

# Censorship or Selection? Academic Library Holdings Of the Top Ten Most Challenged Books of 2007

By Rickey Best

## Abstract

Academic libraries often serve as the protectors of challenged books. Pressure on public libraries to remove controversial works can and often does result in the restriction of access or removal of the work from those libraries shelves. Academic libraries, however, operate with a stronger sense of academic and intellectual freedom. To analyze how well academic libraries do in acquiring and making available books which appear on the American Library Association's Challenged Books list, the list for 2007 was analyzed in WorldCat to determine the number and overall percentage of academic libraries holding the titles. Overall, 29.94% of the libraries holding challenged books were academic libraries.

## Introduction

While academic libraries are generally free from the challenges of items faced by school and public librarians, issues concerning selection remain. Selection choices are generally directed by collection development policies which are aligned with institutional curricula. But do academic libraries shy away from books which might be considered controversial? Or are the intellectual freedom issues and curricular development strong enough to overcome personal hesitations to add a controversial title like Madonna's *Sex*? Does the inclusion of specific courses within the university curricula which deal with children's or young adult literature have an influence on the addition of titles? Perhaps the inclusion of a School of Education or Library and Information Science has an influence? Does geographic location make a difference in terms of the cultural mores impacting decisions on selecting?

## The Top Ten Challenged Books of 2007

The American Library Association's top ten most challenged books for the year 2007 list was chosen since the time frame between the publication of the list and the inclusion of a library's holdings in OCLC's WorldCat was sufficient to allow for the purchase and inclusion of recently published title(s). The

list, posted on the ALA website<sup>1</sup>, lists as the most challenged books the following:

1. *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson & Peter Parnell. (2005)
2. *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier. (1974)
3. *Olive's Ocean* by Kevin Henkes. (2003)
4. *The Golden Compass* by Philip Pullman. (1995)
5. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain. (1884)
6. *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker. (1982)
7. *TTYL* by Lauren Myracle. (2004)
8. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou. (1969)
9. *It's Perfectly Normal* by Robie Harris. (1994)
10. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky. (1999)

## Intellectual Freedom vs. Censorship

The Office of Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association annually prepares a list of the most challenged books in libraries. In examining the information from the OIF's *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* for the past three years, we see few challenges involving academic libraries.<sup>2</sup> The majority of these challenges were for artistic and intellectual freedom, such as the inclusion of art exhibits or the intellectual

freedom issues not related to printed works. The vast majority of challenges, however, are to be found in public and school libraries over the inclusion of specific works within the libraries collections.

Anne Scott MacLeod addresses the issues affecting censorship of children's literature in her book *American Childhood: Essays on Children's Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth century's*. MacLeod argues the debate over censorship of children's literature is based upon whether children have the same intellectual rights as adults have – is the concept of intellectual freedom applicable to children? Is that concept, in fact, even compatible with the concept of childhood?"<sup>3</sup> MacLeod identifies two assumptions to modern views of childhood. She writes that —The first [assumption] is that children need to be separated to some degree from adult life until they have been educated or ripened in some important way. The second is that adults have something of value to teach children, so that the very concept of childhood in modern history is closely associated with that of nurture, training, and conscious education of the child by responsible adults."<sup>4</sup> The concepts of nurture, training, and conscious education of the child include two contradictory elements as described by MacLeod. The first is that —modern middle-class childhood is managed, directed, organized and defined by adults, for the good of the child and the good of society, as adults see both. And management of childhood implies restrictions of children, usually by separating them from some aspects of society and by curtailing their access to some kinds of knowledge, experience and resources- including books."<sup>5</sup>

MacLeod traces the historical evolution of children's literature, recognizing the societal

changes in the late twentieth century which argues that —children should learn as soon as possible the realities of the world they live in – even the hardest and most unsavory realities" which is balanced against those who argue for restriction based on —the good of society."<sup>6</sup> This fear of the influence of children's books on the easily susceptible is the underlying element in censorship in the public and school libraries. Parents, find reasons to want books banned from libraries. The censorship for the —good of society" approach is identified by Lester Asheim as a means of —authoritarian control" in his essay —Not Censorship, but Selection" which appeared in the *Wilson Library Bulletin* in 1953, and has since been placed on the ALA Website.<sup>7</sup>

Within the academy, notes Charlene C. Cain, —the experience of censorship by academic libraries is different from that of public and school libraries...." Cain goes on to cite the protections provided by the intellectual freedom principles of the American Library Association as well as the standards for academic freedom adopted by the American Association of University Professors.<sup>8</sup> Decisions over selection, however, are not always easy to make. Asheim highlighted the subtle differences between selection and censorship in his essay —Not Censorship but Selection."<sup>9</sup> Asheim demonstrated three elements of censorship using George Bernard Shaw's work, *Ulysses*. The first where law prevented the importation of *Ulysses*, i.e., the work was banned by law; the second, where the librarian refuses to circulate the work; and the third instance, where a work —is banned from an entire community by the extra-legal pressure of a small segment of the community."<sup>10</sup> As Asheim notes, —itsi the scope of the ban which distinguishes the second and third instances: the librarian controls only the content of his own

institution; the pressure group attempts to control the content of all institutions, whether under their jurisdiction or not.”<sup>11</sup> The distinction, for Asheim lies in the approaches taken by the individuals wishing to ban a book and the librarian who wishes to select a book. The censor looks for the negative attributes of a work – its ideas, weaknesses, and possibilities for misinterpretation. The librarian, on the other hand, looks at the positive elements of a work – its values, its strengths, its virtues which will overshadow its minor faults. The positive approach of the selector asks what “the reaction of a rational, intelligent adult would be to the content of a work,” whereas the censor “fears the results on the weak, the warped, and the irrational.”<sup>12</sup>

Asheim addresses the distinction between censorship and selection by saying that librarians select titles in terms of “standards,” but that “some of our standards are sufficiently subjective, sufficiently vague, and sufficiently imprecise to serve the uses of the censors as well as of the selectors.”<sup>13</sup> The standards articulated by Asheim include the intent of the author, the literary excellence of the work, and the presumed effect upon the reader. All of these standards, Asheim argues, contain a subjective element imposed by either the censor or the selector. “If we have almost no evidence that books are harmful, we have less that they are not, and it is quite understandable that those who favor censorship should advocate wariness against materials which may be harmful.”<sup>14</sup>

DeVinney analyzes the history of academic freedom in regards to academic libraries and quotes from the ALA policy statement “Tenure in Libraries” that “librarians claimed for themselves intellectual freedom, and defined it as the freedom to develop, maintain, and improve library service...freedom in the selection of books,

in the presentation of materials on all sides of controversial materials questions, and in the dissemination of information on all subjects...”<sup>15</sup> Later revisions of the policy statement focus more specifically on procedural and policy issues to align with the standards on academic freedom and process developed by the American Association of University Professors.<sup>16</sup>

The addition of children’s and young adult literature to academic library collections has been reflected in the literature by authors such as Elaine Gass Hirsch,<sup>17, 18</sup> and Mark T. Bay.<sup>19</sup> Hirsch noted the appeal of the literature as “encompassing college students and adults who are not studying it as part of their academic pursuits. While most students and faculty in a college’s education and library science programs understand the role of children’s literature in literacy development and the importance of integrating literature into the lives of children... many other clientele of academic libraries... could enjoy and benefit from it.”<sup>20</sup> Bay noted that librarians in institutions with colleges or schools of Education are “frequently charged with maintaining and developing collections of children’s literature.”<sup>21</sup>

The influence of intellectual freedom has served to protect academic libraries from parents and members of the public protesting the inclusion of specific works. The basis of intellectual freedom can be found in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which reads “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”<sup>22</sup> However, as noted in the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the American Library Association’s *Intellectual*

*Freedom Manual*, —. in academic libraries, as in all others, the greatest dangers to intellectual freedom are internal rather than external.”<sup>23</sup> These “internal” dangers are primarily reflected in selection decisions.

### **Academic Library Selection of Children and Young Adult Literature**

To examine selection patterns by academic libraries, an examination of the top ten most challenged books of 2007 was conducted. Using OCLC’s WorldCat, an analysis was conducted examining library holdings of the books cited in the 2007 list within the United States. The analysis included the holdings of public and school libraries and academic libraries for institutions that offering a bachelor’s degree or higher. While recognizing that not all public and school libraries include their holdings in WorldCat, the importance of the database to academic libraries allows for a reasonably accurate analysis of academic library holdings.

In looking at the list of challenged books for 2007, of note are the original publication dates of the works, which range from 1884 (*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*) to 2005 (*And Tango Makes Three*). The average number of years between original publication and the work appearing on the 2007 challenged books list is fifteen years.<sup>24</sup> Because of the length of time that *Huckleberry Finn* has been in print, a decision was made to include only those editions which were held by a minimum of 100 libraries. For all works, the count was

limited to editions in the English language only.

The 2007 Bowker Annual lists 17,046 public libraries within the United States, and 2,591 University and College Libraries.<sup>25</sup> For the purposes of this project, World Cat records for the 2007 top ten challenged books were examined. The analysis consisted of examining the total number of libraries which had holdings for a particular record, then counting the number of academic libraries which held a copy of that specific work. For this exercise, academic libraries were defined as four-year colleges and universities, both public and private. Community and junior colleges were not included, though a number of libraries in such categories did hold copies of the works in question. To determine the proportion of holdings, an examination was conducted of the 58<sup>th</sup> edition of *American Library Directory*.<sup>26</sup> This edition of the *Library Directory* listed 9,734 public libraries (excluding branch libraries) in the United States, and 2,573 academic libraries at four-year schools. The total number of all libraries within the United States, including branch libraries, medical, law, government, special, and armed forces libraries came to 30,416.<sup>27</sup> Breaking this number out by region, the northeast has the most libraries (7,662), followed by the Midwest (6,747), the West (3,138), the Southeast (2,936) and the Southwest (2,436) for a total of 22,919 unique libraries, excluding branches. Table 1 provides a census by region of the libraries found in the 2005-2006 edition of *American Library Directory*.

**Table 1**  
**Number of Libraries by Type and Region**

<b>Region</b>	<b># Public Libraries</b>	<b># Academic Libraries</b>	<b>Total Libraries*</b>
<b>Midwest</b>	3,640	490	6,747
<b>Northeast</b>	2,809	549	7,662
<b>Southeast</b>	1,172	344	2,936
<b>Southwest</b>	1,151	194	2,436
<b>West</b>	918	223	3,138
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,690</b>	<b>1,800</b>	<b>22,919</b>

\* The total includes all libraries, including government, business, and special.

The totals for each title were listed by state. The states were then organized by geographic region, according to the geographic descriptors provided by Olsgaard and Olsgaard.<sup>28</sup> Table 2 indicates the number of libraries and the percentages of academic libraries holding a copy of a title

broken out by region. It should be noted that the table includes a column for "Total Held by All Libraries." This total includes predominantly public and academic libraries, although some special libraries are included in these totals.

**Table 2**  
**Challenged book Holdings by Title and Region**

<b>Book Title</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Total Held by all Libraries</b>	<b>Academic Libraries Held</b>	<b>% Held by Academic Libraries</b>
<i>And Tango Makes Three</i>	Midwest	242	6	2.47%
	Northeast	92	1	1.08%
	Southeast	132	9	6.81%
	Southwest	25	0	0.00%
	West	97	1	1.03%
<b>Total</b>		<b>588</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2.89%</b>
<i>The Chocolate War</i>	Midwest	1,051	271	18.05%
	Northeast	598	164	27.42%
	Southeast	539	169	31.35%
	Southwest	257	89	34.63%
	West	544	105	19.30%
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,439</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>23.20%</b>
<i>Olive's Ocean</i>	Midwest	1,941	378	19.47%
	Northeast	642	274	42.67%

	Southeast	705	213	30.21%
	Southwest	356	131	36.79%
	West	930	158	16.98%
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,574</b>	<b>1,154</b>	<b>25.23%</b>
<i>The Golden Compass</i>	Midwest	2,196	246	11.20%
	Northeast	786	277	28.88%
	Southeast	808	186	23.01%
	Southwest	376	111	29.52%
	West	967	130	13.44%
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,133</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>17.53%</b>
<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>	Midwest	8,392	2,202	26.23%
	Northeast	5,259	2,215	42.11%
	Southeast	3,860	1,551	40.18%
	Southwest	2,256	998	44.23%
	West	3,141	1,129	35.94%
<b>Total</b>		<b>22,908</b>	<b>8,905</b>	<b>38.87%</b>
<i>The Color Purple</i>	Midwest	3,020	648	21.45%
	Northeast	1,719	682	39.67%
	Southeast	1,805	562	31.13%
	Southwest	716	279	38.96%
	West	1,460	303	20.75%
<b>Total</b>		<b>8,720</b>	<b>2,474</b>	<b>28.37%</b>
<i>TTYL</i>	Midwest	648	28	4.32%
	Northeast	208	17	8.17%
	Southeast	224	18	8.03%
	Southwest	98	11	11.22%
	West	300	9	3.00%
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,478</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>5.62%</b>
<i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i>	Midwest	1,641	392	23.88%
	Northeast	941	414	43.99%
	Southeast	838	294	35.08%
	Southwest	368	167	45.38%
	West	670	175	26.11%

<b>Total</b>		<b>4,448</b>	<b>1,432</b>	<b>32.19%</b>
<i>It's Perfectly Normal</i>	Midwest	784	151	23.07%
	Northeast	347	121	34.87%
	Southeast	367	87	23.70%
	Southwest	188	57	30.31%
	West	429	75	17.48%
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,119</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>23.09%</b>
<i>The Perks of Being a Wallflower</i>	Midwest	776	79	10.18%
	Northeast	272	74	27.20%
	Southeast	252	63	25.00%
	Southwest	157	35	22.29%
	West	363	37	10.19%
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,820</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>15.82%</b>
<b>Total (All Regions)</b>		<b>55,227</b>	<b>16,539</b>	<b>29.94%</b>

Analyzing the results by region, a measure was taken of the percentage of academic libraries which held the titles in question. For the top ten challenged books of 2007, the percentage of academic libraries holding the titles are as follows: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was first with 38.87% all of the regions reporting; *I know why the Caged Bird Sings* was second with 32.19%, *The Color Purple* was in third place with 28.37%; *Olive's Ocean* was in fourth place 25.23%; *The Chocolate War* was fifth, with 23.20% of the copies held by academic libraries; *It's Perfectly Normal* was sixth, with 23.09%; *The Golden Compass* was seventh, with 17.53%; *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* was eighth, with 15.82% held by academic libraries; *TTYL* was ninth, with 5.62% held by academic libraries; finally, *And Tango Makes Three* was tenth, with 2.89% of the academic libraries holding a copy of the book. Overall, 29.94% of the libraries holding copies of the challenged books for 2007 were held by four-year

college and university libraries, even though these libraries comprise only 7.85% of the total population sample.

The totals of the challenged books held by academic libraries as a percentage of all libraries by region (excluding branch and departmental libraries) are shown in Table 3. In comparing holdings amongst the regions by combining all ten of the challenged titles, it appears that academic libraries in the southwest do a better job percentage wise of acquiring challenged books. In the southwest, 39.14% of the holdings in challenged books were by academic libraries, followed by 39.01% for the northeast, 33.07% for the southeast, 23.84% for the west, and 21.30% for the Midwest. The southwest, however, also has the smallest number of libraries holding a title on the 2007 challenged book list, with 4,797 libraries holding copies. This is only 8.76% of the total libraries. Conversely, the Midwest has the largest percentage of total

libraries, with 37.72% of the total. Of the total number of academic libraries holding challenged books, the Midwest has the highest percentage of the regions with

27.87%, followed by the Northeast with 26.84%, the Southeast with 19.96%, the West, with 13.44%, and the Southwest with 11.89%.

**Table 3**  
**Challenged Books Held by Libraries By Region**

Challenged Books Held By Region	Total Challenged Books Held by All Libraries	Percentage Held by Libraries by Region	Total Challenged Books Held by Academic Libraries	Total Percentage Books Held by Academic Libraries	Percentage of Books Held by Academic Libraries by Region
Midwest	20,655	37.72%	4,401	21.30%	27.87%
Northeast	10,864	19.84%	4,239	39.01%	26.84%
Southeast	9,530	17.40%	3,152	33.07%	19.96%
Southwest	4,797	8.76%	1,878	39.14%	11.89%
West	8,901	16.25%	2,122	23.84%	13.44%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,747</b>	<b>99.97%</b>	<b>15,792</b>	<b>28.84%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Curricular influences appear to play a significant role in the selection of materials by academic libraries. To determine curricular influence, a random sample of the 15,792 academic institutions was conducted. A total of 430 institutions were selected (see Appendix A for a list of the institutions examined). The websites and course catalogs of these institutions were examined to determine whether there were teacher education programs being taught at the institution and if there were courses being taught on children's literature. The course could be taught outside of the school or department of education.

The results of the survey indicated that 87.2% (375) of the colleges and universities examined had a school, college, or department of education and 12.79% (55) did not. Additionally, the course descriptions at these institutions indicated that a course on children's or adolescent literature, reading, and/or literacy was taught

at 86.28% (371) of the institutions. In the course catalog descriptions, children's or adolescent literature was specifically mentioned. Applying these percentages to the total number of academic institutions equates to 13,625 having teacher education infrastructures and coursework utilizing children's literature.

In terms of the top ten states with libraries (public, private, and special) holding copies of challenged books, the rankings are as follows:

1. New York 777
2. Illinois 641
3. Texas 568
4. Iowa 532
5. Pennsylvania 518
6. Michigan 501
7. Wisconsin 392
8. Massachusetts 370
9. Kansas 320
10. New Jersey 310



The top ten states with academic library holdings for challenged books are:

1. New York 140
2. Pennsylvania 121
3. California 97
4. Texas 83
5. Ohio 79
6. Illinois 74
7. Massachusetts 65
8. Michigan 62
9. Maine 62
10. Florida 62

### Geographic Influences

Does geographic location have an influence on the probability of selection of challenged titles? If so, what figures influence regional selection? In considering the influence of geographic region, an examination was undertaken as to influences such as median household income and literacy / reading skills by region, using the Digest for Education Statistics, 2007.<sup>29</sup>

In examining the data, we see inconsistencies in the correlation between median household income and reading scores of children at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level. Table 4 provides the data broken out by region.

**Table 4**  
**Median Household Income and Reading Scores of 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students**

Region	Median Household Income	Average Reading Scores for 8 <sup>th</sup> Graders in Public Schools
Midwest	\$47,405	266.41
Northeast	\$53,935	265.33
Southeast	\$42,425	259.66
Southwest	\$40,229	255.42
West	\$51,214	260.63
<b>Average Total</b>	<b>\$47,042</b>	<b>261.49</b>

Notably, the Midwest, with the third highest Median Household income, has the highest average reading scores. Thus, an inconsistent correlation between median income and reading scores exists. In terms of median income, regional rankings are Northeast, West, Midwest, Southeast, and Southwest, while the average reading scores are Midwest first, followed by the Northeast, West, Southeast, and Southwest. In considering the data, we recognize that the largest metropolitan areas (Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle) with more diversified

revenue streams are located primarily in the Northeast and West coast. The Midwest, with median income slightly above the average, lacks, with the exception of Chicago, major urban / industrial centers. The average reading scores, however, reflect the continuing influence of European immigrants to the region. The Swedish, Norwegian, German, and other immigrant groups influenced the region in the importance and value of education. The Southeast and Southwest, both primarily rural areas with lower median incomes, historically have been impacted by a lack of

value assigned to education, as well as by the impact of the new wave of immigrants entering the country through Mexico.

The influence of income and reading can also be seen in the data when one examines the total number of libraries holding challenged books. For 2007, the total number of libraries holding challenged books was highest in the Midwest, followed by the Northeast, Southeast, West, and Southwest. To focus upon academic libraries and their holdings, an examination of the NCES academic library comparison database was undertaken, examining library reports on expenditures on print materials

(books and serial backfiles), total library expenditures, full-time equivalent enrollment. Retrieving this data for the academic libraries included in the sample, medians were calculated by region. Table 5 provides data on academic library expenditures and median challenged book holdings per expenditure. Since there is an observed inconsistency of correlation between median income and reading scores, an analysis was undertaken of median library expenditures as reported in the NCES data for 2008.<sup>30</sup> Table 6 shows the median book expenditures, the median total library expenditures, and the median FTE for colleges and universities by region.

**Table 5**  
**Percentage of Median Challenged Books per Academic Library Book and Total Expenditures**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Median Book Expenditures</b>	<b>Median Total Library Expenditures</b>	<b>Median # Challenged Books Held Academic Libraries</b>	<b>% Median Challenged Books / Median Academic Library Book Expenditures</b>	<b>% Median Challenged Books / Median Academic Library Expenditures</b>
Midwest	\$97,416	\$874,208	4,401	0.045	0.0050
Northeast	\$155,198	\$1,890,505	4,239	0.027	0.0022
Southeast	\$136,634	\$1,168,533	3,152	0.023	0.0026
Southwest	\$163,467	\$1,754,820	1,878	0.011	0.0010
West	\$300,028	\$3,150,038	2,122	0.007	0.0006
<b>Median All Regions</b>	<b>\$155,198</b>	<b>\$1,754,820</b>	<b>3,152</b>	<b>0.020</b>	<b>0.0203</b>

As table 5 indicates, the region with the lowest median book expenditures (Midwest) and the lowest median total library expenditures (Midwest) have the highest percentage median of challenged books based upon both median book expenditures and total library expenditures. In short, one finds challenged books are more likely to be

available in the Midwest region, even though the region has a paucity of large, well-funded academic institutions compared to the northeast and western regions. This statement holds true even when looking at availability in comparison with institutional full-time equivalent enrollment, as can be seen in table 6.

**Table 6**  
**Median Challenged Book Holdings by Academic Libraries per FTE**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Median FTE Enrollment</b>	<b>Median # Challenged Books Held Academic Libraries</b>	<b>% Median # Challenged Books Held by Academic Libraries / FTE</b>
Midwest	2,306	4,401	1.908
Northeast	3,757	4,239	1.128
Southeast	3,204	3,152	0.983
Southwest	5,456	1,878	0.344
West	7,109	2,122	0.298
<b>Median All Regions</b>	<b>3,758</b>	<b>3,152</b>	<b>0.838</b>

Table 6 shows that academic libraries in the Midwest region hold 1.908 challenged books per fte enrollment, compared to 1.128 for the Northeast, 0.983 for the Southeast, 0.344 for the Southwest, and 0.298 for the West. The Midwest, conversely, has the lowest median fte’s among the regions. The Midwest, a region with the third highest median income and highest average reading scores conversely has the lowest median expenditures by academic libraries for books and the lowest total library expenditures of the five regions.

**Political Influences**

The issue of intellectual freedom and censorship is essentially a moral issue. Likely, then, we can make some assumptions using the red-state / blue-state determinations from the 2004 presidential election. Red sates have been identified as those who voted for President Bush, blue for those who voted for John Kerry – in other words, red is associated with the Republican Party, blue with the Democratic Party. Each party has developed regional strongholds, the Northeast and Pacific Coast for the Democrats while Republican strength is focused upon the South and Mountains/Plains. According to Norman and Merle Black, it is the Midwest that

serves as the nation’s swing region in national elections.<sup>31</sup>

The Republican Party has long been associated with conservative issues and, especially after the 1960s, the Democrats have been associated increasingly with liberal issues. –Conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats- as politicians, financial contributors, activists, and voters – are ... the driving forces in American politics” according to the Blacks.<sup>32</sup> The Blacks describe the liberal wing of the Democratic party as being made up of –white liberals plus minorities” and assert that those identifying themselves as –liberal” comprise 63 per cent of all Democrats. For Republicans, those who identify themselves as conservative (both white and minorities) equal 66 percent of the party.<sup>33</sup> As Nivoli and Brady discuss, the issues of polarization can focus upon both moral and economic issues, using the antebellum debates over slavery as an example. Today issues such as abortion, women’s rights, gay marriage, and school prayer have taken the forefront. For moral issues, the arguments at the party level may agree upon the –fight” outcome, but disagree on how to achieve that outcome.<sup>34</sup>

Given these descriptions – what are the geographic implications regarding academic libraries acquiring challenged books? Using Olsgaard’s regional definitions, table 5

indicates by region the number of states in the 2004 presidential election who voted Republican (conservative) or Democratic (liberal).<sup>35</sup>

**Table 7**  
**Conservative versus Liberal Voting in the 2004 Presidential Election**

<b>Region (# of States &amp; D.C.)</b>	<b>2004 Presidential Vote (conservative)</b>	<b>2004 Presidential Vote (liberal)</b>
Midwest (12)	8	4
Northeast (12)	0	12
Southeast (9)	9	0
Southwest (7)	7	0
West (11)	7	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>

In some instances, the data in Table 5 supports the determination by the Blacks that the Northeast is strongly supportive on liberal issues, while the Southeast (and Southwest) are strongly supportive of conservative issues. The Midwest indeed served as a “swing” region in 2004, with 8 of the 12 states voting conservatively and 4 liberally. Does the conservative / liberal label influence individuals to challenge library materials? A map prepared on Book Bans and Challenges, using data available from the American Library Association and the Kid’s Right to Read Foundation indicates that for the period of 2007 to 2009, a total of 120 challenges to library materials were documented.<sup>36</sup> Breaking these down by region, the Midwest had 36 challenges, the Southeast 29, the Northeast 22, the West 20, and the Southwest 13. By individual states, New York had the most challenges, with 9, followed by Florida with 7 and California, Illinois, Michigan, North Carolina, Oregon, Texas, and Virginia with 6 challenges each. While most challenges are never reported, it seems reasonable that the number of challenges are associated with the number of challenged books held, the

cultural affinity of the region (i.e., are voters / library users “conservative” or “liberal”), and the importance placed on reading and literacy. A difficulty in making clear connections with the Black’s thesis is that the Olsgaard divisions are inconsistent with current regional definitions. As an example, Mississippi and Louisiana are included by Olsgaard in the Southwest, and mountain states such as Colorado, Montana, Utah, and Wyoming are included in the West.

**Conclusion**

Academic libraries provide significant support for intellectual freedom and access to challenged books. In reviewing the top ten challenged titles for 2007, eight of the challenged titles are identified in Books-In-Print on-line as being for a juvenile audience. This includes Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. In examining the lowest price listed in Books-In-Print for the titles, multiplied by the number of academic libraries holding the title, academic libraries would have spent a minimum of \$64,562.80 on acquiring the ten challenged books. While the titles easily lend themselves to degree programs in early childhood

education, not all of the academic libraries with those titles have such programs. The acquisition of challenged books lends support not only to education, but also to sociology, political science, psychology as well as literature in general. For those institutions serving older students, the availability of the challenged books for leisure reading is an element of consideration. As noted by Strothmann and Van Fleet, —leisure reading correlates strongly with student achievement both in the short term as well as long term success and civic participation.”<sup>37</sup> The acquisition of challenged books by academic libraries reinforces the concepts of intellectual freedom by supporting the mission of higher education to promote individual enrichment and community engagement.<sup>38</sup>

We are left asking whether approximately 30% of academic libraries holding copies of these challenged books is a good thing. Should we not be more aggressive in acquiring such titles? Do the issues of academic and intellectual freedom which resound throughout the academy call us to protect those freedoms by acquiring challenged works, particularly when public

libraries are so susceptible to pressure to remove such works? Decisions by libraries to allow participate in Berman’s —dirty little secret” of choosing not to select whole categories or genres of materials despite public interest and the need to reflect the broad categories of human belief and activity, limits access to ideas and opinions as well as speech itself.<sup>39</sup> We need to know more. A place to start could be by examining the curricula of educational institutions served by academic libraries holding challenged works in order to determine whether a primary focus in acquiring the works is specifically curricular, or whether broader issues pertaining to academic freedom might be in play. Additionally, we need to better understand the ties between moral and economic issues, particularly in our geographic regions, if we are to truly understand the influences leading to the acquisitions of these types of materials, as well as to potential challenges to those items. As a profession, we need to better understand the challenges that all libraries face when library materials are objected to.

## Appendix A Sampled Institutions

Abilene Christian University TX	Bradley University IL	Crichton College TN
Adams State College CO	Brescia University	Cumberland University TN
Alabama A & M University	Brigham Young University Hawaii	Dalton State College GA
Alcorn State University MS	Brigham Young University UT	Dana College NE
American University DC	Bryan College TN	David N Myers College
Amherst College MA	Buffalo State College NY	Delaware State University
Angelo State University TX	Cabrini College PA	DePaul University IL
Anna Maria College MA	Cal Poly Pomona	Devry University Pomona
Arcadia University PA	Cal State University Bakersfield	Devry University South Florida
Arkansas State University Jonesboro	Cal State University Chico	Dickinson College PA
Asbury College KY	Cal State University Fresno	Dickinson State University ND
Ashland University	Cal State University Monterey Bay	Dillard University LA
Assumption College MA	Cal State University Sacramento	Dixie State College UT
Auburn University Montgomery	Cal State University San Bernardino	Dominican University IL
Augsburg College MN	Cal State University Stanislaus	Donnelly College
Augustana College IL	Caldwell College NJ	Duke University NC
Augustana College SD	Campbell University NC	Duquense University PA
Austin College TX	Cardinal Stritch University WI	Eastern Connecticut State University
Ave Maria University FL	Carleton College MN	Eastern Illinois University
Avila University	Castelton State College VT	Eckerd College FL
Babson College	Central State University OH	Edgewood College WI
Ball State University IN	Charter College	Edward Waters College FL
Baptist Bible College MO	Christian Brothers University TN	Elizabethtown College PA
Baptist College of Florida	City College CUNY	Emmaus Bible College IA
Barber-Scotia College NC	Claremont College CA	Fairmont State College WV
Barry University FL	Coe College IA	Fisk University
Barton College NC	Coker College SC	Fitchburg State College MA
Bay Path College MA	Colby College ME	Florida Institute of Technology
Baylor University TX	College of Charleston SC	Florida International University
Bellarmino University	College of Mount St. Vincent NY	Florida Memorial University
Bellevue University	College of St Benedict MN	Florida Southern College
Belmont University TN	College of St Rose NY	Fordham University NY
Beloit College WI	College of St Thomas More TX	Fort Lewis College CO
Berea College KY	College of the Atlantic ME	Francis Marion University SC
Bethany College KS	College of the Holy Cross MA	Franklin W Olin College of Engineering MA
Bethany Lutheran College MN	College of the South West NM	Fresno Pacific University CA
Bethel University MN	Columbia College MO	Gardner-Webb University NC
Birmingham Southern College	Columbia College SC	George Fox University OR
Blackburn College IL	Columbia Union College (aka Washington Ady Un.)	Georgetown College KY
Boston College MA	Converse College	Georgia Gwinnett College GA
Boston University MA	Covenant College	Goddard College VT

Governor's State University IL	Marylhurst University OR	Oglala Lakota College SD
Grace College IN	Marymount University VA	Ohio Christian University
Grand Valley State University MI	Mayville State University ND	Ohio Dominican University
Great Basin College NV	McDaniel College MD	Ohio Valley College
Hardin-Simmons University TX	McKendree University IL	Oklahoma Christian University
Harris Stowe State College MO	McPherson College KS	Olivet College MI
Haverford College PA	Medgar Evers College NY	Olivet Nazarene University IL
Heidelberg College OH	Mercy College NY	Otis College of Art & Design CA
Henderson University AR	Miami Dade College FL	Pacific Union College CA
Hiram College OH	Miami University OH	Paul Smiths College NY
Hodges University FL	Midway College KY	Peace College NC
Hood College MD	Midwestern State University TX	Pennsylvania State University
Hunter College NY	Mills College CA	Pepperdine University CA
Immaculata University PA	Misericordia University PA	Polytechnic University NY
Indiana University Columbus	Mississippi University for Women	Portland State University OR
Indiana University Kokomo	Missouri University of Science & Technology	Post University CT
Indiana University Northwest	Monroe College NY	Purdue University Calumet
Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis	Montana State University Bozeman	Queens University of Charlotte NC
Indiana University Southeast	Montclair State University NJ	Rice University TX
Iona College NY	Morehead State University KY	Roanoke College VA
Ithaca College NY	Morningside College IA	Roger Williams University RI
Jacksonville State University	Mount Holyoke College MA	Rollins College FL
Jacksonville University	Mount Ida College MA	Rosemont College PA
Jamestown College ND	Mount Union College OH	Rowan University NJ
Keene State College NH	Mount Vernon Nazarene University OH	Rust College MS
Kendall College IL	National Louis University IL	Rutgers University NJ
Kennesaw State University GA	Nazareth College NY	Saint Ambrose University IA
Knox College IL	New Mexico Highlands University	Saint Anselm College NH
Lake Forest College IL	New Mexico Institute of Mining & Technology	Saint Bonaventure University NY
Lamar University TX	New School University NY	Saint Cloud State University MN
Lambuth University TN	New York Institute of Technology	Saint Edward's University TX
Lander University SC	Niagara University NY	Saint John's College NM
Lebanon Valley College PA	North Carolina A&T State University	Saint Joseph's College ME
Lock Haven University PA	North Carolina State University	Saint Joseph's University PA
Long Island University CW Post	North Carolina Wesleyan College	Saint Lawrence University NY
Long Island University Southampton	North Central College IL	Saint Mary's College CA
Loras College IA	Northeastern University MA	Saint Mary's College IN
Louisiana College	Northern Kentucky University	Saint Mary's University MN
Loyola Marymount University CA	Northern Michigan University MI	Saint Norbert College WI
Lynchburg College VA	Northland College WI	Saint Olaf College MN
Lyon College AR	Northwood University FL	Saint Peter's College NJ
Manhattan College NY	Northwood University MI	Salem College NC
Marantha College MN	Notre Dame College OH	Salisbury State University MD
Marlboro College VT	Nyack College NY	San Diego State University
Mary Baldwin College VA	Oberlin College OH	San Francisco State University

Santa Clara University CA	Tiffin University OH	University of Michigan Flint
Savannah State University	Trevecca Nazarene University TN	University of Missouri Columbia
Shawnee State University OH	Trinity University DC	University of Missouri Kansas City
Shippensburg University PA	Truman State University MO	University of Missouri St. Louis
Siena College NY	Tufts University MA	University of Montevallo
Silver Lake College WI	Tuskegee University AL	University of Nebraska Kearney
Simpson College IA	Union College KY	University of New England ME
Slippery Rock University PA	Union College NE	University of New Hampshire
Sonoma State University CA	Union College NY	University of New Hampshire Manchester
South Carolina State University	Union University TN	University of New Haven
South Dakota School of Mines & Technology	University College of Bangor	University of New Mexico
southeastern Bible College AL	University of Akron OH	University of North Carolina Asheville
Southeastern Louisiana University	University of Alabama Birmingham	University of North Carolina Charlotte
Southern Adventist University TN	University of Alaska Anchorage	University of North Carolina Greensboro
Southern Arkansas University	University of Arkansas Fort Smith	University of North Carolina Wilmington
Southern Connecticut State University	University of Baltimore	University of North Dakota
Southern Illinois University	University of Bridgeport CT	University of Oklahoma
Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville	University of California Berkeley	University of Pittsburgh PA
Southern New Hampshire University NH	University of California Davis	University of Portland OR
Southern Poly State University GA	University of California Los Angeles	University of Rio Grande OH
Southern Virginia University	University of California Merced	University of Saint Francis IN
Southern Wesleyan University	University of California San Diego	University of San Diego
Southwestern College AZ	University of California Santa Barbara	University of Sioux Falls SD
Southwestern University TX	University of California Santa Cruz	University of Southern Maine Lewiston
Stephens College MO	University of Colorado at Boulder	University of Southern Mississippi
Stony Brook University NY	University of Colorado at Colorado Springs	University of Southern Mississippi Regional
SUNY Alfred	University of Colorado at Denver	University of St Francis IL
SUNY Canton	University of Connecticut	University of St Mary of the Lake
SUNY College at Cortland	University of Connecticut Hartford	University of Tampa
SUNY Fredonia	University of Dallas TX	University of Tennessee at Martin
SUNY Institute of Technology Utica	University of Dayton OH	University of Texas Arlington
SUNY Old Westbury	University of Delaware	University of Texas at Tyler
SUNY Plattsburgh	University of Florida	University of Texas Brownsville
Susquehanna University PA	University of Hartford CT	University of Texas San Antonio
Talladega College AL	University of Hawaii at Hilo	University of the District of Columbia
Tennessee Temple University	University of Houston Clear Lake	University of the Pacific CA
Texas A&M Kingsville	University of Houston Downtown	University of the Sciences in Philadelphia
Texas A&M University	University of Houston TX	University of the South TN
Texas A&M University Commerce	University of Houston Victoria	University of Utah
Texas A&M University Corpus Christi	University of Kansas	University of Washington
Texas Christian University	University of La Verne CA	University of West Alabama
Texas State University San Marcos	University of Maine Presque Isle	University of West Florida
Texas Tech University	University of Mary ND	University of Wisconsin Madison
Texas Wesleyan University	University of Maryland Eastern Shore	University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
Texas Woman's University	University of Massachusetts Boston	University of Wisconsin Whitewater
	University of Michigan Dearborn	Upper Iowa University



Valley City State University ND	Wayne State College NE	Whitman College WA
Vassar College NY	Wayne State University MI	Widener University, Delaware
Vincennes University IN	Waynesburg University PA	Wilkes University PA
Virginia Commonwealth University	Weber State University UT	Williams Baptist College AR
Virginia Military Institute	Wentworth Inst of Technology MA	Wilmington University DE
Virginia Tech VA	Wesley College DE	Winston-Salem State University NC
Viterbo University WI	West Chester University PA	Winthrop University SC
Walsh University OH	West Texas A&M University	Wisconsin Lutheran College
Wartburg College IA	Western Connecticut State University	Woodbury University CA
Washington State University Vancouver	Western Illinois University	Yale University CT
Washington University MO	Westfield State College MA	
Wayland Baptist College TX	Westminster College MO	
	Westmont College CA	

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> American Library Association. Banned Books Week. What Was the Most Challenged Book of 2007? Available at: <http://www.lita.org/ala/pressreleases2008/may2008/penguin.cfm>. Accessed July 14, 2008,

<sup>2</sup> In September of 2006, Vol. LV, No. 5, it was reported that the library of the University of the Incarnate Word, a private Catholic university in San Antonio, Texas, was reinstating its subscription to the New York Times. The subscription had been ordered cancelled by the Dean of Library Services who objected to the Times reporting on a secret government program to monitor international banking transactions. Accessed July 13, 2008. URL: [https://members.ala.org/nif/v55n5/success\\_stories.html#sanantonio](https://members.ala.org/nif/v55n5/success_stories.html#sanantonio)

<sup>3</sup> Macleod, Ann Scott. *American Childhood: Essays on Children's Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Athens, GA : University of Georgia Press, 1994. p. 174

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 176.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 176-177.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 185,

<sup>7</sup> Asheim, Lester. "Not Censorship but Selection." *Wilson Library Bulletin* 28 (September 1953) p. 6. Available at: <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/basics/notcensorship.cfm>. Accessed June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Cain, Charlene C. "Intellectual Freedom in Academic Libraries." *Louisiana Libraries* 68(3) 2006; p. 29.

<sup>9</sup> Asheim, Lester. "Not Censorship but Selection." *Wilson Library Bulletin* 28 (September 1953) p. 6. Available at:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/basics/notcensorship.cfm>. Accessed June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid; Available at: <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/basics/notcensorship.cfm>. Accessed June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid; Available at: <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/basics/notcensorship.cfm>. Accessed June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid; Available at: <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/basics/notcensorship.cfm>. Accessed June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Asheim, Lester. "Not Censorship but Selection." *Wilson Library Bulletin* 28 (September 1953) p. 6. Available at: <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/basics/notcensorship.cfm>. Accessed June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid; Available at: <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/basics/notcensorship.cfm>. Accessed June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

<sup>15</sup> DeVinney, Gemma. "Academic Librarians and Academic Freedom in the United States." *Libri* 36 (March 1986) p. 30; and "Tenure in Libraries" *ALA Bulletin* 40 (November 1946) :. 451 (see reference 39).

<sup>16</sup> See "Guideline for the Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure of Academic Librarians: Approved at ALA Annual Conference, June 2005." *College & Research Libraries News* 66 (9) 2005; pp. 668-676.

<sup>17</sup> Hirsch, Elaine Gass. "You have kids' books?!" Promoting children's literature in an academic library." *Education Libraries: Children's Resources*, 31(3) Spring, 2008; pp. 13-16.

<sup>18</sup>Hirsch, Elaine Gass. "On becoming a Children's Literature Librarian in an Academic Library." *OLA Quarterly* 12(2) 2006; pp. 2-3.

<sup>19</sup>Bay, Mark T. "Selecting Children's Literature for Academic Librarians: Tips from the Trenches." *Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian* 19(2) 2001; pp. 1-6.

<sup>20</sup>Hirsch, Elaine Gass. "You have kids' books?!" Promoting children's literature in an academic library." *Education Libraries: Children's Resources*, 31(3) Spring, 2008; p 13.

<sup>21</sup>Bay, Mark T. "Selecting Children's Literature for Academic Librarians: Tips from the Trenches." *Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian* 19(2) 2001; p. 2.

<sup>22</sup>Vile, John R. Encyclopedia of Constitutional Amendments, Proposed Amendments, and Amending Issues, 1789-2002. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2003. pp. 532-533.

<sup>23</sup>American Library Association. Office of Intellectual Freedom. Intellectual Freedom Manual 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Chicago : American Library Association, 1996; p. 283.

<sup>24</sup>Original publication dates for the titles are: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884); *And Tango Makes Three* (2005); *The Chocolate War* (1985); *The Color Purple* (1982); *The Golden Compass* (1995); *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings* (1969); *It's Perfectly Normal* (1994); *Olive's Ocean* (2003); *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999); and *TTYL* (2004);

<sup>25</sup>"Number of Libraries in the United States and Canada" The Bowker Annual 2007 52nd Edition. Medford, NJ: Information Today, Inc., 2007. p. 407.

<sup>26</sup>American Library Directory 58<sup>th</sup> edition, 2005-2006. Medford, NJ: Information Today, 2005; v. 1, p. xii.

<sup>27</sup>American Library Directory 58<sup>th</sup> edition, 2005-2006. Medford, NJ: Information Today, 2005; v. 1, pp. xii-xiii.

<sup>28</sup>Olsgaard, John N. and Olsgaard, Jane Kinch. "Authorship in Five Library Periodicals." *College & Research Libraries* 41(1) (1980); p. 50.

<sup>29</sup>Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences. Digest of Education Statistics, 2007. Available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2008022>. Accessed December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Public Library Funding data from IMLS <http://harvester.census.gov/imls/compare/PeerVariableNumeric.asp>

<sup>30</sup>United States Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. Compare Academic Libraries (2008 data). Available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/libraries/compare/index.asp?LibraryType=Academic>

<sup>31</sup>Black, Norman and Black, Merele. Divided America: the Ferocious Power Struggle in American Politics. New York : Simon & Schuster, 2007; pp. 1.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid; p. 2.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid; p. 3.

<sup>34</sup>Nivola, Pietro S. and Brady, David W. Red and Blue Nation? : Consequences and Correction of America's Polarized Politics. Stanford University : Hoover Institution on War, Revolution & Peace, 2008; pp. 127-148.

<sup>35</sup>Gastner, M. T.; Shalizi, C.R., and Newman, Michael J. "Maps and Cartograms of the 2004 Presidential Election." University of Michigan, 2004. Website available at: <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mejn/election/2004/>. Accessed January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

<sup>36</sup>Google Maps. Book Bans and Challenges, 2007-2009. Available at: <http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&oe=UTF8&source=embed&t=h&msa=0&msid=112317617303679724608.00047051ed493efec0bb8&ll=38.68551,-96.503906&spn=32.757579,56.25&z=4>. Accessed January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

<sup>37</sup>Strothmann, Molly and Van Fleet, Connie. "Books that Inspire, Books that Offend." *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 49(2) (2009) p. 165.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 165.

<sup>39</sup> Berman, Sanford. "Inside Censorship." *Progressive Librarian* 18 (2001); p. 49.

Rickey Best, Collection Development Librarian  
Auburn University at Montgomery Library  
[rbest@aum.edu](mailto:rbest@aum.edu)