

A Bibliographical Primer To Intellectual Freedom

Gene D. Lanier

"Certainly, I believe in intellectual freedom and the right of an individual to choose." How many librarians have made this statement but have never really analyzed their true philosophy concerning this very important issue in the profession? Most librarians have never asked themselves to what lengths they will go in defending the right to read, view, and listen.

Unfortunately, many persons in the library profession profess the merits of intellectual freedom but truly do not know what it is, how to deal with censorship problems, or how current interpretation of First Amendments rights evolved. As the censor in the 1980s continues to raise its ugly head and almost overnight many have become self-proclaimed advocates of "clean" literature, the library profession should ready itself for the onslaughts to come.

Unless librarians, as disseminators of information in a public place, are well versed in these areas, they could find themselves in very awkward and very dangerous positions. Having a written, approved selection policy and procedures for handling complaints are not enough. It will be necessary for librarians to vocalize their stand and philosophy concerning intellectual freedom. Simply believing in the concept is not sufficient.

In order to be well prepared and to be able to analyze their own feelings, it is suggested that librarians begin a personal, intensive reading campaign in order that they may operate from a firm and well thought out foundation. By engaging in this endeavor, the librarian will be ready before the censor comes and will be more adept at adhering to the true interpretation of First Amendment rights and due process. Oftentimes, the librarian with an unsolidified philosophy operates unconsciously as a "closet censor." Becoming a First Amendment purist takes much thought, research and questioning.

Following is a plan to help librarians accomplish this critical and timely responsibility:

Step 1: Peruse the Past

Haight, Anne L. and Chandler B. Grannis, *Banned Books, 387 B.C. to 1978 A.D.*, New York: Bowker, 1978.

Fourth edition giving chronological listing of books banned through the centuries. Appendix section includes trends, statements, excerpts from court decisions and the report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, and selected U.S. laws and regulations.

Moon, Eric (editor), ***Book Selection and Censorship in the Sixties***, New York: Bowker, 1969.

Primarily an anthology of articles written for *Library Journal*.

National Council of Teachers of English, ***Meeting Censorship in the School: A Series of Case Studies***, Champaign: Author, 1967.

Short case reports of events as they happen and incidents involving the censorship of such standards as *The Catcher in the Rye*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and 1984.

Step 2: Check the Philosophy of the "Big Boys"

Berninghausen, David K., ***The Flight from Reason***, Chicago: American Library Association, 1975.

Essays urging the reaffirmation of faith in reason, dialogue and objective scholarship. Concerned with threats to intellectual freedom from both left and right.

Davis, James E., ***Dealing with Censorship***, Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1979.

Very good articles on how to combat problems with textbooks and reading assignments.

Downs, Robert B. (editor), ***The First Freedom***, Chicago: American Library Association, 1960.

An anthology of the most notable writings of American and British authors in the field of book censorship and intellectual freedom. Excellent name index.

Freedom of the Press, Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1980.

Excellent articles reprinted for the American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation from *Today's Education*, *NEA Journal*. Includes information on the student press and teaching strategies for the free press.

Oboler, Eli M., ***Defending Intellectual Freedom: The Library and the Censor, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood press, 1980.***

Idaho State University librarian expresses his "purist" philosophy through previously published articles, editorials, letters, and reviews, as well as a great deal of new material. He also reviews recent literature on censorship.

The Speaker and the Listener: A Public Perspective on Freedom of Expression, New York: The Public Agenda Foundation, 1980.

Presents a framework for understanding the public's role in debates about freedom of expression in the media. Closed-end interviews and a national opinion survey showing the attitudes of the general public. Very good analysis and interpretation.

Woodworth, Mary L. (editor), *The Young Adult and Intellectual Freedom*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Library School, 1977.

Down-to-earth speeches presented at institutes sponsored by the library science programs at Madison, Milwaukee, and Oshkosh.

Step 3: Look at the Law

DeGrazia, Edward, *Censorship Landmarks*, New York: R. R. Bowker, 1969.

Cites court cases covering the years 1663-1968 that can be viewed as legal stepping-stones used in the slow move from conditions of widespread censorship to something approaching full freedom with respect to books, magazines, stage presentations, motion pictures, and oral expressions having to do with sex. Do not miss the excellent introduction.

Kurland, Philip B. (editor), *Free Speech and Association; The Supreme Court and the First Amendment*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1975.

Scholarly essays analyzing Supreme Court decisions on First Amendment rights.

Norwick, Kenneth P., *Lobbying For Freedom; Censorship*, Chicago: The Playboy Foundation, 1974.

Explains functions of a legislature and how to lobby on a bill.

The Supreme Court Obscenity Decisions, San Diego: Greenleaf Classics, 1973.

The complete text of decisions and dissents and the text of the rehearing petition along with an overview by a competent constitutional attorney.

Step 4: Examine Selection Policies and Procedures

Busha, Charles H., *Freedom versus Suppression and Censorship*, Littleton, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited, 1972.

A scientific research study showing that librarians profess a more liberal attitude with respect to intellectual freedom than they practice—the contrast between theory and practice. Studies the attitudes of Midwestern public librarians. Very good bibliography.

Merritt, LeRoy C., *Book Selection and Intellectual Freedom*, New York: H. W. Wilson, 1970.

Basic guidelines, especially for public libraries on writing selection policies and counteracting pressure groups.

Office for Intellectual Freedom, *Intellectual Freedom Manual*, Chicago: American Library Association, 1974.

Answers many practical questions that confront librarians in applying the principles of intellectual freedom to service. Identifies concrete examples of the kinds of problems librarians can expect to encounter.

Stanek, Lou W., ***Censorship; A Guide for Teachers, Librarians, and Others Concerned with Intellectual Freedom***, New York: Dell, 1976.

Brief handbook with suggestions for handling attempted censorship based on publications from professional organizations concerned with First Amendment rights.

Taylor, Mary M. (editor), ***School Library and Media Center Acquisitions Policies and Procedures***, Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1981.

Gives reprints of the full or partial selection policies for fifty-two school systems across the nation. Excellent examples.

Step 5: Analyze Your Philosophy

Anderson, A. J., ***Problems in Intellectual Freedom and Censorship***, New York: Bowker, 1974.

Gives the reader an opportunity to provide solutions to problems. Presents case studies that serve as vehicles through which the librarian can test, in application, the limits of both personal and professional concepts of free access to information.

Busha, Charles H. (editor), ***An Intellectual Freedom Primer***, Littleton: Libraries Unlimited, 1977.

Essays discussing developments in the twentieth century that have contributed to erosions of First Amendment rights. Helps librarians understand sub-areas of freedom of speech, such as expression in the visual arts, performing arts, motion pictures, and other media.

Lewis, Felice F., ***Literature, Obscenity, and Law***, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1976.

A systematic, comparative, and comprehensive view of literature's involvement in the obscenity question. She quotes extensively from the literature itself making it possible for the reader to reflect on the matter of artistic creations and one's own personal philosophy. Extensive notes and index.

Ramer, Leonard V., ***Your Sexual Bill of Rights***. New York: Exposition Press, 1973.

An analysis of the harmful effects of sexual prohibitions that still exist in America.

Step 6: Stay Up To Date

Office for Intellectual Freedom, ***Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom***, Chicago: American Library Association.

Bimonthly with up-to-date articles and reports on censorship problems and successes around the country. Outstanding way to stay contemporary for \$10 per year subscription.

O'Neil, Robert M., *Classrooms in the Crossfire*, Bloomington: Indiana University, 1981.

Recent examination of the rights and interests of students, parents, teachers, administrators, librarians, and the community. Discusses religious and child-rearing beliefs that may differ; special interest groups; ethnic minorities; private schools; and the community as a whole. Excellent advice that centers on current problems now evident in North Carolina.

Gene D. Lanier, Chairman, NCLA Intellectual Freedom Committee, has been a President of NCLA and highly visible library educator in North Carolina.

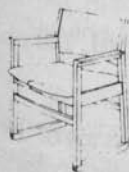


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