Prairie* (1935), the inspiration for a successful television series in the 1970s. The novels have been challenged for being “derogatory to Native Americans.”

WILLHOITE, MICHAEL A. (1946–)

Born in Hobart, Oklahoma, the writer and illustrator began his career by publishing cartoons and caricatures in a weekly gay newspaper, the *Washington Blade*. In *Daddy’s Roommate* (1990), Willhoite depicts a divorce in which the father begins cohabitation with another man while the mother explains to their child that his father is gay. Numerous challenges have emerged to the book because it “legitimizes” gay relationships. Willhoite’s most recent book, *Daddy’s Wedding* (1996), is a sequel that shows the father marrying his male roommate.

WILLINGHAM, CALDER (1922–1995)

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, novelist and screenwriter Willingham became an instant literary star at 24 with the publication of *End as a Man*, the best known of his 10 novels and the one that generated both critical praise and controversy. The publicity surrounding the obscenity trial involving that novel cast a shadow on the author that he was never able to escape. From 1955 onward, Willingham also wrote screenplays for films, including those for *The Graduate* (1967), *Little Big Men* (1970), and *Rambling Rose* (1991).

WOLFE, THOMAS (1900–1938)

Born Thomas Clayton Wolfe in Asheville, North Carolina, the novelist and playwright has been acclaimed as one of the great American novelists of the 20th century. After completing a master's degree in English in 1924 at Harvard University, where he wrote plays, Wolfe began the autobiographical novel *Look Homeward, Angel* (1929) when he found that he could not get his plays produced. His two major autobiographical novels, *Look Homeward, Angel* and *You Can't Go Home Again* (1940), established Wolfe as a major figure in American literature, and *Of Time and the River* (1935), a fictional account of his experience at Harvard, affirmed that reputation. The latter novel has been accused of being "racist," "anti-Semitic," and "pornographic."

ZEMACH, MARGOT (1931–1989)

Born in Los Angeles, Margot Zemach was a renowned children's author and illustrator who specialized in adapting folktales for children. Her books included retellings of such classic tales as *The Little Red Hen* (1983) and *The Three Little Pigs* (1986), as well as stories drawn from Yiddish folklore. Zemach was the U.S. nominee for the Hans Christian Anderson Medal for illustration in 1980, and she collaborated on numerous distinguished picture books with her husband, Harve Zemach, including *Duffy and the Devil* (1973), which won the Caldecott Medal in 1974; *The Judge* (1969), which was a Caldecott Honor book in 1970; *Salt* (1965); *A Penny a Look* (1971); and *Mommy, Buy Me a Doll* (1966). Zemach also wrote and illustrated *It Could Always Be Worse* (1977), a Caldecott Honor Book, in 1978 and *Jake and Honeybunch go to Heaven* (1981), which won the Commonwealth Club Silver Medal for literature in 1982.

ZOLA, ÉMILE (1840–1902)

Born in Aix-en-Provence, France, the journalist and novelist used his fiction to campaign for social reform and justice. He became the major proponent of literary naturalism. Zola created a cycle of 20 novels called, collectively, *Les Rougon Macquart*, which were published between 1871 and 1893 and criticized for their gratuitous brutality and obscenity. Today they are valued as fictionalized sociology. Of particular interest are *Nana* (1880) and *La Terre*, translated variously as *The Earth* and *The Soil* (1887). In later years, Zola gained further notoriety for his celebrated campaign and notorious "J'accuse" letter in defense of Captain Alfred Dreyfus.

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Norman Mailer

*WORDS OF CONSCIENCE: RELIGIOUS STATEMENTS ON
CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION*

Shawn Perry, ed.

WORKS DISCUSSED IN *BANNED BOOKS:*
LITERATURE SUPPRESSED ON RELIGIOUS GROUNDS
BY MARGARET BALD

*ADDRESS TO THE CHRISTIAN NOBILITY OF THE
GERMAN NATION*

Martin Luther

THE ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING

Francis Bacon

THE AGE OF REASON

Thomas Paine

ALCIPHRON; OR THE MINUTE PHILOSOPHER

George Berkeley

THE ANALECTS

Confucius

ARCANA COELESTIA

Emanuel Swedenborg

THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY OF THE CHURCH

Martin Luther

THE BIBLE

THE BLOODY TENENT OF PERSECUTION

Roger Williams

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

Thomas Cranmer et al.

CHILDREN OF THE ALLEY

Naguib Mahfouz

THE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH

John Eliot

CHRISTIANITY NOT MYSTERIOUS

John Toland

CHRISTIANITY RESTORED

Michael Servetus

*CHURCH: CHARISM AND POWER: LIBERATION THEOLOGY AND
THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH*

Leonardo Boff

COLLOQUIES

Desiderius Erasmus

COMMENTARIES

Averroës

COMPENDIUM REVELATIONUM

Girolamo Savonarola

CONCERNING HERETICS

Sebastian Castellio

THE COURSE OF POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY

Auguste Comte

CREATIVE EVOLUTION

Henri Bergson

THE CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON

Immanuel Kant

DE ECCLESIA

Jan Hus

DE INVENTORIBUS RERUM

Polydore Vergil

DE L'ESPRIT

Claude-Adrien Helvétius

DIALOGUE CONCERNING THE TWO CHIEF WORLD SYSTEMS

Galileo Galilei

DIALOGUES CONCERNING NATURAL RELIGION

David Hume

DISCOURSE ON METHOD

René Descartes

DON QUIXOTE

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra

DRAGONWINGS

Laurence Yep

ÉMILE

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

ENCYCLOPÉDIE

Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, eds.

AN ESSAY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

John Locke

ESSAYS

Michel de Montaigne

ETHICS

Baruch Spinoza

THE FABLE OF THE BEES

Bernard Mandeville

THE GUIDE OF THE PERPLEXED

Maimonides

HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE

J. K. Rowling

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS

J. K. Rowling

HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN

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HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE

J. K. Rowling

HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX

J. K. Rowling

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Nawal El Saadawi

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL DICTIONARY

Pierre Bayle

*HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN RELIGION
AND SCIENCE*

John William Draper

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THE ROMAN EMPIRE*

Edward Gibbon

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Hans Küng

AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

David Hume

INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

John Calvin

INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY

Peter Abelard

*AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALS
AND LEGISLATION*

Jeremy Bentham

INTRODUCTORY LECTURES ON PSYCHOANALYSIS

Sigmund Freud

THE KORAN

LAJJA (SHAME)

Taslima Nasrin

THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

Nikos Kazantzakis

LETTER ON THE BLIND

Denis Diderot

LETTERS CONCERNING THE ENGLISH NATION

Voltaire

LEVIATHAN

Thomas Hobbes

THE LIFE OF JESUS

Ernest Renan

MARY AND HUMAN LIBERATION

Tissa Balasuriya

MEDITATIONS ON FIRST PHILOSOPHY

René Descartes

THE MERITORIOUS PRICE OF OUR REDEMPTION

William Pynchon

THE METAPHYSICS

Aristotle

MEYEBELA: MY BENGALI GIRLHOOD

Taslima Nasrin

THE NEW ASTRONOMY

Johannes Kepler

THE NEW TESTAMENT

William Tyndale, trans.

NINETY-FIVE THESES

Martin Luther

*OF THE VANITIE AND UNCERTAINTIE OF ARTES
AND SCIENCES*

Henricus Cornelius Agrippa

OLIVER TWIST

Charles Dickens

ON CIVIL LORDSHIP

John Wycliffe

ON JUSTICE IN THE REVOLUTION AND IN THE CHURCH

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

ON MONARCHY

Dante Alighieri

ON THE INFINITE UNIVERSE AND WORLDS

Giordano Bruno

ON THE LAW OF WAR AND PEACE

Hugo Grotius

ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES

Charles Darwin

ON THE REVOLUTION OF HEAVENLY SPHERES

Nicolaus Copernicus

OPUS MAJUS

Roger Bacon

PENGUIN ISLAND

Anatole France

THE PERSIAN LETTERS

Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu

PHILOSOPHICAL DICTIONARY

Voltaire

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE DEVIL

Daniel Defoe

POPOL VUH

THE POWER AND THE GLORY

Graham Greene

THE PRAISE OF FOLLY

Desiderius Erasmus

PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

John Stuart Mill

THE PROVINCIAL LETTERS

Blaise Pascal

THE RAPE OF SITA

Lindsey Cohen

THE RED AND THE BLACK

Stendhal

RELIGIO MEDICI

Sir Thomas Browne

RELIGION WITHIN THE LIMITS OF REASON ALONE

Immanuel Kant

THE RIGHTS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH ASSERTED

Matthew Tindal

THE SANDY FOUNDATION SHAKEN

William Penn

THE SATANIC VERSES

Salman Rushdie

SHIVAJI: HINDU KING IN ISLAMIC INDIA

James W. Laine

A SHORT DECLARATION OF THE MISTERY OF INIQUITY

Thomas Helwys

THE SHORTEST WAY WITH THE DISSENTERS

Daniel Defoe

THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

THE SORROWS OF YOUNG WERTHER

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

THE SPIRIT OF LAWS

Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu

SPIRITS REBELLIOUS

Kahlil Gibran

THE STORY OF ZAHRA

Hanan al-Shaykh

A TALE OF A TUB

Jonathan Swift

THE TALMUD

THEOLOGICAL-POLITICAL TREATISE

Baruch Spinoza

THREE-PART WORK

Meister Eckhart

THE VEIL AND THE MALE ELITE: A FEMINIST INTERPRETATION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN ISLAM

Fatima Mernissi

VOODOO & HOODOO: THEIR TRADITIONAL CRAFTS AS REVEALED BY ACTUAL PRACTITIONERS

Jim Haskins

VOYAGES TO THE MOON AND THE SUN

Savinien Cyrano de Bergerac

THE WITCHES

Roald Dahl

WOMEN WITHOUT MEN: A NOVEL OF MODERN IRAN

Shahrnush Parsipur

ZHUAN FALUN: THE COMPLETE TEACHINGS OF FALUN GONG

Li Hongzi

ZOONOMIA

Erasmus Darwin

WORKS DISCUSSED IN *BANNED BOOKS: LITERATURE SUPPRESSED ON SEXUAL GROUNDS* BY DAWN SOVA

ALICE SERIES

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

ALWAYS RUNNING: LA VIDA LOCA

Luis T. Rodriguez

AMERICA (THE BOOK)

Jon Stewart, Ben Karlin, David Javerbaum

AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY

Theodore Dreiser

THE ARABIAN NIGHTS, OR THE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Sir Richard Burton, trans.

THE ART OF LOVE

Ovid

BESSIE COTTER

Wallace Smith

THE BLUEST EYE

Toni Morrison

BOY

James Hanley

THE BUFFALO TREE

Adam Rapp

CANDIDE

Voltaire

CANDY

Maxwell Kenton

THE CARPETBAGGERS

Harold Robbins

CASANOVA'S HOMECOMING

Arthur Schnitzler

THE CHINESE ROOM

Vivian Connell

CHRISTINE

Stephen King

THE CLAN OF THE CAVE BEAR

Jean Auel

CONFESSIONS

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

THE DECAMERON

Giovanni Boccaccio

THE DEER PARK

Norman Mailer

THE DEVIL RIDES OUTSIDE

John Howard Griffin

THE DIARY OF SAMUEL PEPYS

Samuel Pepys

DROLL STORIES

Honoré de Balzac

DUBLINERS

James Joyce

EAT ME

Linda Jaivin

FANNY HILL; OR MEMOIRS OF A WOMAN OF PLEASURE

John Cleland

THE FIFTEEN PLAGUES OF A MAIDENHEAD

Anonymous

FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON

Daniel Keyes

THE FLOWERS OF EVIL

Charles Baudelaire

FOREVER

Judy Blume

FOREVER AMBER

Kathleen Winsor

FROM HERE TO ETERNITY

James Jones

THE GENIUS

Theodore Dreiser

THE GILDED HEARSE

Charles O. Gorham

THE GINGER MAN

J. P. Donleavy

THE GOATS

Brock Cole

GOD'S LITTLE ACRE

Erskine Caldwell

THE GROUP

Mary McCarthy

HAGAR REVELLY

Daniel Carson Goodman

THE HANDMAID'S TALE

Margaret Atwood

THE HEPTAMERON

Marguerite d'Angoulême

THE HISTORY OF TOM JONES, A FOUNDLING

Henry Fielding

HOMO SAPIENS

Stanley Przybyszewski

HOW TO MAKE LOVE LIKE A PORN STAR

Jenna Jameson

IF IT DIE

André Gide

ISLE OF PINES

Henry Neville

IT'S PERFECTLY NORMAL

Robbie H. Harris

JANET MARCH

Floyd Dell

JUDE THE OBSCURE

Thomas Hardy

JURGEN: A COMEDY OF JUSTICE

James Branch Cabell

JUSTINE, OR THE MISFORTUNES OF VIRTUE

*JULIETTE, HER SISTER, OR THE PROSPERITIES
OF VICE*

Marquis de Sade

THE KAMA SUTRA OF VATSAYANA

Sir Richard Burton, F. F. Arbuthnot, trans.

THE KREUTZER SONATA

Leo Tolstoy

LADIES IN THE PARLOR

Jim Tully

LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER

D. H. Lawrence

LA TERRE

Émile Zola

LOLITA

Vladimir Nabokov

THE LUSTFUL TURK

Anonymous

MADAME BOVARY

Gustave Flaubert

MADELEINE

Anonymous

MADemoiselle de Maupin

Théophile Gautier

THE MAID OF ORLEANS

Voltaire

MEMOIRES

Giovanni Casanova de Seingalt

MEMOIRS OF A YOUNG RAKEHELL

Guillaume Apollinaire

MEMOIRS OF HECATE COUNTY

Edmund Wilson

THE MERRY MUSES OF CALEDONIA

Robert Burns

MOLL FLANDERS

Daniel Defoe

MY LIFE AND LOVES

Frank Harris

A NIGHT IN A MOORISH HAREM

Anonymous

NOVEMBER

Gustave Flaubert

THE 120 DAYS OF SODOM

Marquis de Sade

OUR LADY OF THE FLOWERS

Jean Genet

OUTLAW REPRESENTATION

Richard Meyer

PAMELA, OR VIRTUE REWARDED

Samuel Richardson

PANSIES

D. H. Lawrence

THE PERFUMED GARDEN

Sir Richard Burton, trans.

PEYTON PLACE

Grace Metalious

THE PHILANDERER

Stanley Kauffmann

POEMS AND BALLADS

Algernon Charles Swinburne

POINT COUNTER POINT

Aldous Huxley

RABBIT, RUN

John Updike

THE RAINBOW

D. H. Lawrence

REPLENISHING JESSICA

Max Bodenheim

SANCTUARY

William Faulkner

SARI SAYS

Sari Locker

THE SATYRICON

Gaius Petronius Arbiter

SEPTEMBER IN QUINZE

Vivian Connell

SERENADE

James M. Cain

SEX

Madonna

SEXUS

Henry Miller

SHANGHAI BABY

Weinui

SIMON CALLED PETER

Robert Keable

*1601—A FIRESIDE CONVERSATION IN YE TIME OF
QUEEN ELIZABETH*

Mark Twain

SLEEVELESS ERRAND

Norah C. James

SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS

David Guterson

SOPHIE'S CHOICE

William Styron

A STORY TELLER'S HOLIDAY

George Moore

STUDS LONIGAN: A TRILOGY

James T. Farrell

SUSAN LENOX: HER FALL AND RISE

David Graham Phillips

SWEETER THAN LIFE

Mark Tryon

TEN NORTH FREDERICK

John O'Hara

TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES

Thomas Hardy

THEN AGAIN, MAYBE I WON'T

Judy Blume

THE THIEF'S JOURNAL

Jean Genet

THREE WEEKS

Elinor Glyn

TOBACCO ROAD

Erskine Caldwell

TRAGIC GROUND

Erskine Caldwell

TRILBY

George du Maurier

THE TRIUMPH OF DEATH

Gabriele D'Annunzio

TROPIC OF CANCER

Henry Miller

TROPIC OF CAPRICORN

Henry Miller

ULYSSES

James Joyce

LITERATURE SUPPRESSED ON SOCIAL GROUNDS

VENUS AND TANNHAUSER (UNDER THE HILL)

Aubrey Beardsley

THE WILD PALMS

William Faulkner

WOMEN IN LOVE

D. H. Lawrence

WOMEN ON TOP

Nancy Friday

A YOUNG GIRL'S DIARY

Anonymous

INDEX

Note: Boldface numbers indicate major treatment of the topic; b indicates entry in biographical section.

A

- Aberdeen, Washington 246
 Abernethy, Julian 36
 Ace Books 195–196
 ACLU. *See* American Civil Liberties Union
 adolescent literature. *See* young adult literature
 Advantage Learning Systems 45
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Mark Twain) xi–xii, 3–7, 10, 11
The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes (Doyle) xii, 7–8
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (Mark Twain) 3, 9–11
 “Advice to a Young Man on the Choice of a Mistress” (Franklin) 36
 African Americans. *See also* racism
Another Country 26–28
The Autobiography of Malcolm X 37–39
The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman 39–41
The Best Short Stories by Negro Writers 54–57
Black Like Me 57–60
The Color Purple 95–98
Fallen Angels 135–139
Go Tell It on the Mountain 170–172
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings 180–182
Invisible Man 184–187
Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven 187–190
Kingsblood Royal 202–204
Little Black Sambo 211–214
Manchild in the Promised Land 221–224
My House 226–227
Soul on Ice 259–262
Strange Fruit 264–267
 Ahmutty, Chris 44–45
 AJC (American Jewish Committee) 147
 Akron, Ohio 64
 Alabama
Brave New World 67
The Catcher in the Rye 87–88
Cujo 100
East of Eden 124
Little Black Sambo 213
Of Mice and Men 238, 239
Welcome to the Monkey House 288–289
Whale Talk 297
 Alabama Textbook Commission
Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl 23
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings 181
Of Time and the River 243
 Alaska 15
 Alexandria, Louisiana 239
Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (Carroll) xii, 11–13
 Allen, Christine 81
 Alton, Oklahoma 245
 Altoona, Wisconsin 192
 Amarillo, Texas 243
 Amazon.com 198
The Amboy Dukes (Shulman) 13–15
 American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
Annie on My Mind 25, 26
Baby Be-Bop 44
The Bell Jar 53
The Canterbury Tales 77, 78
Daddy’s Roommate 103
Deliverance 108
To Have and Have Not 275
Howl and Other Poems 178–179
As I Lay Dying 34
One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest 246
We All Fall Down 285
The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language 15–17
 American Jewish Committee (AJC) 147
 American Library Association
The Chocolate War 92
Daddy’s Roommate 102
Fahrenheit 451 135
Little Black Sambo 214
Little House on the Prairie 216
We All Fall Down 285
 American Library Association Committee for Intellectual Freedom 138
Am I Blue? (Bauer, ed.) 17–19
 Anaheim, California
East of Eden 123–124
Gone with the Wind 167
Ordinary People 248
 Anchorage, Alaska 15
 Andrews, V. C. 252
And Still I Rise (Angelou) 20–21
 Angelou, Maya 305b
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings 180–182
And Still I Rise 20–21
Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl (Frank) 21–23
Annie on My Mind (Garden) 23–26
 Anniston, Alabama
The Catcher in the Rye 87
East of Eden 124
Another Country (Baldwin) 26–28
 anti-Semitism
Appointment in Samarra 31
The Fixer 145–147
Gentleman’s Agreement 153–154
Of Time and the River 242–243
 anti-white sentiment
The Autobiography of Malcolm X 38
Go Tell It on the Mountain 171
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings 181
Kingsblood Royal 203
Soul on Ice 261
And Still I Rise 21
Apbrodite (Louÿs) 28–30
 Apple Valley Unified School District, California 69
Appointment in Samarra (O’Hara) 30–33
 Ardmore High School (Limestone County, Alabama) 297
 Arizona
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 5
Black Like Me 59–60
Blubber 64
The Chocolate War 90, 91
Daddy’s Roommate 103–104
Heather Has Two Mommies 175
To Kill a Mockingbird 277
Lord of the Flies 220
Of Mice and Men 238, 240
The Ox-Bow Incident 250
Working 300
 Arkansas 238
 Arlington, Texas
Fallen Angels 138–139
We All Fall Down 285–286
 Ashfield, Massachusetts 148
As I Lay Dying (Faulkner) 33–35
 Asquith, Henry 234
 Atlanta, Georgia
The Color Purple 97–98
Kingsblood Royal 203
Attorney General v. A Book Named “Naked Lunch” 231
 Augusta, Georgia 91
 Augusta, Maine 91
 Aurora, Colorado
A Clockwork Orange 94–95
The Fixer 146
 Austin, Texas 181–182
 Australia
The Catcher in the Rye 86
Final Exit 144
 Australian Film and Literature Board of Review 144

LITERATURE SUPPRESSED ON SOCIAL GROUNDS

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin (Franklin) 35-37

The Autobiography of Malcolm X (Malcolm X and Haley) 37-39

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman (Gaines) 39-41

Avery, Sandy Lane 160

B

Babcock, Lewis 48

Baby Be-Bop (Block) 41-46, 122

Baldwin, James 305b
Another Country 26-28

Go Tell It on the Mountain 170-172

Baldwin, Kansas 286

Ballentine Books 134

Bamberger v. The Vanguard Press, Inc. 302

Banfield, Beryle 189

Bannerman, Helen 305b
Little Black Sambo 211-215

Barron Area School District, Wisconsin

Baby Be-Bop 44

The Drowning of Stephan Jones 122

The Basketball Diaries (Carroll) 46-49

Bass River Township, New Jersey 173-174

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Manchild in the Promised Land 223

The Naked Ape 228

Soul on Ice 261

Bauer, Marion Dane

305-306b

Am I Blue? 17-19

Beat generation/Beat literature

Howl and Other Poems

178-180

Naked Lunch 229-231

Steppenwolf 264

Being There (Kosinski)

49-51

Bel Air, Maryland 177

Bellay, Jean du 150

The Bell Jar (Plath) 51-54

Beloit, Wisconsin 183

Bemotas, Richard 281

Benchley, Peter 306b

Jaws 193-194

Bend, Oregon 25

Benning, California 181

Bernd, Mac

Fallen Angels 139

We All Fall Down

285-286

Bernstein, Aline 242

Berrien Springs, Michigan

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 5

Of Mice and Men 238

Besant, Annie 149

The Best Short Stories by Negro Writers (Hughes, ed.) 54-57

Bicknell v. Vergennes Union High School Board 114-115
Birkett, Lord, of Ulverston 292

Biron, Sir Charles 292

birth control

Fruits of Philosophy

147-150

Married Love 226

Bismark, North Dakota

Cujo 100

Deliverance 108

Black, Sir Cyril 206-207

Black Like Me (Griffin)

57-60

Black Muslims 38

Blackwell, Sir Basil 206

Bladen Coalition of Christians 103

Blaney, Gerald 47

Bless the Beasts and Children

(Swarthout) 60-62

Block, Francesca Lia 306b

Baby Be-Bop 41-46

Bloomington, Minnesota

289

Blubber (Blume) 62-65

Blue Springs School District,

Missouri 161

Bluffton, Ohio 138

Blume, Judy 306b

Blubber 62-65

Blundell, Sir Robert 207

Board of Censors of Ireland 66

Board of Education, Island

Trees Union Free School

District No. 26 v. Pico

The Best Short Stories by

Negro Writers 56-57

The Canterbury Tales 77

Down These Mean Streets

117

The Fixer 147

Go Ask Alice 164

A Hero Ain't Nothin' but

a Sandwich 177

The Naked Ape 229

Soul on Ice 262

Board of Superintendents

(Bronx, New York) 155

Boissevain, Eugene 292

Bok, Curtis

End as a Man 129-130

Never Love a Stranger

236-237

The Scarlet Letter 254

A World I Never Made

302

Boling, Texas 121

Bonsall Union School District,

California 45

Boron, California 87

Boston, Massachusetts

Appointment in Samarra

32

Elmer Gantry 126-127

A Farewell to Arms

141, 142

Gone with the Wind 167

Last Exit to Brooklyn 206

Leaves of Grass 210

Naked Lunch 231

Boston Booksellers' Committee 126

Boston Watch and Ward

Society. See Watch and

Ward Society

Bozeman, Montana 64

Bradbury, Ray 306-307b

Fahrenheit 451 xi-xii,

133-135

Bradford, New York 100

Bradford County, Florida

218

Bradlaugh, Charles 149

Bradlaugh-Besant trial

148-150

Branford, Florida 239

Brantford, Ontario 14

Brave New World (Huxley)

65-68

The Catcher in the

Rye 86

Stranger in a Strange

Land 270

Brawner, Lee 285

Brennan, William J. 56

Bridges, Robert 141

Bridge to Terabithia (Paterson)

68-70

Britain

The Adventures of Tom

Sawyer 10-11

Anne Frank: The Diary

of a Young Girl 23

Cain's Book 72

Camille 74

Dracula 118-119

Esther Waters 132-133

Final Exit 144

Fruits of Philosophy

148-150

Go Tell It on the Mountain

171

Howl and Other Poems

179

Last Exit to Brooklyn

206-207

Leaves of Grass 210-211

Little Black Sambo 212,

214

Nana 234

Sister Carrie 259

The Well of Loneliness

291-292

British Customs 292

Bronx, New York 154-155

Brooklyn, New York

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 4

The Adventures of Tom

Sawyer 10

Daddy's Roommate 102

Heather Has Two Mom-

mies 175

Brooklyn Park, Minnesota

164

Brooks, Christi 297

Brooks, Dan 240

Brooksville, Florida

Cujo 100

James and the Giant

Peach 192

Broun, Heywood 302

Brown, Claude 307b

Manchild in the Promised

Land 221-224

Buckhannon-Upshur, West

Virginia 164

Buckingham, Virginia 239

Burger, Warren 56

Burgess, Anthony 307b

A Clockwork Orange

92-95

Burgin, Brenda 160

Burlington, Connecticut

The Chocolate War 90

A Day No Pigs Would

Die 105

Burlington, North Caro-

lina 69

Burnau, Teresa 53

Burruss, Lee

Black Like Me 59

Gone with the Wind 167

Go Tell It on the Mountain

171

Invisible Man 186

Manchild in the Promised

Land 223

The Ox-Bow Incident

250

The Red Pony 251

The Scarlet Letter 254

Soul on Ice 261

Stranger in a Strange

Land 270

The Sun Also Rises 273

Working 299, 300

Burroughs, William S.

307b

Junky 194-196

Naked Lunch 229-232

Butler, Georgia 6

Butler, Pennsylvania 186

B.W. Dodge Company 259

C

Caddo Parish, Louisiana 5

Cain's Book (Trocchi) 70-72

Caldecott Honor Book

Award 218

Calder, John 71, 72

Calder and Boyars 206, 207

Califon, New Jersey 106

California

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 6

The American Heritage

Dictionary of the

English Language 16

Annie on My Mind 25

Baby Be-Bop 45

Brave New World 67

Bridge to Terabithia 69

Captain Underpants

80-81

The Catcher in the

Rye 87

The Chocolate War 90

The Color Purple 97

Cujo 100

- A Dictionary of American Slang* 109–110
East of Eden 123–124
Fabrenheit 451 135
Gone with the Wind 167
Grendel 173
Howl and Other Poems 178–179
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings 181
Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven 189, 190
Little Red Riding Hood 218
Lord of the Flies 220
Of Mice and Men 239
Naked Lunch 231
Ordinary People 248
Soul on Ice 260–261
The Sun Also Rises 272
Working 299
- Cambridge, Massachusetts 148
 Camden, New Jersey 127
 Camden, New York 183
Camille (Dumas) 73–75
 Campbell, Lord 74
 Canada
The Amboy Dukes 14
East of Eden 124
Little Black Sambo 213
Lord of the Flies 220
 Canadian National Black Coalition 213
The Canterbury Tales (Chaucer) 75–78
Captain Underpants (series) (Pilkey) 78–81
 Carbondale, Illinois 105–106
 Carlisle, Pennsylvania
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 6
The Catcher in the Rye 87
 Carneal, Michael 48
 Carolan, Alice 80
 Carroll, Barry 297
 Carroll, Jim 307–308b
The Basketball Diaries 46–49
 Carroll, Leo 261
 Carroll, Lewis 308b
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland xii, 11–13
 Carroll County, Maryland 34
 Carvers Bay High School, South Carolina 296
Cary, Bob, et al. v. Board of Education of Adams-Arapahoe School District 28–7, *Aurora, Colorado* 94–95
 Casa Grande, Arizona 277
 Cason, Richard 160
 Casper, Eileen 161
 Casper, Wyoming 64
 Castle Rock, Colorado 181
Catch-22 (Heller) 82–84
The Catcher in the Rye (Salinger) 84–88
- Cavanaugh, Janice 199
 Cedar Lake, Indiana 15–16
 Cedar Rapids, Iowa 161
 Cerbasi, Anna 159
 Chadwick, Jocelyn 6
 Champaign, Illinois
In the Night Kitchen 183
A Separate Peace 257
 Chandler, Arizona
Daddy's Roommate 103–104
Heather Has Two Mommies 175
 Chanute, Kansas 26
 Chapman, Robert L. 308b
New Dictionary of American Slang 109–110
 Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant v. *The Queen* 148–150
 Charles Scribner's Sons
To Have and Have Not 274–275
The Sun Also Rises 272
Of Time and the River 242, 243
 Charlotte Harbor, Florida 192
 Charpentier publishers 233
 Chatillon, Cardinal de 152
 Chattanooga, Tennessee
The Color Purple 97
Of Mice and Men 238
 Chaucer, Geoffrey 308b
The Canterbury Tales 75–78
 Chicago, Illinois 189
 children's books. *See also* young adult literature
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland 11–13
Bridge to Terabithia 68–70
Captain Underpants 78–81
Daddy's Roommate 101–104
Doctor Dolittle 110–112
Heather Has Two Mommies 174–176
Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven 187–190
James and the Giant Peach 191–193
King & King 196–202
Little Black Sambo 211–215
Little Red Riding Hood 216–218
In the Night Kitchen 182–184
 Childress, Alice 308b
A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich 176–177
The Chocolate War (Cormier) 88–92
 Christenson, et al. v. *Barron Area School District, et al.* 44
 Christian County, Kentucky 238
- Churchill County, Nevada 16
 Ciardi, John 231
 Citizens Commission on Education (Florida) 110
 Citizens for Family Friendly Libraries 48
 City Lights Bookstore 178, 179
 Civil War 165–167
 Clark, Walter Van Tilburg 308b
The Ox-Bow Incident 249–250
 Clay County, Florida 218
 Clayton County School District (Jonesboro, Georgia) 174
 Cleaver, Eldridge 309b
Soul on Ice 259–262
 Cleburne, Texas 69–70
 Clemens, Samuel. *See* Twain, Mark
 Clinton, North Carolina 194
A Clockwork Orange (Burgess) 92–95
 CNN 80
 Cobb County, Georgia 97–98
 Cockburn, Sir Alexander 149
 Coffin, Albert W. 114, 115
 Cohen, Stacy 286
 Collette & Collette 234
 Colony, Texas 25
 Colorado
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 4
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer 10
The Basketball Diaries 48
A Clockwork Orange 94–95
A Day No Pigs Would Die 105
A Dictionary of American Slang 110
The Fixer 146
The Giver 161
Go Ask Alice 164
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings 181
One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest 245
Steppenwolf 264
The Color Purple (Walker) 95–98
 Columbia, South Carolina 90
 Columbia County High School, Lake City, Florida 77–78
 Columbine High School, Colorado
The Basketball Diaries 48
The Giver 161
 Columbus, Mississippi 181
 Columbus, Ohio 86
 Commerce Township, Michigan 110
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. Isenstadt* 266–267
Commonwealth v. Gordon et al.
End as a Man 129
Never Love a Stranger 236–237
The Scarlet Letter 254
 Communist Party 159
 Comstock, Anthony
Gargantua and Pantagruel 152
Leaves of Grass 210
 Comstock Act 37
 Concerned Citizens and Taxpayers for Decent Books (Baton Rouge Louisiana)
Manchild in the Promised Land 223
The Naked Ape 228
Soul on Ice 261
 Concord, Massachusetts 4
 Congress, U.S. *See* U.S. Congress
 Connecticut
Bridge to Terabithia 69, 70
Captain Underpants 80
The Chocolate War 90, 91
A Clockwork Orange 95
A Day No Pigs Would Die 105
Last Exit to Brooklyn 206
Soul on Ice 261
 Conroe, Texas 41
 Contact Publishers (Holland) 22
 Continental, Ohio 238
 contraception. *See* birth control
 Cook, Henry 149
 "The Cook's Tale" (Chaucer) 75
 Cope, Sandra 138
 Copyright Law (1976) 269
 Corgi 171
 Cormier, Robert 309b
The Chocolate War 88–92
We All Fall Down 282–287
 Cornish, Maine 184
 Corona-Norco Unified School District, California
Brave New World 67
The Catcher in the Rye 87
 Costa Mesa, California 109
 Cottage Grove, Oregon
Daddy's Roommate 103
Heather Has Two Mommies 175
 Council on Interracial Books for Children
Doctor Dolittle 111
Little Black Sambo 214
 Covici-Friede (publisher) 292
 Cowan, D. J. 14
 Coxe, Arthur C. 254
 Crabb, Barbara 44
 Craft, Judy 48

Craig, Eugene Carroll 122
 Crane, Hart 275
 Crete, Nebraska 51
 Cromwell, Connecticut 70
 Crosby, Harry 275
 Crutcher, Chris 309b
Whale Talk 293–298, 296
 Crystal Lake, Illinois 281
Cujo (King) 98–101
 Culver City, California 218
 Cummings, Walter J. 54
 Curran, Henry 302
 Customs Bureau, U.S. See U.S. Customs Bureau

D

Daddy's Roommate (Willhoite) 101–104
Heather Has Two Mom-mies 175
King & King 200
 Dahl, Roald 309b
James and the Giant Peach 191–193
 Dallas, Texas
A Farewell to Arms 142
Little Black Sambo 213–214
Lord of the Flies 220
 DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) 16
 Darlington, South Carolina 177
 Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) 16
 Dauphin County, Pennsylvania 102
 Davenport, Iowa
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 5
Being There 51
 Davis, James 255
A Day No Pigs Would Die (Peck) 104–106
 De Funiak Springs, Florida 87
 de Haan, Linda. See Haan, Linda de
 Delaware, Indiana 248
Deliverance (Dickey) 106–108
 Dell Publishing
Doctor Dolittle 112
Last Exit to Brooklyn 206
 Delta Wood Junior High School (Blue Springs, Missouri) 161
 Del Valle, Texas 64
 Denver, Colorado
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 4
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer 10
 Des Moines, Iowa
Blubber 64
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings 181
 Detroit, Michigan
The Amboy Dukes 14
Appointment in Samarra 32

To Have and Have Not 275
 Detroit Public Library 275
 DeVoto, Bernard
Strange Fruit 267
A World I Never Made 302
 DeWitt Clinton High School (Bronx, New York) 154
Diary of Anne Frank. See Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl (Frank)
 Dickerson, Mary Jo 80
 Dickey, James 310b
Deliverance 106–108
A Dictionary of American Slang (Wentworth and Flexner) 109–110
Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English (Partridge) 109–110
Doctor Dolittle (series) (Lofting) 110–112
 Dodgson, Charles. See Carroll, Lewis
Dog Day Afternoon (Mann) 112–115
 Donelson, Kenneth 254
 Donnelly, Horace J. 127
 Doubleday, Frank 259
 Doubleday Page 259
 Douglas, James 291
 Douglas, William O. 117
Down These Mean Streets (Thomas) 115–117
 Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan 310b
The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes xii, 7–8
 Dozier, Randy 296
Dracula (Stoker) 117–119
 Drake, North Dakota 108
 Dreiser, Theodore 310b
Sister Carrie 258–259
The Drowning of Stephan Jones (Greene) 44, 120–122
 drug use
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland 11–12
The Basketball Diaries 46–47
Cain's Book 70–72
Final Exit 144
Go Ask Alice 162–165
A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich 177
Junky 194–196
Naked Lunch 229–231
Steppenwolf 263, 264
 Dubuque, Iowa 152
 Dudley, Massachusetts 164
 Dugan, Marion 97
 Dukes, Eugene 160
 Dumas, Alexandre, Jr. 310b
Camille 73–75
 Duplessis, Marie 73
 Dupree, South Dakota 62
 Durand, Wisconsin 100
 Durham, North Carolina 278

Duval County, Florida
The Autobiography of Malcolm X 39
The Catcher in the Rye 87
Of Mice and Men 239
My House 227

E
East of Eden (Steinbeck) 122–124
 Eaton County, Michigan 297
 Eden Valley, Minnesota 277
 Educational Research Analysts 16
 Eldon, Missouri 16
 Elizabethtown, North Carolina
Daddy's Roommate 103
Heather Has Two Mom-mies 175
 Elk River, Minnesota 184
 Ellis, Havelock 290
 Ellison, Ralph 310–311b
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 4
Invisible Man 184–187
Elmer Gantry (Lewis) 124–127
 El Paso, Texas 184
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo 210
 Empire, California 218
End as a Man (Willingham) 127–130
 England. See Britain
 Enid, Oklahoma 6
 Enon, Ohio 247
 Erie, Pennsylvania
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 5
Gorillas in the Mist 169
 Ernst, Frederic 154
 Ernst, Morris 292
 Ess, Richard and Alice
The Chocolate War 91
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings 182
Esther Waters (Moore) 130–133
 Eureka, Illinois 78
 euthanasia
Final Exit 143–144
The Giver 159, 161
 Everyman's Library
The Canterbury Tales 76
Leaves of Grass 211

F
Fabrenheit 451 (Bradbury) xi–xii, 133–135
 Fairfax County, Virginia
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 5
The Chocolate War 91–92
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings 182
Fallen Angels (Myers) 135–139
 Family Friendly Libraries (FFL) 285

A Farewell to Arms (Hemingway) 139–143
 Farmington, Utah 173
 Farrar, Straus & Giroux 190
 Farrell, James T. 311b
A World I Never Made 300–303
 Farris, Michael 214
 Faulkner, William 311b
As I Lay Dying 33–35
 Faulkton, South Dakota 248
 Fayetteville, North Carolina
Daddy's Roommate 102–103
Heather Has Two Mom-mies 175
 FBI. See Federal Bureau of Investigation
 Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
Another Country 27–28
Kingsblood Royal 204
 Federal Communications Commission 179–180
 Ferlinghetti, Lawrence 178, 179
 FFL (Family Friendly Libraries) 285
Final Exit: The Practicalities of Self-Deliverance and Assisted Suicide for the Dying (Humphry) 143–144
 First Amendment
Annie on My Mind 26
Baby Be-Bop 44
The Bell Jar 53
The Best Short Stories by Negro Writers 56
Catch-22 83
End as a Man 129
A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich 177
One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest 246
Soul on Ice 262
Welcome to the Monkey House 289
 Fitzgerald, F. Scott 275
The Fixer (Malamud) 145–147
 Flexner, Stuart Berg
A Dictionary of American Slang 109–110
 Florida
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 4
The Autobiography of Malcolm X 39
The Canterbury Tales 77–78
The Catcher in the Rye 87
The Chocolate War 90, 91
Cujo 100
Daddy's Roommate 103
A Day No Pigs Would Die 106
A Dictionary of American Slang 110
The Giver 159–161

- I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* 181
James and the Giant Peach 192
Little Red Riding Hood 218
Manchild in the Promised Land 223
Of Mice and Men 239
My House 227
In the Night Kitchen 183–184
A Separate Peace 257
Fogarty v. Atchley 246
Foley, Alabama 67
Foley, William J. 126
Folsom, California 16
Fort Worth, Texas
Another Country 28
Daddy's Roommate 104
Fossey, Dian 311*b*
Gorillas in the Mist 168–170
Foster, Retha K. 254
Fourteenth Amendment
The Bell Jar 53
Catch-22 83
One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest 246
Fowler, Lorenzo and Orson 209
France
Camille 73–74
Final Exit 144
Gargantua and Pantagruel 150–152
Nana 232–234
François I (king of France) 150, 152
Frank, Anne 311*b*
Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl 21–23
Frank, Otto 22–23
Franklin, Benjamin 311–312*b*
The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin 35–37
Franklin, William 35
Franklin, William Temple 36
Frantz, John C. 190
Franz, Eric 78
Freauf, Betty 159–160
Frederick County, Maryland 173
Freedman, Ralph 263
Free Thought Publishing Society 149
Fresno, California 239
Friede, Donald 292
Fruits of Philosophy: The Private Companion of Married Couples (Knowlton) 147–150
Fuller, Richard F. 126–127
- G**
Gabler, Mel and Norma 16
Gaines, Ernest J. 312*b*
The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman 39–41
Gainesville, Georgia
Go Ask Alice 164
Heather Has Two Mommies 175
Galandiere, Lewis 30
Gambetta, Leon 233
Garden, Nancy 312*b*
Annie on My Mind 23–26
Garden City Publishing 76
Gardner, John 312*b*
Grendel 172–174
Gardner, Kansas 194
Gargantua and Pantagruel (Rabelais) 150–153
Garvey, Marcus 37
Gathings Committee Report
The Amboy Dukes 14
A World I Never Made 302
Gentleman's Agreement (Hobson) 153–155
George County, Mississippi 240
George County School Board, Mississippi 138
Georgia
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 6
The Basketball Diaries 47–48
The Catcher in the Rye 88
The Chocolate War 91
The Color Purple 97–98
Daddy's Roommate 102
Fallen Angels 138
Go Ask Alice 164
Grendel 174
Heather Has Two Mommies 175
A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich 177
Jaws 194
To Kill a Mockingbird 277
Kingsblood Royal 203
Of Mice and Men 240
The Red Pony 252
Germany
Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl 23
A Farewell to Arms 142
Steppenwolf 262–264
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 70
Gifford, Sir Hardinge 149
Ginn and Company
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 5
The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin 36
Ginsberg, Allen 312*b*
Howl and Other Poems 178–180
Junky 195, 196
Naked Lunch 231
Giovanni, Nikki 312–313*b*
My House 226–227
Girard, Pennsylvania 300
The Giver (Lowry) 156–162
Glasser, Ronald J. 313*b*
Glaze, Joel 87–88
Glenwood Springs, Colorado 264
Gloucester County, New Jersey 220
Glynn County, Georgia
The Catcher in the Rye 88
To Kill a Mockingbird 277
Go Ask Alice (Anonymous) 53, 162–165
Goffstown, New Hampshire 87
Golding, William 313*b*
Lord of the Flies 219–221
Goldman, Arthur 266
Goldsboro, North Carolina 102
Gone with the Wind (Mitchell) 165–168
Gorillas in the Mist (Fossey) 168–170
Go Tell It on the Mountain (Baldwin) 170–172
G.P. Putnam publishers
Married Love 225
Stranger in a Strange Land 269
Graham, Bill 122
Grand Blanc, Michigan 238
Grand Ledge High School (Eaton County, Michigan) 297
Grand Prairie, Texas 102
Grandville, Michigan 240
Grant, Carole 94
Graves County, Kentucky 34
Gray, Wanda 183
Grayslake, Illinois 87
Great Britain. *See* Britain
Greeley, Colorado 245
Greene, Bette 313*b*
The Drowning of Stephen Jones 120–122
Greenfield, Massachusetts 148
Greenville, North Carolina 238
Greenville, South Carolina 124
Greenwich, Connecticut 261
Grendel (Gardner) 172–174
Griffin, John Howard 314*b*
Black Like Me 57–60
Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm 217
Griswold, R. W. 209
Grosset and Dunlap 259
Grove Press
Cain's Book 71
Last Exit to Brooklyn 206
Guest, Judith 314*b*
Ordinary People 246–248
Gwinnett County, Georgia
The Basketball Diaries 47–48
Daddy's Roommate 102
- Go Ask Alice* 164
Jaws 194
- H**
Haan, Linda de 314*b*
King & King 196–202
Haines City, Florida 181
Haley, Alex 37
Hall, Radclyffe 314*b*
The Well of Loneliness 290–293
Hamer, Alvin C. 275
Hamilton, Montana 182
Hamilton, Ohio 239–240
Hamilton, Ontario 213
Hammock, Bo 160
Hanover, Pennsylvania 64
Hanson, Mark S. 161
Harcourt Brace 126, 127
Harkreader, Donna
Fallen Angels 138, 139
We All Fall Down 285
Harlan, James 210
Harlem 221–222
Harper & Brothers 259
Harris, Eric 48
Hartsell, Michael and Tonya 198, 199
Hartwinton, Connecticut
Bridge to Terabithia 69
The Chocolate War 90
A Day No Pigs Would 105
Haverhill, New Hampshire 90
Hawley, Barbara 198
Hawthorne, Nathaniel 314–315*b*
The Scarlet Letter 252–255
Hayward, California
The Color Purple 97
Cujo 100
Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier 77
Heather Has Two Mommies (Newman) 174–176
Daddy's Roommate 102, 103
King & King 200
Heckman, John 45
Heinemann publishers 259
Heinlein, Robert 315*b*
Stranger in a Strange Land 267–270
Heller, Joseph 315*b*
Catch-22 82–84
“Helter Skelter” (the Beatles) 270
Hemingway, Ernest 315*b*
A Farewell to Arms 139–143
To Have and Have Not 273–276
The Sun Also Rises 271–273
Henry, Arthur 259
Henry II (king of France) 152
A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich (Childress) 176–177

- Herrick, Robert 142
Hesse, Hermann 315–316
Steppenwolf 262–264
Heywood, Ezra 210
Hicklin Statute 292–293
Himebaugh, Ken 297
Hitchcock, Curtice 266
Hitler, Adolf 263
Hobson, Laura Z. 316b
Gentleman's Agreement 153–155
Holcomb, Shaun and Lorie 161
Holocaust (*Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*) 21–23
homosexuality
Am I Blue? 17–19
Annie on My Mind 23–26
Another Country 27
Apodrite 29
Baby Be-Bop 41–45
The Basketball Diaries 46
Being There 50–51
Daddy's Roommate 101–104
Deliverance 107
The Drowning of Stephan Jones 120–122
Heather Has Two Mommies 174–175
Howl and Other Poems 178, 179
Junky 195
King & King 196–202
Leaves of Grass 208–211
A Separate Peace 256
Unlived Affections 281
Hooks, Texas 181
Hoover, J. Edgar 27, 28
Horn, Clayton 179
Horry County School District Board, South Carolina 122
Houghton Mifflin
The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin 36
Little Red Riding Hood 218
Houma, Louisiana 5
House of Commons 234
House of Representatives, Oklahoma 200
Houston, Texas 5
Howell, Donnie 138
Howl and Other Poems (Ginsberg) 178–180
Hudson, Eugene 231
Hudson Falls, New York
The Chocolate War 91
Go Tell It on the Mountain 171
Hughes, Langston 316b
The Best Short Stories by Negro Writers 54–57
The Humanities: Cultural Roots and Continuities Volume I 77–78
Human Relations Council (Lincoln, Nebraska) 213
Humphry, Derek 316b–317b
Final Exit: The Practicalities of Self-Deliverance and Assisted Suicide for the Dying 143–144
Hunan Province, China 13
Huntton, Elizabeth 189
Huxley, Aldous
Brave New World 65–68
Hyannis, Massachusetts 90
- I**
- Idaho 245–246
Ihry, Dawn 80
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (Angelou) 180–182, 243
Illinois
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 5, 6
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer 11
Black Like Me 60
The Canterbury Tales 78
The Catcher in the Rye 87
Cujo 100
A Day No Pigs Would Die 105–106
Final Exit 144
Gone with the Wind 167
Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven 189
To Kill a Mockingbird 277, 278
Kingsblood Royal 204
Of Mice and Men 238, 240–241
In the Night Kitchen 183
The Ox-Bow Incident 250
A Separate Peace 257
Unlived Affections 281
Index librorum prohibitorum
Camille 74
Nana 234
Index of the Sorbonne 151, 152
Indiana
The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language 15–16
The Bell Jar 53–54
The Catcher in the Rye 87
Cujo 100
Fallen Angels 138
To Kill a Mockingbird 277
King & King 201
Of Mice and Men 238
Ordinary People 248
The Sun Also Rises 273
Indianapolis, Indiana 138
Indians. See Native Americans
In re Worthington Company 152
Intellectual Freedom Committee of the American Library Association 135
interracial sex
Another Country 27
Strange Fruit 264–267
In the Night Kitchen (Sendak) 182–184
“Introduction to the Lawyer’s Prologue” (Chaucer) 75–76
Invisible Man (Ellison) 184–187
Iowa
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 5
Am I Blue? 18–19
Being There 51
Blubber 64
The Catcher in the Rye 87
Gargantua and Pantagruel 152
The Giver 161
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings 181
Lord of the Flies 220–221
Of Mice and Men 239
Iowa City, Iowa 239
Ireland
Brave New World 66
Elmer Gantry 127
Last Exit to Brooklyn 206
Married Love 226
Of Mice and Men 238
Nana 234
Irish Censorship Board 226
Irvine, California 135
Isenstadt, Abraham A. 266–267
Island Trees Union Free District, New York
The Best Short Stories by Negro Writers 55–56
Down These Mean Streets 117
The Fixer 146–147
Go Ask Alice 164
A Hero Ain’t Nothin’ but a Sandwich 177
The Naked Ape 228–229
Soul on Ice 261–262
Issaquah, Washington 86–87
Italy 206
- J**
- Jacksboro, Tennessee 239
Jackson, Michael (legislator) 200
Jackson County, Georgia 138
Jacksonville, Florida
The Autobiography of Malcolm X 39
My House 227
In the Night Kitchen 183–184
A Separate Peace 257
Jacobson, John 240
Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven (Zemach) 187–190
James and the Giant Peach (Dahl) 191–193
Jansen, William 155
Jashni, Vera 218
Jaws (Benchley) 193–194
J.B. Lippincott Company
Doctor Dolittle 111
Little Black Sambo 212
Jefferson, Thomas 36
Jefferson County, Colorado 105
Jimenez, Jose 200
Johnson, Frank 289
Johnson, Marguerite. See Angelou, Maya
Johnson City, Illinois 250
Johnstown, New York 164
Jones, Sir Elwyn 206
Jones, Walter 199
Jonesboro, Georgia 174
Joyce, James 275
Joynson-Hicks, Sir William 291
Junky (Burroughs) 194–196
- K**
- Kalkaska, Michigan 164
Kansas
Annie on My Mind 25–26
Bridge to Terabithia 70
The Chocolate War 90–91
Jaws 194
Of Mice and Men 239
We All Fall Down 286
Kansas City, Kansas 25
Kent, Rockwell 76
Kentucky
The Basketball Diaries 48
As I Lay Dying 34
Of Mice and Men 238
Kern, Sally 200
Kesey, Ken 317b
One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest 244–246
King, Martin Luther, Jr. 40
King, Stephen 317b
Cujo 98–101
King & King (de Haan and Nijland) 196–202
Kingsblood Royal (Lewis) 202–204
Kinston, North Carolina 6
Klebold, Dylan 48
Knight, Robert 199
Knights of Columbus 87
Knopf publishers 292
Knowles, John H. 317b
A Separate Peace 255–257
Knowlton, Charles 317b
Fruits of Philosophy: The Private Companion of Married Couples 147–150
Knoxville, Tennessee 238
Kosinski, Jerzy 317b
Being There 49–51
Krysztof, Lois 286
Ku Klux Klan
Another Country 28
Of Mice and Men 238
Kyrene, Arizona 91

- L**
- Lady Chatterly's Lover* (Lawrence) xi, xii
- "Lady Luncheon Club" (Angelou) 20
- Lafayette, Louisiana 20
- Lafitte, Jules 233
- Laka Havasu, Arizona 90
- Lake City, Florida 77-78
- Lambert Schneider 23
- Lapeer, Michigan
- Annie on My Mind* 25
- The Chocolate War* 89
- Last Exit to Brooklyn* (Selby) **204-208**
- Lauriat, Charles E. 126
- Lawrence, D. H. xi, xii
- Lawrence, New Jersey
- Daddy's Roommate* 103
- Heather Has Two Mommies* 175
- Leary, Timothy 264
- Leaves of Grass* (Whitman) **208-211**
- Lee, Harper 318*b*
- To Kill a Mockingbird* **276-278**
- Lee, Spike 39
- Lee, William (William S. Burroughs) 195, 196
- lesbianism
- The Color Purple* 96
- Heather Has Two Mommies* 174-175
- Steppenwolf 263, 264
- The Well of Loneliness* 290-293
- Lessard, Daniel 137
- "Letter from a Master Addict to Dangerous Drugs" (Burroughs) 230
- Levy County, Florida 218
- Lewis, Sinclair 318*b*
- Elmer Gantry* **124-127**
- Kingsblood Royal* **202-204**
- The Well of Loneliness* 292
- Lewisville, Texas
- The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* 6
- Dracula* 119
- Libby, Montana 87
- Libertyville, Illinois 144
- Library Company of Philadelphia 209
- Lichter, Jacob 30
- Liddell, Alice 11
- Limestone County School District, Alabama
- The Catcher in the Rye* 87-88
- Whale Talk* 297
- Lincoln, Nebraska
- Bridge to Terabithia* 69
- Little Black Sambo* 213
- Lintonwold, New Jersey 64
- Linton-Stockton, Indiana 87
- Lippincott. See J.B. Lippincott Company
- Little, Malcolm. See Malcolm X
- Little Black Sambo* (Bannerman) **211-215**
- Little House on the Prairie* (Wilder) **215-216**
- Little Red Riding Hood* (Perault) **216-218**
- Liverright Publishing Corporation 30
- Livonia, Michigan 137-138
- Lofting, Christopher 112
- Lofting, Hugh 318*b*
- Doctor Dolittle* **110-112**
- Loganville, Georgia 240
- London, England
- The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* 10-11
- Fruits of Philosophy* 149
- Sister Carrie* 259
- Long, Huey 40
- Longview, Washington 21
- Lord of the Flies* (Golding) **219-221**
- Los Angeles, California 231
- Louisiana
- The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* 5
- Another Country* 27-28
- Kingsblood Royal* 203
- Little House on the Prairie* 216
- Manchild in the Promised Land* 223
- Of Mice and Men* 239
- The Naked Ape* 228
- Soul on Ice* 261
- And Still I Rise* 20
- Louisville, Kentucky 34
- Louis XIV (king of France) 217
- Louÿs, Pierre 318*b*
- Approdite* **28-30**
- Lowry, Lois 318-319*b*
- The Giver* **156-162**
- Lucas, Victoria (Sylvia Plath) 51
- Lucedale, Mississippi 240
- M**
- MacDiarmid, Hugh 71
- MacLeod, Ann 48
- Macmillan Company 166, 167
- Madison, James 36
- Mailer, Norman 231
- Maine
- Annie on My Mind* 25
- The Catcher in the Rye* 88
- The Chocolate War* 91
- Cujo* 100
- I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* 181
- In the Night Kitchen* 184
- Malamud, Bernard 319*b*
- The Fixer* **145-147**
- Malcolm X 319*b*
- The Autobiography of Malcolm X* **37-39**
- Mallet, Isabelle 236
- Manatee, Florida 103
- Manchild in the Promised Land* (Brown) **221-224, 245**
- Manitoba, Canada 124
- Mann, Patrick 319*b*
- Dog Day Afternoon* **112-115**
- Manson, Charles 269-270
- Marana, Arizona 220
- Marion County, West Virginia 238
- marriage manuals
- Fruits of Philosophy* **147-150**
- Married Love* **224-226**
- Married Love* (Stopes) **224-226**
- Marsh, Derick 296
- Maryland
- Blubber* 64
- Brave New World* 67
- The Chocolate War* 89-90
- Deliverance* 107-108
- Grendel 173
- A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich* 177
- As I Lay Dying* 34
- Massachusetts
- The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* 4
- Appointment in Samarra* 32
- The Chocolate War* 90
- Elmer Gantry* 126-127
- A Farewell to Arms* 141
- Fruits of Philosophy* 148
- Go Ask Alice* 164
- Heather Has Two Mommies* 175
- Last Exit to Brooklyn* 206
- Leaves of Grass* 210
- Manchild in the Promised Land* 223
- Naked Lunch* 231
- One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* 245
- Strange Fruit* 266-267
- Matsch, Richard P. 95
- Matthews County, Virginia 67
- Maurer, John H.
- Never Love a Stranger* 236
- A World I Never Made* 302
- McClure, Pam 98
- McCullough, Dustin 201
- McDonald, Larry 138
- McGraw-Hill 5
- McIntosh, Lynn 200
- McIntosh, Ralph 179
- Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania 69
- Medicine Bow, Wyoming 87
- Melbourne, Florida 106
- "Men" (Angelou) 20
- Mercedes, Texas
- Brave New World* 67
- Stranger in a Strange Land* 270
- Merrimack, New Hampshire
- One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* 246
- Ordinary People* 247
- Mesa, Arizona
- The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* 5
- Daddy's Roommate* 103
- Meyer, Howard N. 214
- Miami Dade Junior College, Florida 4
- Miars, Elizabeth 198
- Michael Joseph Publishing 171
- Michigan
- The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* 5-6
- The Amboy Dukes* 14
- Annie on My Mind* 25
- The Catcher in the Rye* 87
- The Chocolate War* 89
- The Color Purple* 97
- A Dictionary of American Slang* 110
- Fallen Angels* 137-138
- Go Ask Alice* 164
- To Have and Have Not* 275
- Of Mice and Men* 238, 240
- The Scarlet Letter* 254-255
- Whale Talk* 297
- Working* 300
- Mid-Continent News Company 86
- Middleville, Michigan 87
- Mifflinberg, Pennsylvania
- Being There* 51
- The Naked Ape* 229
- Miley, Scott 138
- Miller, Missouri 67
- "The Miller's Tale" (Chaucer) 76, 77
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- The Amboy Dukes* 14
- Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven* 189
- A World I Never Made* 302
- Mingus, Arizona 240
- Minnesota
- Appointment in Samarra* 32
- Go Ask Alice* 164
- To Kill a Mockingbird* 277
- In the Night Kitchen* 184
- Welcome to the Monkey House* 289
- A World I Never Made* 302
- Mississippi
- Cujo* 100
- Fallen Angels* 138
- Go Ask Alice* 164
- I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* 181
- Of Mice and Men* 240
- Missouri
- The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* 16
- Black Like Me* 60
- Brave New World* 67

LITERATURE SUPPRESSED ON SOCIAL GROUNDS

The Giver 161
To Kill a Mockingbird 277
In the Night Kitchen 183
The Scarlet Letter 255
 Mitchell, Margaret 319b
Gone with the Wind 165-168
 Mobile, Alabama 239
 Modern Library 30
 Modesto, California 6
 "Momma Welfare Roll" (Angelou) 20
 Montana
Blubber 64
The Catcher in the Rye 87
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings 182
 Montgomery, Alabama
Little Black Sambo 213
Welcome to the Monkey House 288-289
 Montgomery County, Maryland
Blubber 64
Deliverance 107-108
 Moore, George 319b-320b
Esther Waters 130-133
 Moral Majority 214
 Moreno Valley, California 90
 Morris, D. John, Jr. 198
 Morris, Desmond 320b
The Naked Ape 227-229
 Morris, Donna 200
 Morris, Manitoba 124
 Morrisonville, New York 183
 Mortimer, John 207
 Moss, Maximilian 155
 Motteux, Peter 152
 Mowat, Farley 320b
Gorillas in the Mist 169
 Mudie's Library (Britain) 132-133
 Muhammad, Elijah 38
 Mulholland, James V. 14
 Muskego, Wisconsin 64
 Muskogee, Oklahoma 277
 Muskogee Public Library 277
 Muslim Mosque, Inc. 38
 Mutual Circulation Company 30
 Myers, Walter Dean 320b
Fallen Angels 135-139
My House (Giovanni) 226-227
 Myrtle Beach Middle School, South Carolina 122

N

NAACP. See National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
The Naked Ape (Morris) 227-229
Naked Lunch (Burroughs) 229-232
 Nana (Zola) 232-235
 Napoleon, North Dakota 87

Nasier, Alcofribas 151
 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 4
To Kill a Mockingbird 277
Of Mice and Men 239
 National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC)
The Drowning of Stephen Jones 121
Of Mice and Men 240
 National Coalition of Teachers of English 138
 National Organization of Decent Literature (NODL)
The Amboy Dukes 14
Apbrodite 30
Appointment in Samarra 32
A Farewell to Arms 142
 National Vigilance Association (NVA) 234
 Nation of Islam 38
 Native Americans 215, 216
 Naugatuck, Connecticut 80
 Nazi Germany
A Farewell to Arms 142
Steppenwolf 263
 NCAC. See National Coalition Against Censorship
 Nebraska
Being There 51
Bridge to Terabithia 69
Gorillas in the Mist 169
Little Black Sambo 213
 Nelson, T. L. 210
 Netherlands 22
 Nevada 16
Never Love a Stranger (Robbins) 235-237
 Newark, New Jersey 14
 New Berne, North Carolina 97
 Newbery Medal 158-159
 New Brunswick, Canada 213
 New Deal 243
New Dictionary of American Slang (Chapman) 109-110
 New Hampshire
The Catcher in the Rye 87
The Chocolate War 90
The Drowning of Stephen Jones 121
One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest 246
Ordinary People 247
 New Hanover County School District Media Advisory Committee 198-199
 New Ipswich, New Hampshire 121
 New Jersey
The Amboy Dukes 14
Blubber 64

The Catcher in the Rye 86
Daddy's Roommate 103
A Day No Pigs Would Die 106
Elmer Gantry 127
Go Ask Alice 164
Grendel 173-174
Heather Has Two Mommies 175
Lord of the Flies 220
 Newman, Leslea 320b
Heather Has Two Mommies 174-176
 New Mexico 102
 New Milford, Connecticut 91
 New Orleans, Louisiana
Another Country 27-28
Kingsblood Royal 203
 Newport Beach, California 109
 Newport News, Virginia 97
 New Richmond, Wisconsin 87
New World Dictionary 213
 New York City
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 4
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer 10
The Amboy Dukes 14
Apbrodite 30
Daddy's Roommate 102
Down These Mean Streets 116-117
Elmer Gantry 127
Gentleman's Agreement 154-155
To Have and Have Not 275
Kingsblood Royal 203-204
Leaves of Grass 210
Little Black Sambo 213
Mancchild in the Promised Land 223
The Well of Loneliness 292
 New York City Post Office 127
 New York Civil Liberties Union
The Best Short Stories by Negro Writers 56
Down These Mean Streets 116
 New York Society for the Suppression of Vice
Apbrodite 30
Appointment in Samarra 32
Elmer Gantry 126
End as a Man 129
Gargantua and Pantagruel 152
Gone with the Wind 166-167
Kingsblood Royal 203-204
Leaves of Grass 210

The Well of Loneliness 292
 New York State. See also New York City
The Best Short Stories by Negro Writers 55-56
The Chocolate War 91
Cujo 100
A Farewell to Arms 142
The Fixer 146-147
Go Ask Alice 164
Go Tell It on the Mountain 171
Heather Has Two Mommies 175
Little Black Sambo 213
Of Mice and Men 238
My House 227
The Naked Ape 228-229
In the Night Kitchen 183
One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest 245
Ordinary People 248
The Red Pony 251-252
A Separate Peace 256
 New Zealand 144
 Nicholas I (czar of Russia) 254
 Nijland, Stern 321b
King & King 196-202
 NODL. See National Organization of Decent Literature
 Normal, Illinois
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 6
To Kill a Mockingbird 278
Of Mice and Men 240-241
 Norris, Frank 259
 North Berwick, Maine 88
 North Carolina
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 6
Bridge to Terabithia 69
The Color Purple 97
Daddy's Roommate 102, 103
Heather Has Two Mommies 175
Jaws 194
To Kill a Mockingbird 278
King & King 198-199
Lord of the Flies 220
Of Mice and Men 238
And Still I Rise 20-21
 North Carolina Family Policy Council 199
 North Dakota
Captain Underpants 80
The Catcher in the Rye 87
Cujo 100
Deliverance 108
 North Jackson, Ohio
The Catcher in the Rye 87
Mancchild in the Promised Land 223
 Northridge, Illinois 183

North Salem, New York 248
Nunnally, Maryann 199
NVA (National Vigilance Association) 234
Nyquist, Ewald B. 55

O

Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts 175
Oakland, California 97
"objectionable language"
 Gorillas in the Mist 169
 A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich 177
 Jaws 194
 The Ox-Bow Incident 250
 Whale Talk 296
 Working 299
O'Brien, Morgan J. 152
Obscene Publications Act of 1857
 Camille 74
 The Well of Loneliness 292
Obscene Publications Act of 1959 206, 207
OCA (Oregon Citizens Alliance) 103
OCAF (Oklahomans for Children and Families) 285
Oconee County, Georgia 252
O'Connor, Sandra Day 56
O'Fallon, Illinois 11
Office of Indecent Publications (New Zealand) 144
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP; England) 206
Of Mice and Men (Steinbeck) 138, **237-241**
Of Time and the River (Wolfe) **241-243**
Ogden, Utah 194
O'Hara, John 321*b*
 Appointment in Samarra **30-33**
Ohio
 Blubber 64
 Catch-22 83-84
 The Catcher in the Rye 86, 87
 Fallen Angels 138
 Manchild in the Promised Land 223
 Of Mice and Men 238-240
 One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest 245
 Ordinary People 247
 The Scarlet Letter 255
 Soul on Ice 261
Oil City, Pennsylvania 238
Oklahoma
 The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 6
 Brave New World 67
 The Catcher in the Rye 86

To Kill a Mockingbird 277
 King & King 200
 One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest 245
 We All Fall Down 285
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
 The Catcher in the Rye 86
 King & King 200
Oklahoma County Metropolitan Library System 285
Oklahomans for Children and Families (OCAF) 285
Olathe, Kansas 26
Old Corner Bookstore (Boston) 126-127
Olney, Texas 220
Olson, Richard 45
Olympia, Washington 102
Omaha, Nebraska 169
Omak, Washington 261
One City-One Book 277
One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest (Kesey) **244-246**, 248
Ontario, Canada
 The Amboy Dukes 14
 Little Black Sambo 213
 Lord of the Flies 220
Ordinary People (Guest) **246-248**
Oregon
 The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 6
 Annie on My Mind 25
 Daddy's Roommate 102, 103
 The Giver 159-160
 Heather Has Two Mommies 175
 Manchild in the Promised Land 224
Oregon Citizens Alliance (OCA) 103
Orem, Utah 94
Organization of Afro-American Unity 38
Oskaloosa, Kansas 70
Osseo School District (Brooklyn Park, Minnesota) 164
Owen, North Carolina 220
The Ox-Bow Incident (Clark) **249-250**

P

PABBIS. *See* Parents Against Bad Books in Schools
Pacifica Radio Network 179-180
Paducah, Kentucky 48
Page, North Dakota 80
Pagosa Springs, Colorado 164
Panama City, Florida 90
Paola, Kansas 90-91
Parducci, Marilyn 288-289
Parducci v. Rutland 289
Parental Empowerment Act of 2005 199

Parents Against Bad Books in Schools (PABBIS)
 The Chocolate War 91-92
 I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings 182
Parents' Coalition (Hamilton, Ohio) 239-240
Parents of New York United 55
Parent-Teacher Association (Bronx, New York) 154
Parker v. Board of Education 67
Park Hill, Missouri 277
Parkrose, Oregon 224
Parliament, British 206-207
Parliament, French 151
Partridge, Eric, *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* **109-110**
Pascagoula, Mississippi 138
Paterson, Katherine 321*b*
 Bridge to Terabithia **68-70**
Payson, Utah 106
Peck, Robert Newton 321*b*
 A Day No Pigs Would Die **104-106**
Pegasus Press 291
Penguin Books 196
Pennsylvania
 The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 5, 6
 The Adventures of Tom Sawyer 11
 Being There 51
 Black Like Me 60
 Blubber 64
 Bridge to Terabithia 69, 70
 The Catcher in the Rye 86, 87
 The Chocolate War 90
 The Color Purple 97
 Daddy's Roommate 102
 End as a Man 129-130
 Fallen Angels 138
 The Fixer 146
 Gorillas in the Mist 169
 Invisible Man 186
 Leaves of Grass 210
 Married Love 225
 Of Mice and Men 238
 The Naked Ape 229
 Never Love a Stranger 236
 A Separate Peace 256-257
 Stranger in a Strange Land 270
 Working 300
 A World I Never Made 302
People for Better Education 15
People for the American Way 159
People v. Friede 292
People v. Vanguard Press, Inc. 129
People Who Care 53

Peoria, Illinois 64
Pepe, Frank C. 152
Perkins, Max
 The Sun Also Rises 272
 Of Time and the River 242
Perkins, Maxwell 141-142
Perrault, Charles 321*b*
 Little Red Riding Hood **216-218**
Perrin, Noel 211
Perry Township, Ohio 64
Perry, Illinois 240
Peru, Indiana 100
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 Leaves of Grass 210
 Married Love 225
Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania
 Partridge, Eric, *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* 129-130
 Never Love a Stranger 236
 A World I Never Made 302
Phillips, Elizabeth 114
Pickens County, South Carolina 160
Pilkey, Dav 321-322*b*
 Captain Underpants **78-81**
Pine Bluff, Arkansas 238
Pinellas County, Florida 110
Pittsgrove Township, New Jersey 86
Plano, Texas
 The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 5
 The Adventures of Tom Sawyer 11
Plant City, Florida 223
Plath, Sylvia 322*b*
 The Bell Jar **51-54**
Pleasanton, California 181
"Polly Baker's Speech" (Franklin) 36
Poplin, Allen 286
Portage, Michigan 5-6
Porter, Noah 210
Port Huron, Michigan 32
Portland, Oregon
 The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 6
 Annie on My Mind 25
Port Saint Lucie, Florida 159
Post Office Department, U.S. *See* U.S. Post Office Department
Powell, Lewis 56
Pratt, George C. 56
Presidents Council, District 25 v. Community School Board, No. 25
 Dog Day Afternoon 114, 115
 Down These Mean Streets 116-117
Prohibition 31
Protheroe, Susan 18
Pulaski County, Kentucky 34

LITERATURE SUPPRESSED ON SOCIAL GROUNDS

Putnam County, Tennessee 240

Q

Queens, New York
Down These Mean Streets 116-117
To Have and Have Not 275
 "questionable content" 297
 Quinn, Nancy 78

R

Rabelais, François 322b
Gargantua and Pantagruel 150-153
 Rachel Freeman Elementary School (North Carolina) 198, 199
 racial slurs
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 5
The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman 40
Doctor Dolittle 111
Go Tell It on the Mountain 171
To Kill a Mockingbird 277, 278
Kingsblood Royal 204
Of Mice and Men 239
My House 227
 racism. *See also* anti-Semitism; anti-white sentiment
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 4-6
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer 11
The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman 39-41
Black Like Me 57-60
Doctor Dolittle 111-112
Gone with the Wind 167
A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Satchel 176-177
Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven 189-190
To Kill a Mockingbird 276-278
Kingsblood Royal 202-204
Little Black Sambo 212-214
Lord of the Flies 220
Manchild in the Promised Land 221-224
My House 227
One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest 245
Soul on Ice 259-262
Of Time and the River 242-243
 Rafferty, Max
A Dictionary of American Slang 109-110
Soul on Ice 260
 Ralph, James 35, 36
 Randolph, New York 245
 Random House 203
 Rankin County, Mississippi

Cujo 100
Go Ask Alice 164
The Red Pony (Steinbeck) 250-252
 "Red Scare" (1950s) 76
 "The Reeve's Tale" (Chaucer) 76
 Rehnquist, William H. 56
 "Remembrance" (Angelou) 20
 Renton, Washington 6
 Republican Party
The Giver 159
King of King 200
 Respect for All Youth Fund 121
 Reynal & Hitchcock 266
 Rhode Island
The Chocolate War 90
Go Ask Alice 164-165
 Richmond, Rhode Island 90
 Ridgefield, Connecticut 261
 Right-to-Life 102
 Riverside Unified School District, California
Captain Underpants 80-81
The Sun Also Rises 272-273
 Riviera, Texas 239
 Robbins, Harold 322b
Never Love a Stranger 235-237
 Robinson, W. J. 225
 Rockford, Illinois 5
 Rocklin, California 220
 Roggow, Curt 200
 Roman Catholic Church
Camille 74
Nana 234
 Rome, Andrew and James 208
 Roosevelt, Eleanor 221, 222
 Rossetti, William Michael 210-211
 Roswell, New Mexico 102
 Rothman, Nathan L. 236
Roth v. United States
The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin 36
Howl and Other Poems 179
 Roxbury, Stephen 190
 R.R. Bowker Company 127
 Russia
The Fixer 145-147
Last Exit to Brooklyn 206
The Scarlet Letter 254

S

Saari, Charles 121
 Saginaw, Michigan 97
 St. Anthony Freemont High School, Idaho 245-246
 St. Clair County, Michigan 32
 St. Cloud, Minnesota
Appointment in Samarra 32
A World I Never Made 302

St. David, Arizona 238
 St. Petersburg, Florida 91
 Salinas, Kansas 239
 Salinger, J. D. 322-323b
The Catcher in the Rye 84-88
 Samber, Robert 217
 same-sex relationships xii.
See also homosexuality; lesbianism
 San Antonio, Texas 177
 Sanders, Dave 48
 Sanders, Ed 270
 San Francisco, California
Howl and Other Poems 178-179
Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven 189, 190
 Sanger, Margaret 225
 San Jose, California 272
 San Ramon, California 25
 Santi, Pam 80-81
 Saul, Terry 277
 Savannah, Georgia 177
 Save Our Children 260
The Scarlet Letter (Hawthorne) 252-255
 Scholastic book club 135
 Schuman, Harry 275
 Sciacca, Rebecca 80
 Scott, Foresman publishers 5
 Scribners. *See* Charles Scribner's Sons
 Sedgwick, Maine 25
 Selby, Hubert, Jr. 323b
Last Exit to Brooklyn 204-208
 Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials 302
 Selincourt, Ernest de 211
 Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania 86
 Sendak, Maurice 323b
In the Night Kitchen 182-184
A Separate Peace (Knowles) 255-257, 296
 Sevierville County, Tennessee 5
 Shannon, George 323b
Unlived Affections 278-282
 Shannon, James 297
 Shaw, George Bernard 226
 Shawnee Mission, Kansas 25
 Sheffield, England 72
 Shelby County, Tennessee
Of Mice and Men 238-239
A Separate Peace 257
 Shelbyville, Indiana 201
 Shepherd, David 207
 Sherry, Vita M. 44
 Shippensburg, Pennsylvania 256-257
 Shulman, Irving 323b
The Amboy Dukes 13-15
 Sidell, Illinois 87

Signet Books 171
 Singer publishers 5
 Sister Carrie (Dreiser) 258-259
 Smith, Lillian 323-324b
Strange Fruit 264-267
 Smith, R. Lee 90
 Smith, Samuel 234
 Smith's Library (Britain) 132-133
 Socastee, South Carolina 122
 Society for the Suppression of Vice. *See also* National Vigilance Association; New York Society for the Suppression of Vice
Nana 234
A World I Never Made 301
 Solomon, Carl 196
 Solon, Iowa 18-19
 Somerset, Kentucky 34
 "Song of Myself" (Whitman) 208
 Souderton, Pennsylvania 97
Soul on Ice (Cleaver) 259-262
 South Carolina
The Catcher in the Rye 88
The Chocolate War 90
The Drowning of Stephen Jones 122
East of Eden 124
The Giver 160
Whale Talk 296
 South Dakota
Bless the Beasts and Children 62
Little House on the Prairie 216
Lord of the Flies 220
Ordinary People 248
 Southern Heights Ministerial Alliance 6
 South Kitsap, Washington 300
 South Portland, Maine 100
 Soviet Union (USSR)
The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes 8
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer 10
 Sparta, Illinois 100
 Springfield, Illinois 5
 Springfield, Missouri 183
 Springfield, Oregon 103
 Stade, George 119
 State College, Pennsylvania 5
 Stedman, Arthur 210
 Stedman, Edward Clarence 210
 Steinbeck, John 324b
East of Eden 122-124
Of Mice and Men 237-241
The Red Pony 250-252
Steppenwolf (Hesse) 262-264
 "Still I Rise" (Angelou) 20

- Stoker, Bram 324b
Dracula 117–119
- Stone, Kathleen 67
- Stopes, Marie 324b
Married Love 224–226
- Strange Fruit* (Smith) 264–267
- Stranger in a Strange Land* (Heinlein) 67, 267–270
- Straus, Roger W. 190
- Strong, Maine 181
- Strongsville, Ohio
Catch-22 83–84
One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest 245
- Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania 90
- Stuart, Florida 110
- Sturgis, South Dakota 216
- Subin, Jean 154–155
- Suffolk County, Massachusetts 126, 127
- Suhl, Isabelle 111
- suicide
Final Exit 143–144
The Giver 161
Ordinary People 247
We All Fall Down 285
- Sully Buttes, South Dakota 220
- Summerville, South Carolina 88
- Sumner, John S.
Apodrite 30
End as a Man 129
Gone with the Wind 166–167
The Well of Loneliness 292
A World I Never Made 301
- The Sun Also Rises* (Hemingway) 141, 271–273
- Sunizona, Arizona 64
- Supreme Court, U.S. See U.S. Supreme Court
- Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts
Naked Lunch 231
Strange Fruit 266–267
- Suwanee, Florida 239
- Swarthout, Glendon 324b
Bless the Beasts and Children 60–62
- Syracuse, Indiana 238
- Syracuse, New York 227
- T**
- Tariff Act of 1930
Gargantua and Pantagruel 152
Married Love 225
Naked Lunch 231
- Tatar, Maria 217
- Tate–La Bianca murders 270
- Taunton, Massachusetts 148
- Taylor, Sir Charles 206
- Taylor, Mike 87–88
- teen literature. See young adult literature
- Tell City, Indiana 238
- Teller, Fanny and Ida 225
- Tennessee
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 5
The Color Purple 97
Go Tell It on the Mountain 171
Of Mice and Men 238–240
A Separate Peace 257
- Ten Sleep, Wyoming 97
- Terkel, Studs 324–325b
Working 298–300
- Texas
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 5, 6
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer 11
The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language 16
Annie on My Mind 25
Another Country 28
The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman 41
Blubber 64
Brave New World 67
Bridge to Terabithia 69–70
Daddy's Roommate 102, 104
Dracula 119
The Drowning of Stephen Jones 121
Fallen Angels 138–139
A Farewell to Arms 142
A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich 177
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings 181–182
Little Black Sambo 213–214
Lord of the Flies 220
Of Mice and Men 239
In the Night Kitchen 184
Stranger in a Strange Land 270
Of Time and the River 243
We All Fall Down 285–286
- Texas State Textbook Commission
The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language 16
The Canterbury Tales 76
- Thibodaux, Louisiana 216
- Thiel, William 44
- Thomas, Piri 325b
Down These Mean Streets 115–117
- “Through the Inner City to the Suburbs” (Angelou) 20
- Tillamook, Oregon 102
- Tiverton, Rhode Island 164–165
- “To a Common Prostitute” (Whitman) 210
- To Have and Have Not* (Hemingway) 273–276
- To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee) 276–278
The Catcher in the Rye 86
Fallen Angels 138
- Toombs, Jennifer 48
- Toronto, Ontario
Little Black Sambo 213
Lord of the Flies 220
- “To the Royal Academy at Brussels” (Franklin) 36
- Touchier, Andy 48
- Tracy, John 126
- “Tralala” (Selby) 206
- Trilling, Lionel 5
- Trocchi, Alexander 325b
Cain's Book 70–72
- Troy, Illinois 257
- Tulsa, Oklahoma 86
- Tuscaloosa, Alabama 238
- Twain, Mark 325b
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn xi–xii, 3–7
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer 9–11
- Tyrone, Pennsylvania 97
- U**
- Union County, Florida 160–161
- United Kingdom 71–72
- United Parents Associations (UPA) 155
- United States President's Commission of Obscenity xii
- United States v. One Obscene Book Entitled “Married Love”* 225
- Unlived Affections* (Shannon) 278–282
- UPA (United Parents Associations) 155
- Urquhart, Sir Thomas 152
- U.S. Attorney General's Commission on Pornography xii
- U.S. Congress 199
- U.S. Customs Bureau
Apodrite 29, 30
Gargantua and Pantagruel 152
Howl and Other Poems 178, 179
Married Love 225
Naked Lunch 231
Nana 234
- U.S. Department of the Interior 210
- U.S. House of Representatives 302
- U.S. Information Agency 302
- U.S. Post Office Department
Appointment in Samarra 32
Elmer Gantry 127
Strange Fruit 266
- U.S. Supreme Court
The Best Short Stories by Negro Writers 56
The Fixer 147
The Naked Ape 229
- USSR. See Soviet Union
- Utah
A Clockwork Orange 94
A Day No Pigs Would Die 106
Grendel 173
Jaws 194
- V**
- Van Doren, Carl 301–302
- Vanguard Press
End as a Man 129
A World I Never Made 301
- Vaughn, Benjamin 36
- Vaillard, Guillaume Le 36
- Vergennes, Vermont 114–115
- Vermont 114–115
- Vernon-Verona-Sherrill School District, New York
A Farewell to Arms 142
To Kill a Mockingbird 277
Of Mice and Men 238
The Red Pony 251–252
A Separate Peace 256
- Vietnam War (*Fallen Angels*) 135–139
- Villiers 178
- violence
Bless the Beasts and Children 62
The Chocolate War 89
A Clockwork Orange 92–93
Cujo 98–100
A Day No Pigs Would Die 105–106
Deliverance 107–108
Grendel 174
Little Red Riding Hood 218
Lord of the Flies 219–221
We All Fall Down 282–287
- Virgil v. School Board of Columbia County* 77–78
- Virginia
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 5
Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl 23
Brave New World 67
The Chocolate War 91–92
The Color Purple 97
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings 182
Of Mice and Men 239
The Sun Also Rises 273
- Vizetelly, Henry 234
- Vizetelly publishers 234

LITERATURE SUPPRESSED ON SOCIAL GROUNDS

Vonnegut, Kurt, Jr. 325*b*
Welcome to the Monkey House 287–290

W

Wake County, North Carolina 20–21
 Wales, Wisconsin 299–300
 Walker, Alice 326*b*
The Color Purple 95–98
 Wallace, Janet 201
 Waller, Leslie. *See* Mann, Patrick
 Wallis, Linda 81
 Wall Township, New Jersey 164
 Walsh, John V. 154
 Warren Township, Indiana 277
 Warrington, Pennsylvania 5
 Warsaw, Indiana 53–54
 Wasco, California 173
 Washington (state)
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 6
The Catcher in the Rye 86–87
Daddy's Roommate 102
Invisible Man 186
One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest 246
Soul on Ice 261
And Still I Rise 21
Working 300
 Washington, Arizona 300
 Washington County, Alabama 100
 Washoe County, Nevada 16
 Watch and Ward Society
Appointment in Samarra 32
Elmer Gantry 126
A Farewell to Arms 142
Gone with the Wind 167
Leaves of Grass 210
Steppenwolf 263
The Sun Also Rises 272
 Waterloo, Iowa
The Catcher in the Rye 87
Lord of the Flies 220–221
Of Mice and Men 239
 Watkins, Steven N. 213
 Watkins Glen, New York 55
 Watson, James 149
 Watts, Charles 149

Waukegan, Illinois
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 5
Gone with the Wind 167
To Kill a Mockingbird 277
 Waukesha, Wisconsin
Bless the Beasts and Children 62
Manchild in the Promised Land 223
My House 227
 Waupaca, Wisconsin 106
 Wayne County, Michigan 275
We All Fall Down (Cormier) 282–287
 Weathersby, Dorothy 5
Welcome to the Monkey House (Vonnegut) 287–290
The Well of Loneliness (Hall) 290–293
 Wentworth, Harold 326*b*
A Dictionary of American Slang 109–110
 West Chester, Pennsylvania
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer 11
Fallen Angels 138
 Western fiction (*The Ox-Bow Incident*) 249–250
 West Genesee High School (Syracuse, New York) 227
 West Hernando, Florida 90
 Westminster, Maryland 89–90
 Westminster County, Colorado 110
 Westport, Connecticut 95
 Westport, Massachusetts 245
 West Virginia
Go Ask Alice 164
Of Mice and Men 238
Whale Talk (Crutcher) 293–298
 Wheaton-Warrenville, Illinois 238
 Wheelock, John 272
 White, James 286
 Whitman, Walt 326*b*
Leaves of Grass 208–211
 “The Wife of Bath’s Tale” (Chaucer) 76
 Wilder, Laura Ingalls 326*b*
Little House on the Prairie 215–216

Willhoite, Michael 326*b*
Daddy's Roommate 101–104
 Williams, Karen 44
 Williams, William Carlos 178
 Willingham, Calder 327*b*
End as a Man 127–130
 Wilmington, North Carolina 198–199
 Wilms, Denise 189
 Wilson, Geraldine 189
 Wilson, John Anthony Burgess. *See* Burgess, Anthony
 Winnetka, Illinois 5
 Wisconsin
The Amboy Dukes 14
Baby Be-Bop 44
Black Like Me 59
Bless the Beasts and Children 62
Blubber 64
The Catcher in the Rye 87
Cujo 100
A Day No Pigs Would Die 106
The Drowning of Stephen Jones 122
Gone with the Wind 167
Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven 189
James and the Giant Peach 192
Manchild in the Promised Land 223
My House 227
In the Night Kitchen 183
Working 299–300
A World I Never Made 302
 Wise County, Virginia 23
 Wolfe, Thomas 327*b*
Of Time and the River 241–243
 “A Woman Waits for Me” (Whitman) 210
 Woolsey, John M. 225
Working People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do (Terkel) 298–300
A World I Never Made (Farrell) 300–303
 World War I
A Farewell to Arms 139–143
The Sun Also Rises 271

World War II (*Catch-22*) 82–84
 Wyoming
Blubber 64
The Catcher in the Rye 87
The Color Purple 97

X

Xenia, Ohio 64

Y

Yakima, Washington 186
 young adult literature
The Amboy Dukes 13–15
Am I Blue? 17–19
Annie on My Mind 23–26
Baby Be-Bop 41–46
Bless the Beasts and Children 60–62
Blubber 62–65
The Chocolate War 88–92
A Day No Pigs Would Die 104–106
Fallen Angels 135–139
The Giver 156–162
Go Ask Alice 162–165
A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich 176–177
To Kill a Mockingbird 276–278
Little House on the Prairie 215–216
Lord of the Flies 219–221
The Red Pony 250–252
Unlived Affections 278–282
We All Fall Down 282–287
Whale Talk 293–298
 Yugoslavia 234
 Yukon, Oklahoma 67

Z

Zemach, Margot 327*b*
Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven 187–190
 Zola, Émile 327*b*
Nana 232–235
Zykan v. Warsaw (IN) Community School Corporation and Warsaw School Board of Trustees 53–54