

Call for Manuscripts, Study and Scrutiny, Volume 6, Issue 1

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: ~~JULY 31, 2022~~ SEPTEMBER 30, 2022

CENSORSHIP AND YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE: INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM, READING RIGHTS, & READING ACTIVISM

While censorship has always been an issue that classroom teachers and educational institutions are faced with, the American Library Association reports receiving an “unprecedented” number of book challenges and bans in Fall of 2021 (Hlywak, 2021). In 2022, this trend continues with outlets like the American Library Association and Book Riot documenting book challenges and bans on a daily basis. Many challenges come from parents or community members, but some are being spearheaded by political officials and activist groups. In Texas, for example, Republican representative Matt Krause compiled a list of 850+ books that he believed “might make students feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress because of their race or sex” and asked school districts to report if any of the books on the list were present in schools (Chappell, 2021). The vast majority of the books on the list included LGBTQ+ characters or content, but other books focused on topics such as race and racism, sex education, pregnancy, and abortion (Ellis, 2021). Similarly, a Tennessee school board recently made headlines for banning Art Spiegelman’s Pulitzer Prize winning graphic novel *Maus* for foul language and nudity (Boyette, 2022). Thus, texts previously thought immune to censorship based on their status as award winners or canonical texts have proven susceptible to book bans and challenges in the current era.

Authors, librarians, researchers, teachers, and others have spoken out against the dangers of censorship. Renowned young adult literature author Laurie Halse Anderson calls censorship “the child of fear and the father of ignorance” (Anderson, 2013) and has taken to social media and conferences to decry recent bans and challenges. National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature and acclaimed young adult author Jason Reynolds reminds us that for some youth, schools are the only places that they have access to the literature they need (*I Love Lib Admin*, 2021). Banning books from schools and libraries can be seen as akin to banning certain identities and limits readers’ exposure to a variety of ideas and experiences. Recently, the 2022 Summit on the Research

and Teaching of Young Adult Literature has sought to address concerns of censorship and young adult literature asking speakers to consider how books can function as lifelines during a time when people are actively seeking to burn the bridges books create.

With this in mind, we arrive at a call for *critical* and *empirical studies* as well as *theoretical* and *conceptual manuscripts* that examine and explore censorship as it relates to young adult literature. Some possible questions or topics for consideration include:

- What is the history of censorship as it relates to young adult literature? How has censorship changed according to historical, social, and cultural contexts? What implications do the motivations of censors have for students, teachers, scholars, and other stakeholders?
- When young adult literature is censored from schools, what identities, experiences, topics, genres, and formats are subjected to censorship and what implications does this have for a free and just society?
- How can theory help us to better understand or conceptualize the potential harm caused by censorship? How can theories such as critical race theory, queer theory, feminist theory, youth lenses and so on help students, teachers, scholars, and other stakeholders understand and combat censorship?
- Does it indeed cause readers discomfort, guilt, anguish, or some other form of distress to engage with frequently banned or challenged young adult literature and if so, is this a negative or potentially positive experience? Alternatively, does reading banned or challenged books, especially those about marginalized groups and identities, support the growth and development of youth as well as their social, emotional, and mental health?
- How have teachers leveraged banned or challenged books in literacy contexts to support student critical literacy and cultural responsiveness?
- How might methodologies such as youth participatory action research be used to support intellectual freedom and readings rights in school settings and other educational contexts?

In addition to critical and empirical studies (8,000-12,000 words, including tables, figures, and references), focused on the above potential topics, we also welcome shorter submissions in the following areas and encourage contributions that perhaps we have not envisioned:

- Pieces reflecting on challenges in your area (250-500 words)
- Recommendations, procedures, processes, etc. for addressing challenges (250-1000 words)

- Interviews or discussions with authors and illustrators whose work has been challenged or banned (1000-3000 words)
- Best practices and/or guides for selecting, teaching, and using controversial, challenged, or banned texts in educational contexts (250-1000 words)

Submit articles with a title page, as a Microsoft Word file to crag.a.hill@ou.edu. Manuscripts should be written in Times New Roman 12-point font. Manuscripts should be double-spaced with 1” margins and should follow the 7th edition of the APA style guide.

All references to the author(s) should be removed from the body of the manuscript in preparation for blind review. However, the title page should include the following: author contact information, a 100-word abstract, 5-8 keywords, an originality statement, a 2-3 sentence author bio, and social media information.

Author of this call for manuscripts is Dani Kachorsky, guest editor for S & S Issue 6.1.

DANI KACHORSKY is a high school English teacher researcher at Brophy College Preparatory. Her research focuses on how readers transact with multimodal texts such as graphic novels and the pedagogical approaches that support the use of these texts in classrooms and other contexts.

Study and Scrutiny: Research on Young Adult Literature is a peer-reviewed, open access journal. As such it provides immediate access to its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge.

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