

***And Tango Makes Three and tyyl: A study of Censorship and Banned Books in Twenty-
First Century America***

by

Jo. A Robles Lugo

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
in
ENGLISH EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO
MAYAGÜEZ CAMPUS
2012

Approved by:

José M. Irizarry Rodríguez, Ph.D.
President, Graduate Committee

Date

Nancy V. Vicente, Ph.D.
Member, Graduate Committee

Date

Nickolas Haydock, Ph.D.
Member, Graduate Committee

Date

Kevin S. Carroll, Ph.D.
Acting Chairperson, Department of English

Date

Maribel Acosta Lugo, Ph.D.
Graduate Studies Representative

Date

Abstract

This thesis explores and questions the effects of censorship in the United States and Puerto Rico, specifically Young Adult and Children's Literature. Literary censorship has both oppressed the authors' right to expression and the readers' right to know. By the use of two of the most challenged texts in the past decade, Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell's *And Tango Makes Three* and Lauren Myracle's *ttyl*, it questions: if censoring texts is appropriate to protect the child's innocence from corrupted ideologies or if it serves as indoctrination to preserve preferred ideologies. Additionally, it will discuss the level of scrutiny which challenged themes are regarded with; how recurrent controversial social themes such as violence develop a level of tolerance while infrequent themes such as sexuality are deemed intolerable. Moreover, it discusses the level of success of implementing these texts in the Puerto Rico Educational System schools and libraries. This discussion will include various example of how teachers can efficiently employ these books inside the classroom. This may provide the opportunity of valuable insight for students, because of the relevancy of these themes in their daily lives. Finally, this study discusses how literary censorship is a burden to education which limits knowledge and attempts to replace it with dogmas or misleading information.

Resumen

La siguiente tesis explora y cuestiona los efectos de censura en los Estados Unidos y Puerto Rico, específicamente en la Literatura de niños y jóvenes adultos. La censura Literaria ha oprimido el derecho de los autores a expresarse y el derecho a saber de los estudiantes. Por la aplicación de dos de los libros más censurados en la pasada década, *And Tango Makes Three* de Justin Richardson y Peter Parnell y *ttyl* de Lauren Myracle, se cuestiona si: estos libros son censurados por legítimamente proteger la inocencia del niño de ideologías corruptas o si sirve para inculcar las ideologías preferidas. Adicionalmente, argumenta sobre el nivel de escrutinio con el cual se evalúan textos controversiales; como eventos recurrentes de temas controversiales como lo es la violencia desarrolla un nivel de tolerancia contrario a temas infrecuentes como la sexualidad son tasados como intolerables. Más allá, se discute el nivel de éxito que tendrían estos libros si son implementados en las bibliotecas y escuelas del Sistema Educativo Puertorriqueño. En adición incluye y se provee varios ejemplos de como un maestro puede hacer uso apropiado de estos libros en el salón de clases. Esto les proveerá una valiosa oportunidad de comprensión a los estudiantes, ya que pueden relacionarse con estos temas que rodean a los estudiantes día a día. En fin, este estudio intenta discutir como la censura Literaria ah sido mas un inconveniente educativo que limita el conocimiento y lo trata de remplazar con dogmas e información fatula.

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
I. Abstractii
II. Resumeniii
III. Table of Contentsiv
IV. Chapter 1: Getting to know Censorship	1
V. Chapter 2: Review of the Literature.	10
VI. Chapter 3: The Mechanics of Censorship55
VII. Chapter 4: Censoring the Nest67
VII. Chapter 5: From Indoctrination to Education77
IX. Appendices	85
X. Works Cited and Consulted	91

Chapter 1: Getting to know Censorship

In 2010, the American Library Association (ALA) presented the top one hundred most controversial and challenged books of the last decade. The list includes a variety of literary genres that range from books recently published to those that have been in public and school libraries for over a century. A closer look at the ALA list shows that “challenging” is a form of literary censorship which is not imposed merely to protect children from certain themes, but rather to preserve established ideologies and values. This thesis will focus on two of the most challenged contemporary books from the ALA list, Lauren Myracle’s young adult novel *ttyl* along with Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson’s children’s picture book *And Tango Makes Three*.

Myracle’s *ttyl* and Parnell and Richardson’s *And Tango Makes Three* are just among some of the texts that have been challenged in the United States in recent years. Along with these, educational author John Bushman, mentions a variety of texts such as Crutcher’s *Stotan!*, Cormier’s, *We All Fall Down*, L’Engle’s *A Wrinkle in Time*, Susan and Cohen’s *When Someone You Know is Gay* (256) among many other texts in the Young Adult Literature genre which have been target for censorship in the past twenty years. Similar to the ones that shall be discussed in this thesis, these texts faced opposition from censors who believe that the topics presented are inappropriate. Even though the scope of the censors’ reasons to obscure or eliminate a text shifts over time, the fundamental idea is to protect the youth’s innocence from the corrupt ills of the world or as censorship critic Marjorie Heins quoted from Plato’s *Republic*:

A young person cannot judge what is allegorical and what is literal;
anything that he receives into his mind at that age is likely to become
indelible and unalterable; and therefore it is most important that the tables

which the young first hear should be models of virtuous thoughts. (Plato
qtd. in Heins, 1)

This previous claim additionally puts into question the confidence and trust that censors have towards the critical and analytical skills that young readers possess. The very notion of alienating young readers from topics which surround their environment portrays them as incapable beings that must be protected from their own lives. By discussing *ttyl* and *And Tango Makes Three* it could be argued that rather than corrupt the youth, these themes may prove to be relevant or even useful for their readers.

Lauren Myracle's *ttyl* published in 2004, recounts the story of three high school girls Madigan, Angela, and Zoe, who deal with situations pertaining to: student / teacher relations, peer pressure, adolescent sexuality, and the use of drugs among many other issues. In general the topics included in Myracle's novel are what many believe to be day-to-day realities for many high school students in our modern society with its graphic depictions of sexuality and foul language. This novel has made recurring appearances on the list of most frequently banned books in 2008 and 2009, and has been challenged in the states of New York, Connecticut, Wisconsin, and Texas where the Round Rock Independent School District superintendent decided to pull the book from school shelves on the grounds of it being racy and controversial. The challenges have come from parents and school boards mainly because parents say *ttyl* is too vulgar for middle school students (kxan-tv).

Parnell and Richardson's *And Tango Makes Three* published in 2005 is about two male penguins, Roy and Silo, that live in a zoo and are given the opportunity to hatch and raise a baby penguin Tango, successfully starting a family without female presence. The topic contrasts with the traditional concepts and values of the heterosexual family because "Tango is the very first

penguin in the zoo to have two daddies.” (Parnell, Richardson, 27). This book possesses the infamous status of the most consecutively challenged book in the United States from 2006 to 2009. Immediately upon its arrival at school libraries this book was challenged by the states of Virginia, Iowa, California, Missouri, North Carolina and Maryland. In the latter three states, the book’s accessibility to students was very limited or was successfully removed from the school libraries (Baldassarro).

The fact that both *And Tango Makes Three* and *tyl* continue on the top ten most frequently challenged books in the United States makes the study of these texts relevant to address and understand the reasons why these texts continue to be under siege. Therefore, it seems appropriate to study the content and context of both texts in order question whether it is justifiable to simply accept the banning these books or whether we should rather discuss how these themes can be useful for the target audience or for students’ educational advancement.

Before engaging with these texts it is appropriate to define what it means for a book to be challenged and how the status of a challenge is related to censorship. The main scope of this thesis attempts to define and discuss literary censorship and its role in contemporary society, particularly as it concerns the educational system in the areas of Children and Young Adult literature.

Book censorship is a concern to the field of pedagogy. From a pedagogical perspective, we should question whether censorship is a pedagogically sound idea based on empirical facts, justifying itself by claiming to protect the target audience, or if indeed it simply limits the possibilities of a vast educational experience by placing boundaries on the access to information and awareness of alternative human conditions. These are questions that no single study can definitively answer due to the ideological nature of the topic, but this study attempts to make its

reader aware of the possibilities of the effects of literary censorship in the development of an individual and a society as a whole.

Literary censorship in the United States can be divided into three levels of intensity: challenging, censoring and banning. According to the American Library Association (ALA), which monitors censorship in the United States due to its interests in the promotion of books in libraries, promoting reading and serving as a watchdog to maintain the first amendment of the United States Constitution, defines challenging a text as “an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group” (ALA Par.1). This would mean that challenging a text does not signify that the complete text is challenged; it can be based on an opposition against a specific section of a book. Theoretically, an author can edit or remove the section(s) of the text thereby lifting the challenge.

Challenging a text is the first step towards censorship. Censoring a text is defined by the ALA as “a change in the access status of material [availability], based on the content of the work and made by a governing authority or its representatives. Such changes include exclusion, restriction, removal, or age/grade changes.” Based on this definition it is understood that when a text is censored it decreases its availability for specific audiences in school libraries or institutions.

Even though censorship mostly acts by modifying and limiting the access of texts, it also includes book banning, which is defined as “the removal of those [challenged] materials” from school and public libraries (ALA “About Banned & Challenged Books” par. 1). In short, in order for a book to be taken out of circulation it must be censored, but this does not necessarily mean that a censored book must be banned, for book banning is a level of censorship that does not have to apply to every censored text. While challenging a text can be seen mainly as an

initiative or attempt to remove a book based on objection, censorship is the result of an agreement by various individuals and/or institutions in taking the appropriate measures to restrict or remove a certain text from public and school libraries.

As the ALA states, the censorship processes begins with a complaint by an initiator(s) or a specific institution (library, school, social/religious group, etc.) against a specific book available in a library, school or any other institution that is providing access to the text. This does not mean that the text is immediately censored because the initiator(s) must publicly present what is “inappropriate” and/or “unacceptable” in the text or a section of it. From this point forward other individuals or institutions may choose whether or not to join this movement which consists of identifying,

Sections of the work that are considered especially offensive to be read aloud or distributed in writing to the library board, the local press, and the public. The censor may also go one step further and organize an ad hoc censorship organization. Even if an ad hoc [committee] group is loosely organized, the censors could use it effectively to promote a statement of purposes among other community groups, to conduct a letter-to-the-editor campaign, and to circulate petitions. The organization could also influence public funding, the appointment of the library director, and the appointment or election of library board members (ALA “The Censor: Motives and Tactics” par. 11).

Following the creation of an organized measure, initiators have various methods that may be used in order to censor a text, as stated by the ALA “if the censors are unsuccessful in getting

the item banned, they may turn their efforts to library policy. If they cannot bring about a change in the library's policy on materials selection and distribution, they may then ask that the library establish a closed shelf or adopt a policy of restricted access.”(ALA “The Censor: Motives and Tactics” par. 12). Here we can see the variety of actions that can be taken towards a text from policy modifications to banning the text from the institution.

The effects of censorship do not simply alter the limitation of access of a text to an individual, but educational institutions as well. For example, if a parent association begins a campaign to censor a text from a library, and the teachers and librarians are in disagreement, censors can influence funding and personnel decisions. This action taken by the censors is what the National Council of Teachers English (NCTE) calls curtailment of funds, which states: “refusing funds for materials labeled controversial frequently results in the overall reduction of funding for all materials” (NCTE “Guideline on Censorship”).

This thesis also attempts to explore and understand the pedagogical effects of literary censorship in the context of the United States and subsequently in Puerto Rico. In addition, this study discusses how controversial issues are actually ideological confrontations that reflect how a society thinks and behaves at a particular time. For this reason, this thesis argues for the inclusion of censored books as part of the curriculum since the issues and controversies are time and era specific. The following objectives shall provide the focus for this study:

1. Identify and discuss the sections and topics presented in Justin Richardson's and Peter Parnell's *And Tango Makes Three* and Lauren Myracle's *ttyl*, which have made them the targets for challenges and censorship. Identify and discuss the arguments that have justified the targeting of these two texts.

2. Discuss how controversial themes such as violence and drug abuse have a higher tolerance level among censors, whereas sexually explicit material is consistently placed under stricter scrutiny.
3. Explore how literary censorship is carried over, employed and enforced in Puerto Rico's educational system. Identify the censors and target themes in Puerto Rico. Identify censorship's impact on Puerto Rico's educational system.

The second chapter focuses on presenting a review of the literature. Firstly, the ALA website is discussed to present a historical background and pertinent information (charts, definition, etc.) to justify its validity to this study. Drawing from Trotsky's literary theory and Hall, Cadzow, Morris and Greenblatt's new historicist perspective, *tyl* and *And Tango Makes Three* will be analyzed in order to identify their ideological topics and historical importance based on their social contribution.

Using Eagleton's discussions of ideology, this thesis analyzes the themes presented in *tyl* and *And Tango Makes Three*, providing a basis for critiquing the effects of censorship on students. Through the use of Freire's and Giroux pedagogical theories, the effects of book censorship on pedagogy are also discussed. This thesis addresses how some themes considered unacceptable at one time eventually become tolerable (e.g., violence) while others (e.g., sexuality) remain intolerable to censorious organizations. By using Žižek's *Violence*, this study sets out to explore how constant exposure of a theme may cause it to eventually be perceived as normal and tolerable, which he calls "objective violence." On the other hand, themes which have minimal exposure because of their infrequent presence retain a mysterious character, making them distressing to address, which he defines as "subjective violence". "Violence" in this context

does not necessarily mean physical violence, but rather ideological violence, that is, ideological conditioning that naturalizes conflict by confirming religious, racial or sexist prejudices. In addition to *Violence*, Žižek's, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* is used to address how states of false consciousness are supported by censorship. In order to preserve desired ideologies, censors produce the ideological security of common knowledge and accepted opinions by obscuring books that threaten these ideological formations. The review of scholarship will conclude with the recent history of book censorship in Puerto Rico. News articles from local newspapers *Primera Hora* and *El Nuevo Dia* are used to discuss how book censorship is implemented and enforced by the central government and Department of Education.

The third and fourth chapter focus on Myracle's *ttyl* and Parnell and Richardson's *And Tango Makes Three*. Firstly, these texts will be discussed individually in order to identify the controversial themes that made them targets for challenging. Next follows a discussion, based on Trotsky and New Historicist literary theory, which questions whether censoring these books is a purposeful and advantageous action. In addition, drawing from Žižek's, Eagleton's and Giroux arguments this chapter will explore the varying levels of tolerance among the controversial themes. Comparing the reception of sexuality and violence in society, this thesis explores the ideology behind their markedly different treatment by censors.

Finally, the fifth chapter addresses the advantages that Myracle's *ttyl* and Parnell and Richardson's *And Tango Makes Three* could offer the Puerto Rican educational system. Because of the relevance that these texts have for Puerto Rico, it will be argued and exemplified how their implementation can be advantageous for students in Puerto Rico. The concluding chapter contains a brief overview of the most important topics discussed throughout this thesis.

Additionally, presents the pedagogical implications and suggestions for future studies in this field.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

In Western Civilization history, censorship can be traced back as far as Athens where in 500 B.C. the Greek natural philosopher Anaxagoras' "theories were materialist in nature and he became infamous for his belief that the sun was a ball of fire, stone and metal, a belief that cost him charges of impiety in which he received a sentence of death." (EGS). This forced him to flee from Greece to avoid death penalty, living in exile for the remainder of his life. Among the first censors in recorded history we will also find well recognized Greek philosopher and author of the *Republic*, Plato who:

"used many of the same measures suggested by contemporary censors. He believed that many of the writers of his time were out of step with his thinking, and he made sure that they were banished from society because they were not working for the well-being of the young" (Bushman, 253).

Censorship played a role in early philosophy as well when Socrates' writings were banned on the basis that they corrupted the youth, similar to the allegations that various authors of contemporary Children's literature are confronted with nowadays. Not only were Socrates' writings banned, but he paid with his life as well. In addition to Socrates, Bushman argues many others have been victims of censorship stating that "the works of Confucius were burned in China, Julius Cesar burned the Library of Alexandria, and the Bible was destroyed publicly in England.... Many people remember reading about the book burning that took place in Nazi Germany" (253).

These examples bear witness to how those in power suppress themes which threat their ideologies. It may be argued that those were different times, in which the systems of power were concentrated in the hands of a few... the elite. But acts of censorship continue in democratic and

egalitarian societies as well. In 1872 United States Postal Inspector Anthony Comstock founded the Society for the Suppression of Vice in New York which purpose was to enforce the ordinance of blue laws which prohibited “obscene” behavior on Sundays. Because of many individuals ignoring these laws Comstock, “went on to Washington to lobby for the passage of a federal statute against obscenity, abortion, and other evils as he saw them” (Bushman, 253). The Comstock law influenced by taboos such as gambling, using contraceptives, smoking, drinking, and even playing pool; was imposed went from destroying “bad” literature up to the point of imprisoning the authors of these works (Bushman, 253).

A more recent example of censorship in the United States that gathered considerable attention in the mid-twentieth century was the 1957 trial of California versus the Beat poet Allen Ginsberg for his poem “Howl.” The first evident action that the state of California took in order to censor this poem was to seize over 500 copies, claiming that it contained “obscene” material. In Ginsberg’s poem, he described the world as he saw it:

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, . . .
who got busted in their pubic beards returning through
Laredo with a belt of marijuana for New York,
who ate fire in paint hotels or drank turpentine in
Paradise Alley, death, or purgatoried their
torsos night after night
with dreams, with drugs, with waking nightmares, al-

cohol and cock and endless balls,. . . (9, 10)

As shown, this poem makes reference to the reality of youth in modern urban life. He portrays the use of illicit drugs and provides graphic representations of homosexual intercourse. Ginsberg as well as the whole Beat movement was remarkable for incorporating into their conversations and writing “expressions from the argots of jazz musicians, drug users, carnival and circus workers, homosexuals, hipsters, and African Americans” (Watson, 8). This growing trend which Ginsberg described in *Howl* was perceived as threatening to the existing American ideology of the 1950’s that was centered on conservative behavior and working hard to achieve economic prosperity in the quest for commodities to live the “American Dream”, making Ginsberg and other Beat members targets for censors. Similar to the problematical situation in which Ginsberg found himself in, challenged and condemned legally by the state, many authors also found themselves as targets of censorship. This act hindered the access of their texts to others, especially the younger members of the society.

When addressing censorship it must be acknowledged that there are those (parents, administrators, association, etc.) who advocate its justification to avoid harm in society and there are others who state that censorship is harmful for society. Among the individuals who are against this action we find the author of *The Satanic Verses*, Salam Rushdie and author of the *Kindly Inquisitor: The New Attacks on Free Thought*, Jonathan Rauch. These authors combine the articles “Respect” (Rushdie) and “In Defense of Prejudice” (Rauch) to create a two sectioned critique focusing on how censorship is detrimental to freedom of speech. In this first section Rushdie initiates his argument by addressing the concept of freedom in which he states that “In free societies, you must have the free play of ideas” (27). In order to have absolute freedom there must be no boundaries to it because setting limitation to that which is called freedom then

would not be freedom at all. As a result of having complete freedom of ideas there will undoubtedly be disagreement and opposing viewpoints or as Rushdie argues “Free societies are dynamic, noisy, turbulent, and full of radical disagreement” (27). In order to claim absolute freedom all ideologies and beliefs must be accepted even if they disagree with our own set in order to have the opportunity to gain as much knowledge as possible from each. These disagreements and encounters that lead to debates and inquiries represent freedom of thought and knowledge.

This liberty of free thought and speech which Rushdie expresses must be preserved is what Jonathan Rauch defines as intellectual pluralism. This concept exposes a no-limit policy on what individuals desire to believe in or as the author argues:

If you want pluralism, then you get racism and sexism and homophobia, and communism and fascism and xenophobia and tribalism, and that is just for a start. If you want to believe in intellectual freedom and the progress of knowledge and the advancement of science and all those other good things, then you must swallow hard and accept this: for as thickheaded and wayward an animal as us, the realistic question is how to make the best of prejudice, not how to eradicate it. (Rauch, 28)

Intellectual pluralism is then placed on a common ground in which it does not give emphasis to right or wrong, but rather places every belief and ideology in equal ground in order to have an opportunity to be explored. According to Rauch the gain of intellectual pluralism:

lies not in doing away with prejudice and dogmas but in channeling them-making them socially productive by pitting

prejudice against prejudice and dogma against dogma, exposing all too withering public criticism. What survives at the end of the day is our base of knowledge.... (29)

What Rauch suggests is that its far more practical to gain knowledge by debating over conflicting issues, seeing both sides of the arguments rather than just eliminating the issue leaving an unanswered void.

Contrary to Pluralism, Rauch describes purism as non-tolerant towards unacceptable themes as are racism, sexism, or any other kind of prejudice, seeking to eradicate these to protect society. Purism is an apparent preferred concept among the members of society as constantly seen diverse ads and campaigns which promote the elimination of the “negative” aspects of society as Rauch states:

the purists’ way of seeing things has spread through American intellectual life with remarkable speed, so much so that many people will blink at you uncomprehendingly or even call you a racist (or sexist or homophobe, etc.) if you suggest that expressions of racism should be tolerated or that prejudice has its part to play.
(29)

It is beyond belief to understand how in America undesired themes as racism, sexism, or other types of prejudice are purposely obscured. Many people find offensive the exploration and discussion these themes and would prefer just avoiding them all together. It is impossible to comprehend how knowledge can be learned if people would choose to avoid the subject.

Avoiding the engagement of these topics does not mean they will disappear; it will only pose as

an acknowledged problem which only limited information is known from it because of its lack of exploration.

When debates over censorship arise, one of the most argued areas is regarding language. The most common type of prejudice encountered is by words, which “purists” commonly believe that by obscuring or possibly eliminating their use is the only way to eliminate prejudice. Rauch suggest that:

to suppress bigoted language seems, at first blush, reasonable, but it quickly leads to a curious result. A peculiar kind of verbal shamanism takes root, as though certain expressions, like curses or magical incantations, carry in themselves the power to hurt or heal—as though words were bigoted rather than people. (29)

Because prejudice lies in the individual and not the words, the mere elimination of the words will not resolve the issue, for other words will eventually substitute the ones eliminated (if even possible to eliminate the word) or as the author argues:

As was bound to happen, purist soon discovered that chasing around after words like “gyp” or “buxom” hardly goes to the roots of the problem. As long as they remain bigoted, bigots will simply find other words. If they can’t call you a kike then they will say Jewboy, Judas, or Hebe, and when all those are banned they will press word like “oven” and “lampshade” into their service. (Rauch, 30)

The elimination of words does not propose a solution to the issue of prejudice; it simply leaves a gap which will eventually be filled with another word. The problem that is presented

with the elimination of words is that it never actually provides a solution to what it set out to resolve, it merely (at best) tries to halt it briefly. Rauch concludes stating that the general difference between intellectual pluralism and purism is:

Pluralism says: There will always be some racist. Marginalize them, ignore them, exploit them, take pains to make their policies illegal, but otherwise leave them alone. Purists say: That's not enough. Society cannot be just until these pervasive and oppressive ideas are searched out and eradicated. (Rauch, 31)

As many controversial debates, in censorship there are those in favor and those against it. In order to provide a complete scope of this dilemma it is essential to expose that there are individuals whom agree with censorship, but not in the typical haste of acting without an elaborated base, rather a well thought out explanation which provides an in depth understanding of their stance in this matter. Among these we find former contributing editor of *New Oxford Review* and current member of the editorial board *The Chesterton Review* Thomas Storck. This author published an article titled *A Case of Censorship* in which he discusses how this issue may efficiently avoid negative or harmful actions among members of society. Storck defines censorship as “a restriction, absolute or merely to some part of the population (e.g., to the unlearned or to children), by the proper political authorities, of intellectual, literary, or artistic material in any format” (18). What this suggests is that censorship must be carried out by “proper political authorities” rather than groups of extreme leftist or rightist driven by biased, misinformed, or even distorted justifications. The purpose for Storck is to competently assure “what books and other things the nation may read or view, is not properly the work of private pressure groups or crusading individuals, though their work may sometimes be necessary when

the state does not carry out its proper functions in this area” (18) for the sake of protecting the common good among the members of society.

Storck defends the justification of censorship based on the argument that “ideas lead to actions, and bad ideas often lead to bad actions, bringing harm to individuals and possible ruin to society” (19). He proceeds to explain that censorship must focus in the elimination of bad ideas and the only way to efficiently remove these is identifying good from evil. Storck exemplifies this point by addressing the issue of rape which he believes everyone would agree is an identifiable evil. He argues that this topic should be censored because of the fact that it does not contribute any positive idea to the community and claims “if the advocacy of those evils seems likely to encourage people to commit them, then why should we not take the next logical step and prohibit such advocacy?” (Storck, 20).

Following the justification of censorship for the common good of the community, Storck pushes forward to identify what would be the appropriate credentials of an individual to possess the right to censor. Before engaging into this description he acknowledges that most acts of censorship conducted are not the most adequate or even well elaborated stating that “I willingly admit that many instances of censorship by individuals and pressure groups have been stupid or perverse” (Storck, 22). Still he claims that proper censorship can take place, but in order for this to be possible, Storck argues that “the ideal censor is not some ill-educated, parochial bigot, but someone of liberal education and continued wide reading, someone with a grasp of first principles and enough experience and wisdom to see how they should be put into practice” (23). Besides describing the list of ideal qualities that an apt censor must meet, the author acknowledges that it will not guarantee that the censor will not commit mistakes. When addressing one of the most common debates in censorship (the claim that by censoring a book or

any kind of art form, will suppress the authors' creativity and completely obscure their creation from the public) the author claims that "those who think that, with censorship, literature and creativity will dry up, forget that most of the great works of the past, up to and in some cases beyond the 19th century, were produced under government or ecclesial censorship" (Storck, 23). This claim implies that if the text is bound to be a valuable asset to literature then it would eventually overcome the barriers that censorship places on it.

When individuals are in search of the truth, Storck discusses that censorship would be advantageous because "if a number of assertions are competing for acceptance, and (let us say) we know that two of them are false, how can removing those two from the debate make it harder for the truth to be discerned among the rest" (23). Censorship in this case simplifies the quest to discover the truth by removing all claims or assertions which are known to be false. Storck concludes his argument in favor of censorship shielding the notion of eradicating all of those negative aspects linked to the downfall of society claiming "who benefits today from the continuing corruption of the public by movies, television, and music filled with sex and violence? (24) Based on Storck argument we could assume that the ideal way to reconcile all the members of society is by identifying and removing the evil ideas from the good ideas, (highly impractical) a goal that can be met with the adequate use of censorship.

Storck's argument of how to efficiently employ censorship is mainly a utopian concept. The idea of knowing how to differentiate good from evil is a far more complex the one may imagine. Storck confidently argues that we can all agree that rape is evil and serves no purpose so it must be eliminated. The problem with this action is that it does not completely engage in an in depth understanding of the topic of rape. What makes rape evil? Is it the sexual act? Is it the invasion of one individual over the other? Is it both? How can one address these problems

without having an appropriate understanding? If one could adequately distinguish between right or wrong then censorship would not be a dilemma because there would be a complete agreement among all the members of society. This would give rise to a bigger situation; if everybody in society would agree in every aspect, freedom of speech and thought would disappear. This would result in free will disappearing making individuals no more than programmed machines who execute orders at will.

Book banning is categorized as a part of censorship; therefore, it is essential to trace back to when this action began in the United States and by whom, in order to understand its effects ever since it was first documented. Tracing back its origins, the Dictionary of American History discusses that book banning “has existed in America since colonial times, when legislatures and royal governors enacted laws against blasphemy and seditious libel. Legislatures in the early American republic passed laws against obscenity” (Downs, Par.1). It could be understood that, in its beginning, the United States government had a direct, active role in book banning contrary to nowadays that censoring is mostly initiated by parents. An example of this is the Comstock act, a “federal statute passed by the U.S. Congress in 1873 as an ‘Act of the Suppression of Trade in, and Circulation of, Obscene Literature and Articles of Immoral Use’”(Encyclopedia Britannica), which though modified, is still in effect today. Even though there were and still are laws established by the government to enforce book banning, at present these are not enforced because they conflict with the First Amendment in the Constitution of the United States which clarifies that “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” (ALA, “First Amendment of the Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution” Par.1). The existence

of this amendment makes the government's involvement minimum if at all. Yet this does not necessarily mean that censorship or limitations to freedom of speech are not present today. The ALA identifies over 30 institutions that have promoted censorship and/or book banning most of which are educational institutions (e.g. School boards and libraries) and government based associations (e.g. National Security Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, and the United States Departments of Justice and Treasury). It is interesting to see that, though the central government (executive, judicial, or legislative) does not directly interfere with censorship and book banning, it does have many agencies that have the power to do so. For the purpose of this study it is important to note that most of the institutions that have banned or censored books are in education and related fields. This fact is disturbing for educators because by censoring, boundaries and limitations are placed upon the very field whose primary purpose is to transmit knowledge to others.

A study conducted by the American Library Association (ALA) from 1990 to 2009 reveals that there were 13,387 challenges on record. Most of these challenges were initiated by parents with a total of 6,010 and 1, 407 by patrons which combined constitute nearly 70% of the total challenges. The ALA administrative assistant Bryan Campbell states that a patron constitutes "library users who do not fall under the other categories (parent, administrator, etc.) found on the challenge report form" (Campbell). Besides parents and patrons challenging texts, schools, school libraries and public libraries are institutions that initiate challenges as well. Of the institutions previously mentioned, independent/local schools were presented as the institution that initiated the most challenges with an amount of 3,866 challenges, followed by school libraries with 3,655 challenges and finally, public libraries with 2,616 challenges. Based on the prior statistics it could be inferred that most of the initiatives towards challenging texts originate

from educationally grounded institutions. Now that the main initiators of text challenging have been identified, the reasons why these are challenged will be discussed. There are various themes present in text that capture the challengers' attention, some of these (texts) more alarming than others. Out of the various themes to challenge a text the two topmost recurrent reasons are: material is considered sexually explicit, with a total of 3,046 challenges, followed by content which is unsuited to a specific age group with 2,170. In a curious side note it is interesting that challenges against a text because of violence fall in fourth place with 1,258 challenges. This makes it apparent that sexually explicit material is perceived by the challengers as a much more controversial topic than violence per se, which philosopher and critical theorist Slavoj Žižek defines as "the obvious signals of violence are acts of crime and terror, civil unrest, or international conflict." (Žižek, *Violence*, 1). From the prior statistic provided by the ALA, it is captivating to see that those who challenge texts give higher emphasis to restricting themes that "sexually explicit themes" throughout (often times considered taboos) rather than those themes that depict how individuals could harm each other.

Book banning and censorship in children's literature is a phenomenon that has been present for a substantial amount of time that as of 1995 approximately 7,926 attempts have been made to ban a text. When addressing book censorship, in order to understand how this affects society and pedagogy it is appropriate to discuss how censored books play a crucial role in reflecting the values and ideologies of the society in which they were created. Leon Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution* sets out to draw a link between a work of art and society and how the work of art represents the time in which in our case the text was created. Trotsky critiques formalism in art and suggests that art is rather directly a result of the milieu, rather than an object detached, "always free of life, and in its color never reflected the color of the flag which waved

over the fortress of the city” (Shklovsky qtd. in Trotsky, 1007), or as a “work of self-sufficient pure forms” (Trotsky, 1005-006). Instead Trotsky argues that art is dependent on its surroundings as the place “the poet can find material for his art only in his social environment and transmits the new impulses of life through his own artistic consciousness” (Trotsky, 1008). The inquiries presented in this thesis approach the research and study of banned books in Children’s and Young Adult Literature based on Trotsky’s premise. While there are texts praised, promoted and celebrated for having “appropriate” content in any particular society, banned or challenged books are removed and negatively criticized for being “inappropriate” or lacking positive values. Yet writers from both popular and challenged books are influenced by their social environment. Furthermore, similar to popular books, challenged books present what could be considered subversive, for some of the themes and situations presented in the text provide controversy or challenge the existing order and understanding of world of the audience. Although these very themes may resonate for some readers they become focal points for the efforts of censorship by other individuals, groups or institutions. As Trotsky states “the investigation may become complicated, detailed or individualized, but its fundamental idea will be that of the subsidiary role which art plays in the social process” (1009) meaning that any theme which is present in a text is a statement of the epoch in which it was written. Trotsky believed that in art “a new class does not begin to create all of culture from the beginning, but enters into possession of the past, asserts it, touches it up, rearranges it, and builds on it further” (1014). This basically means that for a particular society, the group in power assumes the right to re-envision and promote certain values and ideologies. We can see that Trotsky’s claims are relevant to contemporary literary censorship as they not only present what some consider

controversial themes and situations, but also how texts still play a key role in how the world is perceived.

Trotsky's argument, of which states that a text is a direct result of the social constructions and ideologies in which it was created and not an independent phenomenon is also promoted by new historicists such as Donald E. Hall, Hunter Cadzow, Wesley Morris, and Stephen Greenblatt. We can infer from their discussion the importance of censored texts as essential for understanding the timeline/historical context in which they were written.

In *Literary and Cultural Theory: From Basic Principles to Advance Applications*, Donald E. Hall discusses new historicism and pluralistic cultural analysis which argues that "some of the supple readings of literature and culture today are seen as inextricably and simultaneously connected to a variety of political, social, and ideological system" (Hall, 299). We can understand that when a book is challenged or censored, the main cause is that those in favor of challenging or censoring a book feel threatened that the text may jeopardize the preferred/established political, social, or ideological systems. Hall argues that the main purpose of new historicism is to break away from a very limited historical scope claiming that:

[...] the notion of a perfectly linear historical timeline, indicating a steady developmental sequence, obscured the numerous ways in which many people's lives did not change for the better in a neatly progressive fashion because of sexism, heterosexism, racism and other oppressive forces remained substantially unchallenged for many years, in some cases, these forces even intensified as time went on. (Hall, 300)

It must be kept in mind that historical events and circumstances do not affect solely those individuals mentioned in history books, but those living in the same period. One of literary censorship's main purposes is to watch over censor's best interests, thereby establishing or preserving anamorphic or mystified portions of history by overshadowing or bluntly eliminating undesired themes from the worldview of the desired audience. Parting from a new historicist perspective, book censorship then prevents audiences from grasping a greater understanding of history, by limiting the access to information that challenges the ideological views of a particular moment of history.

Another argument presented by Hall is that "new historicism makes a strong case for the important role played by literary texts in the creation and replication of systems of power" (Hall, 301). Apart from watching over what censors believe are the best interests of their targeted audience, book censorship works to impose and maintain a desired ideology and moral value system. Some of the books challenged or censored many times present themes that defy established systems of beliefs and ideologies which are perceived as a threat; thus, the justification for censorship. Such is the case with Lauren Myracle's *ttyl* and Richardson's and Parnell's *And Tango Makes Three* two texts that have been challenged on numerous occasions for presenting controversial themes.

Hall concludes with various key principles which justify the importance of new historicism in order to understand the complexity of history. One of the most important arguments he presents is:

the common attempt to reduce history to a simple timeline of wars, revolutions, major political crises, and changes in governmental policy is to ignore the many ways in which people's lives have

been differently affected (and sometime unaffected) by such grand actions. (Hall, 302)

History is not created only by the prominent individuals mentioned in the text, but rather all the individuals present in that timeline. If recording history's purpose is to present a specific moment with as much insight as possible, censoring books prevents this process because it tries to silence those voices not desired by censors. Hall finally concludes affirming "Literary and cultural analysis is a field that can never be exhausted, for new readings of even the best-known texts will always be possible as new avenues for insight, new forms of data, and new ways of approaching historical complexity become available to us" (306). No text has a definitive interpretation; new understanding and insight can always be found, which will contribute to a better understanding of the text. However, by censoring books this opportunity is denied.

In Hunter Cadzow's book *New Historicism* we are presented with "an effort to rethink the ways that . . . texts were situated within the larger spectrum of discourses and practices" (Cadzow, 534). According to Cadzow new historic critics "must delineate the ways the texts they study were linked to the network of institutions, practices, and beliefs that constitute culture in its entirety" (535) and how these were necessary to avoid misgiving or subjective assumptions adopted by prior scholars. This is reflected on book censorship, for this action is based on claiming the text is "inappropriate" which is mostly justified by biased or misguided assumptions particularly from powerful institutions. Cadzow also makes reference to literary theorist Stephen Greenblatt's definition of new historicism, which states "it is an array of reading practices that investigate a series of issues that emerge when critics seek to chart the ways texts, in dialectical fashion, both represent a society's behavior patterns and perpetuate, shape, or alter that culture's dominant codes" (Greenblatt qtd. in Cadzow, 535). New historicism, according to Greenblatt

also states “the scene in which authors lived was controlled by a variety of authorities-- institutions such as the church, court, family, and administration, as well as agencies such as god or a sacred book--and that these powers came into conflict because they endorsed competing patterns for organizing social experiences” (Greenblatt qtd. in Cadzow 536). This is a key factor for book censorship for most of its drive is based on the critique, opposition or challenging of established ideologies. Cadzow additionally makes reference to literary theorist Louis Montrose’s view on new historicism which states that it;

is to refigure the relationship between texts and the cultural system in which they were produced, and he indicates that as a first step in such an undertaking, critics must problematize or reject both formalist conception of literature as an autonomous aesthetic order that transcends needs and interests and the reflection notion that writing simply mirrors a stable and coherent ideology that is endorsed by all members of society. (Cadzow, 535)

In addition, he states that an in-depth understanding of book censorship must take into account everything subjected to an aesthetic or ideological factor may alter or mislead any opportunity of gaining new understanding. Book censorship can also be triggered by the threat an “inappropriate” text may pose for social or cultural ideologies, or as Cadzow points out about literary theorist Jonathan Goldberg’s argument “he implies that while such a structure allows writers to express feeling of disgust and contempt, it also ultimately contains the threat posed by gestures of dissent and rebellion” (Goldberg qtd. in Cadzow, 538). Cadzow concludes his essay mentioning that “the first task expected in new historicism, namely, explaining how writing is a part of the culture in which it was produced” and “the socially constituted character of human

identity prevents individuals from imagining progressive alternatives to the society in which the live” (Cadzow, 539). This further strengthens our understanding of why books are banned, for texts are seen as promoting change in the censor’s established customs and ideologies.

Furthermore in *Toward a New Historicism*, Wesley Morris discusses the importance of new historicism for understanding the significance of book censorship stating “that literature has a significant relationship with its cultural-historical milieu” (Morris, 3). Although this may be perceived as a simple claim, it links social behavior and perception towards a text written in a parallel timeline. He also exposes the importance historical relativism and subjectivism. Relativism as Morris states in the words of René Wellek defines “a particular event (e.g. a work of art)” is understood only in terms of the moment of its creation, meaning is determined by the author’s historical existence; and a particular event can be understood only in the terms of its interpreter’s historical context regardless of the time of its creation” (Wellek qtd. in Morris, 3). Drawing from these definitions it could be inferred readers’ understanding is not only influenced by his/her historical context, but the context the work of art was created in as well. On the one hand the work of art must be understood within the established history-- set in the time of its creation, on the other hand, the interpreter uses his/her contemporary historical context to understand the work of art. Subjectivism is defined by Wellek as “the most relativistic position of all, resulting in critical impressionism and epistemological solipsism” (Wellek qtd. in Morris, 4). In other words, this suggests historical knowledge only exists because of the subjective awareness of it. In both relativism and in subjectivism we can see historical context is already predisposed to be understood in a subjective manner.

Morris concludes by discussing that the dilemma a new historicist faces is “explaining the aesthetic relationship between the work and its cultural-historical environment” and “must

argue that the individual work stands free of its historical context while it simultaneously draws its audience toward that context” (13), which when regarding relativism and subjectivism can be directly linked to book censorship. When a book is censored it is important to recall that all the institutions and administrations which promote this action are enforced by established social-cultural tendencies which tend not to be threatened or challenged. These tendencies come from what one may presume are “fixed” historical backgrounds which leave no room for interpreting the literature. This is why there must be a presence of new historicism or as Morris states, a purpose which “cannot help but expand our comprehension of literature and the culture of which it is so vital a part” (13).

Finally, Stephen Greenblatt in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* discusses the fashioning of the selves through literature in sixteenth-century England. He argues “it [literature] crosses the boundaries between the creation of literary characters, the shaping of one’s own identity, the experience of being molded by forces outside one’s control, the attempt to fashion other selves” (Greenblatt, 3). The objective of those who promote book censorship is the very action of “fashioning” its audience’s identity into what they believe is the most appropriate way of acting and thinking. This is accomplished by giving the audience texts which contain the preferred themes and obscuring those representing a threat. Greenblatt later discusses the importance of literature in social formations and history, claiming:

Inevitably, the resonance and certainty we find in our small group of texts and their authors are our invention and the similar, cumulative inventions of others. It is we who enlist them in a kind of historical drama, and we need such a drama in part because compulsive readers of literature tend to see the world through

literary models and in part because our own lives--quite apart from professional deformation--are saturated with experience artfully shaped. (Greenblatt, 6)

This suggests part of the formation of individuals is through the interaction they have with the texts. Book censors try to manipulate this by limiting the accesses of its audience, for they (book censors) are dedicated to the formation of the individual, but within their established parameters. They accept the creation of identities through literature as long as these are appropriate, making this a matter of imposition rather than free personal preference. Addressing the importance of literature to history Greenblatt argues “there is no such thing as a single ‘history of the self’ in the sixteenth century, except as the product of our need to reduce the intricacies of complex and creative beings to safe and controllable order”(Greenblatt, 8). Similar to the sixteenth century, book censorship seems to look towards making use of text to create a system of ideological order rather than promoting the exploration of other points of view which can jeopardize the established system of beliefs.

Greenblatt concludes “‘self-fashioning’ occurs at the point of encounter between an authority and an alien, that what is produced in this encounter partakes of both the authority and the alien that is marked for attack, and hence that any achieved identity always contains within itself the signs of its own subversion or loss” (Greenblatt, 9). If book censorship looks to limit the access of certain themes, as a consequence its audience will face a high probability of never having the opportunity to learn or could even developing misleading ideas about the obscured theme.

Even though Trotsky’s and New Historicism theories originate from different approaches (while Trotsky’s theory focuses more on the political and revolutionary scope, New Historicism

focuses on exposing accounts without isolating any aspect of it) both try to explore how the notions of power behave in the very environment which creates them. Trotsky's theory tries to expose how art is a direct response to the manifestation of power in society. In other words, art does not stand by itself but rather created by the environment which surrounds the artists; what they see, feel, or think is the very foundation of the work of art being created. New Historicism on the other hand, does not take any aspect of a work of art for granted; it tries to create an understanding drawing from all the direct and indirect situations that surround the work of art in order to better explain the society in which it was created. Both of these theories focus on exposing how the works of art recount numerous stories about the social constructs in which they were created in. In order to properly explain why are Justin Richardson's and Peter Parnell's *Tango Makes Three* and Lauren Myracle's *ttyl* targets of censorship, and better understand the reasons why, it is appropriate to employ both of these theories to aid the understanding of this situation.

Book censorship in the classroom is a constant controversy, discoursing over what is considered appropriate or not, in its simplest principle it is debate of ideals fueled by threatened ideologies. This is why it is important to understand how ideology plays a key role in book censorship. The concept of ideology is explored by many scholars, including literary theorist Terry Eagleton. In *Ideology: An Introduction* Eagleton sets out to outline and disentangle some of the conceptual confusions when defining ideology (Eagleton, 221). He defines and discusses the concept of ideology that in its neutral sense is "a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class" (Eagleton, 2). When addressing book censorship and attempting to understand beyond the justification of the text's censorship it can be seen there are "bodies of ideas" watching over a particular groups' best interests. If a text questions, challenges or

opposes the ideals of a particular group then it will be perceived as a threat. Texts seen as a threat are those which attempt to alter or even change the established ideas, and thus making them the target of censorship. Further Eagleton argues “there are no such ‘lived’ relations which do not tacitly involve a set of beliefs and assumptions, and these beliefs and assumptions may themselves be open to judgment of truth and falsehood” (21). Based on Eagleton’s discussion it can be understood certain books are challenged for reasons ranging from inappropriate language to sexually explicit material on which censors focus in order to conceal these things from a target audience and to preserve a set of established beliefs and assumptions. As an outcome, censors in their best interests may be willing to challenge certain themes based on dogmatic beliefs.

Addressing conflicts of ideological awareness Eagleton explains “there is the condition which Peter Sloterdijk calls ‘enlightened false consciousness’, which lives by false values but is ironically aware of doing so, and so which can hardly be said to be mystified in the traditional sense of the term” (Sloterdijk qtd. in Eagleton 27). Those who censor books are very much aware of the themes which threaten their ideologies and values (being this the reason to censor the text), yet they choose to deliberately impose ideologies to preserve the established ideological system. An example of this is when children’s books which deal with controversial topics such as homosexuality and/or sexuality appear on the censoring radar for being considered offensive. Censors look to eliminate these themes in order to defend their established ideologies as in the Shiloh Elementary School in Illinois where parents requested Justin Richardson’s and Peter Parnell’s *Tango Makes Three* be moved out of the school’s library regular shelves to the mature section because of its homosexual undertones. In addition to the request to move it to the mature section an appointed panel discussed if the text should require parental permission to control the students’ level of access (Suhr). Apart from trying to overshadow these “offensive”

themes, censoring may send a message that these themes present negative behavior or should be frowned upon. Eagleton concludes by stressing the importance of ideology in the direction of social interest and the distribution of power stating:

The relations between ideological discourses and social interest are complex, variable ones, in which it is sometimes appropriate to speak of the ideological signifier as a bone of connection between conflicting special forces, and at other times a matter of more internal relations between modes of signification and forms of social power. (Eagleton, 223)

This helps explain a justifiable reason to ban a text assuming the text will present within it valuable insight which will help create a better understanding of the behavior and way of thinking of a society in a particular moment in history.

Adding to the discussion on the concept of ideology, cultural critic Slavoj Žižek in *The Sublime Object of Ideology* discusses the use of a Lacanian-inspired definition of ideology and its role in society. For Žižek ideology is “not simply a ‘false consciousness’, an illusory representation of reality, it is rather this reality itself which is already to be conceived as ‘ideological’” (Žižek, *Sublime*, 21). Based on this definition it could be inferred that an individual’s perception of reality is an ideological representation, thus making it real. Therefore, without ideology a representation of the real would not be possible. This would better explain the reasoning of book censorship as a perceived threat from other ideologies. Those who censor books want to keep a specific audience “safe” or unaware of another “reality,” by imposing to its audience the preferred ideology, which they (book censors) believe is the correct view. Censors are likely to be victims of the very same ideological indoctrination imposed by censors before

them. This creates a cycle of the imposition of ideologies rather than a free educational experience. Žižek goes on to discuss how individuals create a value system to objects which he explains, arise from the fetishes which ideology creates toward any object, for example: if an individual's fetish is the promotion of "traditional" families, then texts which deal with the acceptance of "non-traditional" families will be seen as not in accordance with his/her perception of reality, thus should be obscured or eliminated.

Žižek continues by giving insight about "False Consciousness" which he defines as a "basic, constitutive naïveté: the misrecognition of its own presuppositions, of its own effective conditions, a distance, a divergence between so-called social reality and our distorted representation" (Žižek, *Sublime*, 28). In democratic societies this distorted representation is seen when a society which preaches freedom of speech and intellectual knowledge has literary censorship. This results in presenting a contradiction of their "democratic" convictions unmasking the presence of false consciousness. He concludes this section arguing about the enjoyment or "jouissance" of individuals and how this is only a compelling force, aiming at the fulfillment, but always an unsatisfiable desire. Book censor looks to limit the access of certain material to its audience is no more than a constant struggle in hopes of eliminating undesired themes. Yet it is impossible to eliminate these themes from history and can only be satisfied by the intentions of doing so.

Apart from the concept of ideology, Žižek also discusses the subject of violence. One of book censorship's arguments revolve around graphic depictions of violence and how such representations can "corrupt" or teach "negative" values to its audience. Yet it is ironic that often times the very same individuals who look to censor texts because of violence to "protect" the target audience, do so in a confrontational manner as being prejudiced or judgmental. In

Žižek's *The Sublime Violence* he sets out to define and discuss the subject of violence. He discusses the nature of violence which he defines as "acts of crime and terror, civil unrest, or international conflict" (Žižek, *Violence*, 1). Then he goes on to mention violence does not stand within a singular context and goes on to explain two categories violence: objective and subjective. Žižek defines each:

Subjective violence is experienced as such against the background of a non-violent zero level. It is seen as a perturbation if the "normal," peaceful state of things. However, objective violence is precisely the violence inherent to this "normal" state of thing. Objective violence is invisible since it sustains the very zero-level standard against which we perceive something as subjectively violent. (Žižek, *Violence*, 2)

Both of these types of violence are present in book censorship. Objective violence is related to awareness of inappropriate themes presented in texts are in fact present in society and daily life and how the imposition of certain ideologies through educational oppression is seen as normal. On the other hand subjective violence is claimed by book censors who preach the risk of the "corruption" of the audience because of inappropriate themes when they identify a particular text among others. This creates what Žižek labels "fake sense of urgency" which states "there is no time to reflect: we have to act now" (Žižek, *Violence*, 6). This sense of fake urgency can be seen when those in favor of book censorship argue that the "inappropriate" themes presented in the text will teach their audience "bad" values. This has within it two problems; first, the straight forward accusation of the consequences of these texts without any concrete evidence for their claims; second, most if not all of the "bad" values book censors address come from unjustifiable

bias or dogmatic beliefs lack a logical objective argument. Instead of assuming a head on collision with the problem Žižek exhorts audiences to sit down and observe the “practical” situation and learn what the true cause of violence is, “we need to ‘learn, learn, learn’ what causes this violence” (Žižek, *Violence*,8). Instead of deliberately accusing various texts of presenting “inappropriate themes” and immediately looking to censor books based on hasty accusations, it is wise to study first why the theme is considered inappropriate, why there is resistance towards this theme, and if there are truly any concrete negative outcomes of presenting such themes.

It must be taken into consideration that if it is difficult to discuss and identify ideology it and it is much more complex to do it with our own. When we discuss, explore, or even critique others’ ideologies especially if they do not coincide with ours, it is possible to identify these and even see how these transform individuals. When we want to identify our own the process is much more problematic because we must objectively identify those aspects that create who we are, to differentiate between truth acquired by empirical process and what believe to be true because of ideas engrained in the thought process. An example to this is to state that, “as of 2010 corn is the most grown grain in America.” With some research it can be proven that this previous argument is in fact true, but stating, “corn is the best grain in America” cannot be taken as fact because it is impossible to comprehensively study what “best” is, thus making it immeasurable. On the one hand we have a statement that can be proven by observing, quantifying, and comparing the growth of corn to other grains in America, but on the other we have a statement that is speculative and at best can be regarded as an opinion because of its lack of evidence only held by the signifier’s claim. The only truth in ideologies is the faith bestowed upon them because in reality these cannot be proven and the only power of truthfulness they

have come from the passion individuals have to protect and patronize them and as authors Lee Burrell and Edward Jenkinson argue “truth arises from freely held ideas that win acceptance in the free marketplace of opinions” (5). This leads towards the following question; how can educators assist their students learning opportunities without imposing their own ideologies to them?

For educators who truly want their students to become analytical and critical and want to respect their intellectual freedom, this question is a constant struggle that has to be dealt with. To demonstrate how entangled this situation is, Dr. Kathie Krieger Cerra, whose research focuses on education and intellectual freedom, conducted a study which focused on book selection and intellectual freedom (see Appendix A). The results show:

a contradiction between belief and practice. The self-censorship in action in items 1 through 4, and the agreement with publishers’ altering of excerpts from children’s books, contrasts with the teachers’ majority view (76 percent) agreeing that elementary school students should have First Amendment rights. (Cerra, 42)

As the study reveals, educators can claim that they respect intellectual freedom in the practice of education, yet their ideologies play a factor when deciding what should or should not be given to students for their own good.

Literary censorship limits the access of texts in the classroom because the grand majority of efforts surrounding censorship are in educational institutions. This gives relevance in exploring the effects of book censorship in these institutions’ curriculum. Freire emphasizes how through the “Dialogical Method” of education the oppressed may overcome oppression without simultaneously becoming oppressors themselves. In the educational sphere, students

and/or educators can be perceived as oppressed when limitations towards what could be learned and/or taught are present. Censorship may be more influential on students, for they may see censorship as a necessary part of the educational experience. Freire presents two concepts of educational methods: banking and dialogical. The banking method is defined by Freire as “knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry” (Freire, 72). An ideology of oppression is seen in book censorship since limitation is imposed upon an audience and instead of these having the opportunity to acquire the information they desire to learn, they are presented with what should be learned, diverting any interest they (the audience) may have. Furthermore Freire defines the dialogical method as “the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized” (88-89) contrary to censorship, which looks to impose ideas rather than providing an opportunity to explore them. In order to have true humanizing education, it is crucial for the educator/facilitator and students to engage in discourse of mutual discovery and re-discovery of the object/topic discussed. This cannot be possible if texts are censored, because the exploration of knowledge is being limited. How it is difficult to assume that there can be discovery and re-discovery of an object/topic if censorship limits the access of information in books such as *and Tango Makes Three* and *ttyl* because of their themes. Freire argues that, “liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferals of information” (Freire, 79). Acts of cognition are close to impossible to achieve when books are censored and the ones provided have the predisposed preferred ideologies. The biggest consequence of employing the banking method is the creation of what Freire calls “passive learners” who instead of actively

participating in the learning experience are submissively receiving input on what to learn and what type of attitude they should have towards it. This is the effect which book censorship has in education because it looks to preserve certain preferred values to pass along to its audience. The audience passively acquires this knowledge and later on imposes it to another audience thus creating a somewhat mechanical ideology to which they (imposers as well as the audience) have fallen as unconscious victims.

An additional factor that fuels censoring in the pedagogical process is what Henry Giroux addresses in his book *Theory and Resistance in Education* as perspectives of the hidden curriculum. Giroux defines hidden curriculum as “those unstated norms, values, and beliefs embedded in and transmitted to students through the underlying rules that structure the routines and social relationships in school and classroom life” (47) and “not simply as a vehicle of socialization but also as an agency of social control” (47). This can be seen as those themes taught in schools perceived as appropriate by the majority of the society as for example; teaching students the importance of respecting their peers. When themes outside the normal and adequate are taught, these rattle the social construct, creating opposition which will inevitably lead to confrontation, followed by resistance which is the point where the quest for censorship arises. Though it may be perceived as a straight-forward concept, the hidden curriculum has a much more complex structure; as Giroux describes, it is divided into various basic approaches characterize this curriculum though this study focuses particularly on the traditional and liberal approaches.

The traditional approach looks to “accept uncritically the existing relationship between schools and the larger society” (Giroux, 48) and to “explore primarily through the social norms and moral beliefs tacitly transmitted through the socialization process that structure classroom

social relationships” (Giroux, 48). The traditional approach basically focuses on presenting the students the established set of beliefs and values they should know to be successful in the predominant society. These are the themes represented in society as indispensable; opposition to these themes is rarely tolerated and frequently produces conflict. A recurrent example of this situation concerns themes that are thought to be in opposition to dominant religious beliefs frequently labeled as occult. These are the themes that censors are quick to act upon in order to preserve the prominent social values. Unlike the straightforward notion that the traditional approach presents, the liberal approach focuses its “conservative view of knowledge as something to be learned rather than critically engaged, as well as their equally uncritical notion of socialization, in which students are viewed simply as passive role-bearers and recipients of knowledge” (Giroux, 50). Similar to Freire’s banking method; Giroux describes how the liberal approach employs an input system where unquestionable knowledge is transmitted to the students creating a copy and repeat system instead of a critical learning experience. In the liberal approach, censorship plays a passive yet crucial role in education for it preaches indisputable absolute truths, excluding other standpoints and imposing what the students must learn instead of letting them critically create their own understanding. Whether it is liberal or traditional approach, the hidden curriculum is an essential element in censorship because it looks to conserve the prevalent ideology that can only be attained by limiting or prohibiting access to differing themes.

Book censorship in children’s literature has been in public debate for well over a century. As a result of the ongoing dispute, censorship in the United States became part of a general governing body that established parameters concerning book censorship. The association that has taken it upon itself to present to the public this predicament is the American Library

Association (ALA). The American Library Association is the oldest and largest library association in the United States and the world. It was founded in Pennsylvania in 1876 with 103 members; today this association consists of over 62,000 members most of whom are libraries and librarians across the United States. The mission of the ALA is to “provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all” (ALA). Its website contains a wide variety of sections dealing with book censorship. The initial section presents the difference between challenging and banning a book, and why books are challenged. It is essential for this study to know what each of these mean, for they have different effects on a text and also to understand the reason for its challenge. Their website also includes a list of frequently challenged books. This list is useful to explore not only to which texts are mostly challenged, but also to understand which themes were the ones that got them in this list. This list is also useful for understanding recurring themes between texts in order to identify a pattern in book censorship. Apart from the previously mentioned charts there are additional charts which address texts challenged in the past 20 years, arranged by reason, initiators, and institutions (see appendices). These charts are important because they provide statistics relevant in order to understand the origins of the book challenge and based on that content is it banned. The website also presents the steps that must be taken in order to challenge a book. This crucial information is needed for this study because depending on the level of action taken to censor a book will be the level of severity of censorship the text may face if it were to be censored. The weight of limiting the access to a specific audience is not similar to trying to eliminate a text from school library.

Pat Scales' article "What Makes a Good Banned Book?" discusses how through the last decades, censors have banned books for a diverse variety of reasons and, while some had the bad luck to fall under the censoring scope, not all share the same fate. She goes on to talk about Dav Pilkey's *Captain Underpants* book series that has fallen under the censors' scope on the claims that "There's just not a place in children's books for underwear," (Scales, 533) whereas for Karla Kuskin's *The Philharmonic Gets Dressed*, censors did not have any problems with underwear when it was published in 1982. Here she exemplifies how censorship's scope and level of tolerance is modified as time goes on, how a theme that was perceived as controversial various decades ago is not as important nowadays even to the point of being tolerated sometimes even accepted; or the opposite where topics that were considered indifferent decades ago are now perceived as controversial. While some topics appear, disappear or reappear on the censors' scope, Scales mentions there are some always on the scope, many of which are considered taboos especially if these deal with themes of homosexuality, such as *Annie on My Mind* by Nancy Garden, *Daddy's Roommate* by Michael Willhoite, *Heather Has Two Mommies* by Lesléa Newman and most recently *Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell. These books, as Scales states, are "the biggest targets of censors" (534).

Scales moves on to focus her argument to recent censorship initially presenting how books such as Phillip Pullman's *The Golden Compass* and J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series remain upsetting to various adults, mainly members of religious organizations. They struggle to censor these texts arguing that children will turn to the "evil" activities of witchcraft after reading these and for these presenting anti-religious themes. Other topics that commonly attract censors in children's books are profanity, racial epithets, name-calling and violence, as in the case of Lois Duncan's novel *Killing Mr. Griffin*, which was pulled off the shelves after the

Columbine tragedy. Furthermore, the author mentions that social issues are considered “red flags for censors” (Scales, 535) stating that “books that deal with bullying, child abuse, drug and alcohol use, death, gangs, rape, war, or any topic that causes young readers to contemplate the world’s ills” (Scales, 535). Clearly censors try to “protect” their target audience; instead of dealing and confronting these themes they prefer obscuring them. This action is taken based on the claim that these themes may “corrupt” readers, but should not the readers have the right to know about these themes especially if these were to affect them? Is this not limiting the educational opportunities of the reader?

Scales concludes mentioning that literary censorship’s main purpose is to limit the accesses of certain themes to an audience has a counter effect. When books gain notoriety because of the attention provided by censors, this very same notoriety attracts the interest of readers. As Scales argues, “It is human nature to want to read what others say you shouldn’t, and banning a book often helps keep it in print for years” (535). Every human being is intrigued by the forbidden, we all want to know the “secret” which is being kept from us and the harder the censors work to obscure a book, the more likely it will gain an audience.

In the article “Too Much Information?” Pat Scales sets out to address publishers’ age-guidance recommendations on children’s books and its consequences. She begins by discussing how Phillip Pullman, author of *The Golden Compass*, along with more than 700 other children’s book authors and illustrators have embarked in a movement against putting age recommendation on children’s books arguing that “it stigmatizes young readers” (Scales, 27) and recently there has been an increasing number of these “labels” in children’s books. She moves to discuss that there is a difference between reading level and age guidance; while the first one regards readers based on comprehension, the latter one is imposed to a target audience because of their

comprehension level. In other words this would mean that on one hand students should not read a particular text because of the probability that they will not understand what they are reading, but on the other hand they should not read a particular text because they could understand what they are reading. Regardless of either of these two reasons, as Scales argues, every time a book is labeled, censorship is occurring because there is an existent restriction of a book to a certain audience. Because of these two reasons, publishers have assumed the duty to determine what age is appropriate for a child to read a particular book. This occurs against the will very authors and illustrators of children's books who express that their books do not have age limitations.

Furthermore, Scales moves on to argue whether or not book should be age restricted, the fact is that currently children's books do have age recommendations. This presents a problem because "One of the roles of a librarian is to offer youngsters a wide range of reading materials - without placing any restrictions on them" (Scales, 27); when publishers decide to include an age recommendation, it presents more of an obstacle than a solution. It is important to state that this situation does not pose a problem only for librarians but, for teachers as well. Similar to librarians, teachers also face the problem of providing a range of reading materials to students without placing restrictions but, being aware of what books they can or cannot use. Though there are age recommendations on the of level of appropriateness in a children's book, Scales argues that many children's books such as J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*; Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, and Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy have also gained significant adult audiences. Scales concludes her argument by acknowledging Pullman's view that "books have no age restrictions; they're written for whoever wants to read them" (Pullman qtd. in Scales, 27).

"Lauren Myracle: 'This Generation's Judy Blume'" is an article written by Sue Corbett in which she arguments of how judging by her happy and colorful website, one may not conceive

that author Lauren Myracle has been present for recent years at the top of the list of most challenged books because of her novels, specifically some of her bestselling novels. Corbett explains that Myracle has gained this notorious recognition because of the Internet Girl series novels (*ttyl*, *tfn*, and *l8r, g8r*), which as additional result, helped to temporarily ban her *Luv Ya Bunches* from Scholastic Book Fairs because it dealt with homosexuality.

In addition to dealing with the obstacles imposed by censorship book authors must also deal with public attacks kindled by the opposing crowd. Lauren Myracle is a victim of this very situation, for she receives various hateful e-mails every week from people asking her if she is a pedophile and accusing her of corrupting young readers for profit. In an interview with Myracle, she stated that the attacks reached the point that even a Christian-based website called Virtue Alert sent out a mass e-mail stating that “SATAN IS ON THE RAMPAGE, AND HIS NAME IS LAUREN MYRACLE!” (Myracle qtd. in Corbett). This is ironic, for Myracle has openly expressed she is a Christian. It is similarly interesting to note how the previous statement, which makes the claim that Myracle is Satan and is directly judging her, comes from someone who also follows Christian religion which preaches acceptance and free will. Here as in other cases we can see how those who partake in the quest to censor “unacceptable” moral values or “inappropriate” themes are often times more confrontational than passive. This does not only send the contradicting message of being violent and confrontational in the name of preserving moral values, but also its lack of subtlety gives the text they desire to censor notoriety which nevertheless is unwitting advertisement.

Besides the large amount of negative e-mails that Myracle receives, there are also supporting e-mails “sometimes as many as 1,000 e-mails a day” (Myracle qtd. in Corbett), most from young girls. Through these e-mails, Myracle is repeatedly praised by her audience, because

her stories have helped them deal with personal difficulties. Despite the fact that there are those who look to censor her novels because of undesired themes or values, these themes are present and are part of our society, but oftentimes not confronted because they are considered taboo. Books similar to those written by Myracle, present the audience with these situations and likewise present how to deal with them, making the audience aware instead of leaving them vulnerable. Corbett concludes citing Myracle on her pride of being compared to Judy Blume,¹ for Myracle as a young reader was helped by the books written by Blume. Nowadays that is one of the aspects that Myracle, through her writing, looks to achieve for her audience as well.

In “Book banning blues: A New Chorus,” John F. Baker reminds the audience how in America there are a variety of individuals who impose their notion of what should or should not be read. He goes on to relate how every year in the last week of September, booksellers expose a variety of books that at one point have been or still are challenged, censored or banned. Additionally, he remarks the fact that Banned Books Week, through its effort and media coverage, is to some extent a futile effort because many people will forget about it until the next year. Meanwhile challenges, censorship, and banning incidents continue occurring.

Baker acknowledges the difficulty that The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) goes through in the quest to provide funding because of the obscenity in arts issues constantly confronted. It is interesting to point out that these restrictions imposed to the NEA were to some extent influenced by politicians or, as Baker emphasized, that the NEA was “battered for months by congressional critics led by Senator Jesse Helms” (6), who at the time was serving his third term as a United States Senator for the Republican party. As a result of these restrictions artists declined these funds as exemplified by Baker, when founder of the New York Shakespeare

¹ Judy Blume is a well-known children and young adult writer who similar to Myracle has been a victim of censorship.

festival, Joseph Papp, declined the NEA grant because of these restrictions. As a consequence, it motivated him to place provocative ads, as Baker describes, “could be seen as a threat to ‘right-thinking’ viewers” (6). The very act of exhibiting this “inappropriate” art to the public was a key factor for censors to begin protesting. As Baker states, “materials that view human life critically, quizzically or satirically are bound to give offense to someone; and in no time you have an organized group saying that you're trying to destroy the family or endorse sin” (6).

Because of loud protesting by an angry mob in order to stir up attention, censors face two problematical situations. First, if censors are successfully able to acquire a trial pertaining to the material they desire to censor, they must defend the justification for confining a theme in the very same county that was built on the idea of freedom. This situation deals a heavy blow to censors as Baker argues in a trial held in Florida against the rap group 2 Live Crew that:

was acquitted by a straight-arrow jury that certainly seemed unfamiliar with rap and its conventions, but found the whole affair, and the performance for which the band was prosecuted, more funny than reprehensible. As one juror commented, in a remark we would like to think represents the feelings of a real majority of Americans: ‘You take away one freedom, and pretty soon they’re all gone. (6)

The second and perhaps more challenging situation that censors face is that the more attention drawn to their quest of censoring a text or any kind of art for the matter, the more allure and advertisement they are giving to it or as Baker argues “those who would ban books never seem to learn: not only does it seldom work for long, but it is often violently counter-productive” (6). Though these two stations may negatively affect the purpose of censors, it must be kept in

mind that they still have the power to achieve their desired purpose or there would not be a banned books week to begin with.

In “Censoring the Imagination: Challenges to Children's Books”, Judith Saltman discusses how book challenges have increased claiming that the “ALA office for intellectual freedom has received reports of more than 3,500 such attempts in the last five years [1996]” (8). In addition to this upsetting fact she also acknowledges that the challenges North America are not only limited to the United States, but Canada as well. Saltman discusses that in Canada challenges are present exposing that in “the first time around [in 1982 to 1984], I found out that a quarter of the schools had a challenge....This time [1991 to 1993], I had a third. So it's increasing” (Abercrombie qtd. in Saltman, 8). Evidently, similar to the United States, in Canada texts are not only challenged, but its numbers increase every decade.

Though book censorship in children's literature has had grown in the recent century, it can be traced back to the sixteenth century when children were not permitted to read folklore because it was considered unfitting for them. Similar to present day, Saltman argues that in previous centuries the main concern for censors was that books were in accordance with the popular behavioral, social, and religious ideologies, in other words the “moral” values. An example of how these values were established was the creation of *The Guardian of Education* magazine by Mrs. Sarah Trimmer which presented reviews of texts in the genre of children's literature. Though at first glance this may be perceived as a worthy act, it presented a problematical situation. Saltman argues that Trimmer's “views were shared by other Victorians who evaluated children's books in terms of the precepts of behavior and lessons in social and religious morality contained within them”(8). This very situation presents how books were

reviewed based on filling the requirement of a “moral agenda” not taking into account any other elements present in the text.

As previously discussed, in preceding centuries book censors established strategies to limit the ability of access to certain texts based on “usefulness”. Saltman mentions that as each century goes by, the criteria of evaluating the literal quality in children’s texts has increased resulting in “more objections and challenges to the content of the books than in any earlier era” (Saltman, 8). This increasing situation of challenges originate from the diverse amounts of themes that adults oppose to such as; profanity, racism, sexism, homosexuality and ideas that differ from accepted values as challenging authority or perceived as blasphemous. Censors have designed a belief that books should be evaluated based on the utilitarian value that its reader may grasp, yet this present confrontation towards writers such as Nat Hentoff debate “I apologize for being obvious, but literature cannot breathe if it is forced to be utilitarian in this or any other sense.... [T]ruly creative tellers of tales...cannot be fitted into neat, sanitized, newly 'proper' molds (177-78)” (Hentoff qtd. in Saltman, 9). In addition to the standpoint regarding children’s literature authors, Saltman, emphasizes that every human being has to respect the rights of the other, this includes children’s rights. Can children’s rights truly be respected if censors decide what they can or cannot read and place limitations on access to materials? The author moves on to discuss that many parents that work with Children’s literature agree that, the imagination present in these texts must not serve of utilitarian purpose and must be free of ideology and propaganda (11). It must be kept in mind that literature is not ideology free and promotes values, yet using literature solely for utilitarian value limits children’s exposure to a variety of concepts that will ultimately contribute in their development towards the expansion of intellect and becoming critical thinkers with independent belief systems. Saltman concludes her discourse

exposing that “a political or religious group that is totally convinced of the righteousness of its position [censoring] might wish to suppress differing points of view, but democracy is based on the free exchange of ideas: we tolerate differing opinions not because we endorse them but because we wish to remain free to express our own” (12). Censors to some extent believe that by presenting differing themes, these themes are being endorsed even imposed, yet this should not be a situation of imposing right from wrong, but rather the exposition of human behavior. Children should have the right to know that not everyone thinks or acts in the same manner and this should not be judged or criticized and additionally, have the right to know that there are those capable of malevolent acts such as harming the wellbeing of others as portrayed by many antagonists in children’s literature. If the idea of imposition of self-righteousness keeps prevailing, censorship will be an ever-present conflict especially if it is scoped towards the carving children’s belief systems and ideologies.

Now that significant literary, new historic, pedagogical theories and articles that provide insight of the role that censorship plays in Children’s literature have been discussed, the succeeding chapter in this thesis addresses various research questions. These questions will explore if literary censorship serves a utilitarian purpose in Children’s and Young Adult literature or if it is an effort to preserve established ideologies which in effect negatively affects the educational experience.

Similar to the United States, Puerto Rico has experienced uproar with literary censorship. Being a colony of the United States for over one-hundred years, Puerto Rico, has adopted a wide array of American customs and ideologies. This thesis concentrates on contemporary literary censorship therefore the information presented will be on the latest incident of literary censorship in the Puerto Rico public education system.

The most recent literary censorship event encountered in Puerto Rico was the 2009 prohibition of texts; José Luis González "Antología personal", Edgardo Rodríguez Julia's "El entierro Cortijo", Juan Antonio Ramos' "Mejor te lo cuento: Antología Personal", the short story collection "Reunión de espejos", edited by José Luis Vega, and Carlos Fuentes' "Aura" in public schools because of foul language. An article written by Rebecca Banuchi in the *Primera Hora* newspaper, presents the Secretary of Education Carlos E. Chardon's defense of literary censorship of various texts based on the claim that the language used was inappropriate for students in the public educational system. Contrary to the United States, in Puerto Rico, the Department of Education has initiated censorship of various texts within the public education system. In this particular case pertaining to the most recent censorship of texts (2009), the Department of Education had reinforcement of the central government. The head of state, Governor Luis Fortuño, openly indicated being in favor of censoring for he "supported prohibiting the readings of appraised authors such as Carlos Fuentes and José Luis González in the public school system for these containing foul language" (Díaz). There is an evident difference between censors in Puerto Rico and the United States as in the latter censorship is initiated by a variety of sources (parents, institutions, patrons etc.) while in Puerto Rico the government employs direct involvement. It is also remarkable to notice that while in the United State it is unlikely that all of the censors possess the adequate credentials to judge whether or not a text should be censored, in Puerto Rico the very same members of the educational system are the ones deciding what texts should be censored.

In addition to the dissimilarities among the censors in these two countries, also present is a variance in the process of censoring texts. As previously discussed, censorship in the United States is a complex process which involves identification, evaluation, and finally a decision of

whether to censor or ban the text. By contrast, Puerto Rico's process consists of identifying, censoring and finally evaluating if said text should remain censored or not.

Banuchi's article concerning the Secretary's position on censorship points out that after receiving an innumerable amount of criticism from academics and educators, the Department of Education informed that it had only eliminated "permanently" Ramos' "El entierro Cortijo" and the rest are "under revision to evaluate their readmission into the curriculum". Despite having encountered vast opposition, we can clearly notice the absolute authority the Department of Education has exclusively endowed itself with concerning the censoring of Ramos' book and the evaluation of the others.

Due to the hasty prohibition of these books, it is pertinent to inquire the reasons that lead to their elimination. Primera Hora's Associated Press' article is one of many which establish that the language in these texts is "extremely coarse and profane" not appropriate for students as the only reason behind the censure of these texts. Suárez's article states that the Director of the Ateneo Puertorriqueño, Roberto Ramos Perea, expresses concern for texts that "emphasize on [themes] that are filthy, vulgar, sexual, or profane" that do not enrich the mind". The only continuous justifiable reason the Department of Education claims is foul language. Contrary to the United States' emphasis not only on particular words, but also on the themes present throughout the text, Puerto Rico scrutinizes isolated words without considering the context that surrounds them.

Furthermore, the Department of Education secretary justifies the censure of these books by stating that they are not appropriate for special education students stating that "all text should be on revision to assure their utilitarian value for special education and regular students for they share the same classroom and curriculum (Banuchi). This justification is tremendously

discriminating to students both in special education and not. Is it fair for regular students, for their quality of education to be limited or even downgraded to suffice the need of special education students that in most cases are the minority? Is it fair for special education students to be instructed with the general curriculum despite the acknowledgment of requiring special education?

Not only is this action evidently unfair to students, but illustrates Puerto Rico's Department of Education as indolent. Instead of diverting the attention to the creation of appropriate curriculum with the appropriate material to attend the essential needs that both regular and special education students require, the Secretary of the Department of Education censored a variety of texts because of the use of foul language that may not be appropriate for special education students. This in no way projects itself as medium to enhance the students' educational experience. Moreover, similar to the United States, instead of providing material for educators to expand their pedagogical scope, the opposite is being implemented and the limitation of exposition that the authors of these texts will unavoidably encounter.

Despite the fact that censors continuously attempt to limit the access of texts towards a target audience there is opposition to them as well. An example of this opposition is ALA's Banned Book Week campaign held the last week of September every year that emphasizes on celebrating the freedom to read by drawing attention to challenged, censored, or banned texts in the United States. Even though Puerto Rico does not have an association similar to the ALA, there is resistance to censorship. *Primera Hora's* Ivelisse Rivera reports that as a protest to the action taken by the Secretary Chardon, many academics, journalists, teachers, politicians, and artists gathered in front of the Department of Education to express disagreement and read excerpts of the banned texts. Author Teresa Tió expresses that censorship "is only the tip of the

iceberg, to the subjugation of Puerto Rican culture” and that Chardon was not apt to lead the Department of Education (Tió qtd. in Rivera). Yet again Trotsky’s argument on the relation between literature and society is reflected on Tió’s acknowledgment on how culture is obscured because of the censorship of these texts. Despite the fact that this display of objection lasted only a day (being a simple assembly and not an elaborated association) it took in consideration what these texts portrayed rather than the “inappropriate” words in it.

Regardless of Puerto Rico being a colony of the United States and greatly influenced by American ideology, there is a clear difference on how censorship operates within the educational system. Contrary to the United States which employs a much more complex system when dealing with censorship, Puerto Rico has a more imposing method, yet in both there is opposition that takes into consideration the cultural and social value that the censored texts hold within them. In both of these situations, the only secure outcome is that censorship only limits educational opportunity for students and obscures the exposition of a text.

Chapter 3: The Mechanics of Censorship

The reason for censoring in Children's Literature is to preserve children's or student's "innocence" and "uncorrupted" way of thinking, but in order for this to be fulfilled, limitations must be established. Based on this reasoning, the only way to truly "protect" individuals from the controversial or inappropriate themes is if they are kept completely uninformed or unfamiliar of the undesired theme. One of the most common arguments censors use to place these limitations is that the target text is not suited for an age group. If age appropriateness suggests readers must be mature adults, this would retract the pedagogical experience, for the readers would have to be mature in order to read texts intended for children. In addition, parents that claim their children are substantially mature for their age and are in agreement with censorship would contradict their claim. Censorship then denies the opportunity for children to challenge their maturity and critical analyzing skills. Despite the various inquiries that censorship brings with its actions, it plays a crucial role in schools and libraries. The fundamental problem with limiting themes is that many of the themes that censors aim to obscure, are present in readers' lives. If a child interacts with any of these themes in daily life, censorship impedes having a full spectrum of the situation which will be beneficial for their understanding. Instead, the child will have partial or complete alienation in understanding the situation or can develop injudicious information that may lead to prejudiced thinking. This is why the texts that censors try to eliminate in Children's literature genre are crucial; because these present themes that many parents do not want their children to know about, books that give the other side of the scope, and overall deal with themes that cause general discomfort.

Since being published in 2004 *ttyl* has been in the spotlight for banning in various school libraries such as the Round Rock Independent School District middle school library in Texas,

William Floyd Middle School library in Mastic New York and the Ponus Ridge Middle School library in Norwalk, Connecticut, among others. The predominant group of individuals that looked to eliminate this text was composed by parents who believed this text to be inappropriate under the claims of “foul language, sexual content, and questionable sexual behavior” and because of “descriptions of sex, porn, alcohol, and inappropriate teacher-student relationships” (Marshall). Some extremists took it a step further sending hate mail personally insulting Myracle and using websites to create chainmail that was fiercely defaming her, as was the case with the Virtue Alert website, to further express their opposition.

Lauren Myracle’s *ttyl*, has been consistently at the top 10 of the list of ALA’s most frequently challenged/banned mainly for using “offensive” language and presenting sexually suggestive themes. This novel sets out to present the intricacies of Angela Silver, Madigan Kinnick, and Zoe Barrett; three best friends who are beginning the tenth grade. The novel is narrated through instant messaging (IM) style conversations. It is a high tech, instant messaging epistolary novel. All the protagonists are efficiently fleshed out with their individual issues and misfortunes that specifically focus on difficult situations which most western young adults can relate to. The first character encountered in the novel is Angela Silver known in her IM account as “Snow Angel”. This character is portrayed as the friend who centers most of her attention on having a romantic relationship with the male counterpart and emphasizes the importance of being in love for example:

SnowAngel: zoe? u still there?

zoegirl: i’m still here

SnowAngel: maddie doesn’t get it, cuz she’s never been in love. but it’s better to have lived and loved than never to have lived at all.

zoegirl: i guess

SnowAngel: it's TRUE. and now i'm gonna email rob like i said i would, cuz u've made me feel so much better.

zoegirl: i have?

SnowAngel: thanks for the pep talk! bye! (Myracle, 84)

Her absolute belief in love places her in a variety of complex circumstances and in addition it vastly influences her way of thinking and interaction with friends. A clear example of Angela's dogmatic and idealistic belief in love is when she is having consistent difficulties with her boyfriend Rob Tyler, yet forgives him stating;

SnowAngel: i know. maybe i'll email him. cuz he acted like things were over b/w us when he was telling me about tonnie, but maybe that's just cuz he's afraid i won't give him a second chance.

mad maddie: ANGELA. STOP RIGHT NOW.

SnowAngel: but if it's true luv? i can't walk away from true luv!

zoegirl: u REALLY think it's true love?

SnowAngel: well, it MIGHT be. and i don't wanna be the kind of person who's not willing to put in the work, u know? love takes work. it's not all cake and ice cream. (Myracle, 83, 84)

It is evident that Angela is willing to withstand undeserved treatment solely because of her belief in the existence of true love despite the fact that her friends present partial disapproval towards her actions. In addition to withstanding abuse, for love, Angela places herself in a controversial position, regarding sexual intercourse as she discusses with Zoe that;

SnowAngel: but, zoe! I think he may be THE ONE.

Zoegirl: the “one” what?

SnowAngel: *lowers voice to stage whisper* the one I go all the way with

(!!!)

Zoegirl: oh, god

SnowAngel: i’m saying MAYBE, that’s all. IF things keep going well-

and i know they will. *swoons* making love with rob would be amazing,

i just know it. (Miracle, 39)

Though Zoe disagrees with Angela, she? proceeds to sarcastically state being happy that Angela is not rushing into things and making this decision after only two dates to which Angela assuredly replies that she has a true connection with Rob and was never wrong with her feelings. After breaking up with Rob, Angela develops romantic interest with drama classmate Ben Schlanker, yet again claiming it was actual true love, but eventually losing interest when she discovers that Ben has a girlfriend named Leslie.

Based on the ALA statistic on challenges by reason if one was to strip all of the other themes in *ttyl*, this theme alone would be enough to get the censors attention. The very thought of teenagers talking about losing their virginity makes censors restless because this action is deemed immoral. It could be deduced that the core reason for censoring this novel is not that students may engage in intercourse and contract a disease or conceive a child, but rather the very action of intercourse. Censors are not primarily concerned about the consequences intercourse may have in a teenager’s life, they are offended that teenagers are thinking about and engaging in it. At one moment every living adult was a teenager and encountered this situation with or without any texts which dealt about it, making the censoring of this text illogical because of this particular theme.

The exposition of this novel may help students with these very difficult situations. One may argue that is why the curriculums offer sex education to students, which in its right is very advantageous, but we must keep in mind that there are some things that students will just not ask educators or even parents. They would rather prefer receiving misguided for faulty information from their peers. Instead of trying to obscure this book students could use it to identify with any situation they or any peer is going through, which they will not discuss with their parents or teachers.

The second protagonist in the novel is Madigan “Maddie” Kinnick known in her IM as mad maddie. Though she depicts herself to her friends Angela and Zoe as a strong independent adolescent who does not pay attention to the popularity status among her peers, ironically, she is always talking about them, especially about a schoolmate called Jana Whitaker. At the beginning of the novel Madigan apparently dislikes Jana as could be seen when talking to Angela where she states:

mad maddie: and yet everyone still worships her and secretly craves her approval. Why is that?

SnowAngel: i have NO idea. anyway, not everyone craves her approval, cuz i certainly don't. and you don't, of course.

SnowAngel: right?

mad maddie: please. this morning ms. andrist got onto me about being tardy, and i could tell jana was laffing about it behind my back. i can always tell. it's like i have jana radar. so i gave her the evil eye and was like, “yeah? U want some of this, homegirl?”

(Myracle, 19)

Despite Madigan's criticism of Jana's behavior of gossiping and ostracizing her own friends, she eventually befriends her. This new friendship with Jana escalates to the point that Madigan spends more time with Jana than with Zoe or Angela. Madigan's evident preference towards Jana is seen when Angela complains she was left without a ride, to which Madigan replies:

mad maddie: well, sorry. i'd told jana i'd give her a ride 2, and she kinda wanted to get going.

SnowAngel: EXCUSE me?

mad maddie: i ran into her after 7th period. she lives sorta near me, u know.

SnowAngel: omg. i can't believe u ditched me to give jana whitaker a ride.

mad maddie: don't have a cow. god.

SnowAngel: well, think about it, maddie. first u treat jana like she's the anti-crist, and now all of a sudden –snap! – ur her chauffeur? (Myracle, 101, 02)

Madigan, while knowing Jana's attitude towards her friends, still opted to consistently spend time with her and justify her behavior until eventually their friendship took a turn for the worse when Madigan gets drunk at Jana's brother's fraternity party and proceeds to perform a topless table dance. Jana, still mad because Madigan jokingly called her a lesbian, takes advantage of this situation by taking pictures of an inebriated Madigan and sharing them among their peers. Completely humiliated and overwhelmed because her father being an alcoholic, Madigan withdraws from peer interaction which temporarily included talking to Angela and Zoe as well.

The final protagonist is Zoe Barrett known in her IM as zoegirl. Although at times perceived as naïve by Angela and Madigan, Zoe, is portrayed as an applied student and kindhearted towards others. Beginning the tenth grade, Zoe informs Madigan and Angela of her decision to join a Christian group. Her interest is inspired by Mr. H, her twenty-four year old English teacher. Madigan and Angela worry Mr. H is sexually depressed and trying to take advantage of Zoe by taking her to religious gatherings but Zoe, being so sympathetic, believes her friends are over reacting and it is not really a big deal. Madigan and Angela's worries intensify as every time it appears more evident that Mr. H is in fact trying to seduce Zoe, for example:

zoegirl: well, he made this comment about my jeans, teasing me about how raggedy they were. and then he reached over and touched the hole, kinda running his finger around the worn part.

SnowAngel: zoe! OMG!!

zoegirl: it was almost like he was doing it as an excuse to touch my leg.

SnowAngel: well, yeah! cuz he WAS doing it as an excuse to touch your leg!

zoegirl: but he wasn't being a lech or anything. i don't want you to get the wrong idea.

SnowAngel: shit, zoe. HE'S YOUR TEACHER!!!

zoegirl: i know

SnowAngel: did u like it? ooo-that sounds icky. i mean, was it ok with u that he did that?

zoegirl: i don't know. i'm not mad or anything, if that's what you mean. (Myracle, 112, 13)

As seen here, even though Angela tells Zoe that Mr. H is deliberately making advances, Zoe does not seem to be alarmed. Throughout the novel similar situations continually occur until Zoe finally realizes Mr. H is in fact trying to take advantage of her as she agrees to go hot tubbing with him. Unable to imagine how to get out of this situation she seeks help from Angela:

zoegirl: i am so dead! i saw mr. h at the fellowship this morning -i was 2 wimpy not to go- and when we were in the kitchen getting our orange juice, he said, "i'm looking forward to tonite. i got a special candle just for the occasion."

SnowAngel: ew! ick, ick, ick!

zoegirl: he said it in this shy little boy way, and it would have been cute if i'd still been into him. but i'm not!!

SnowAngel: did u tell him u couldn't come?

zoegirl: no! i said something brilliant like, "uh, great," and then i darted off to get a sweet roll-not that i was able to eat it. i wanted to tell him no, but i couldn't!

SnowAngel: zoe, u have to get out of it. (Myracle, 197)

Eventually Angela and Madigan help Zoe overcome this situation by unexpectedly arriving where Mr. H and Zoe were, getting into the hot tub in order to accompany Zoe and prevent Mr. H's intentions with her.

It would be no surprise to believe that parents would find this specific plot in *ttyl* the most appalling, the possibility of there being a romantic relationship among teachers and students is

controversial. It is a fact that there have been multiple situations regarding this theme, even to the point where teachers have impregnated students and vice-versa. This makes parents afraid that by reading this novel their children may in some way mimic this behavior. When addressing this particular theme it is not uncommon to hastily assume that it was the teacher who was responsible for this very action forgetting that students also played a role in this situation. Keeping this in mind we must acknowledge the possibility of two other scenarios regarding this situation besides the most popular which is that the teacher took advantage of the student. The first scenario that should be thought about is the possibility that Zoe was leading Mr. H on, as she does admit at one point “being into him” and accepting to go out with him various times throughout the novel. It is true that the teacher must be the cautious and responsible when encountering this particular situation, but this in no way justifies that students should be leading teachers on especially if there is not an ample age difference. Zoe and her friends are high school students and considering the fact that Madigan has her driver’s license it could be assumed that they are in their mid-teens and considering that Mr. H is mentioned to be twenty-four years of age, eight to nine years is not an outstanding gap in age difference. Mr. H being a young teacher giving class to high school teenagers it is not impossible to assume that he gave in to the idea of having a romantic relation with a student who was flirting with him. The second scenario that should be considered is the possibility that Mr. H was not trying to seduce Zoe at all, he was genuinely trying to have a good friendship with her. Since the beginning of the novel Mr. H has been described as a pervert as we see in the first conversation between Zoe and Angela:

zoegirl: great, while i'll be reading 5000 pages of The Great Gatsby and answering probing discussion questions about the American dream. mr. h expects us to read a book a week. can u believe that?

SnowAngel: like that'll be a problem for u.

SnowAngel: did he stare at your boobs?

zoegirl: who, mr. h?

SnowAngel: maddie and I had him for journalism last year, and he was always staring at some girl's boobs, mostly maddie's. he was always "reading" her shirts. (Myracle, 7)

From this initial statement it could be seen that opinions about Mr. H had been previously constructed by Zoe's friends yet these cannot actually be proved. Being predisposed to this construct may influence Zoe to generate anamorphic assumptions about her English teacher. Whether being naïve or negating Angela's and Madigan's comments about Mr. H trying to seduce her, the accounts she discusses with her friends cannot be proven or taken as absolute fact, for there is no certain evidence of this situation. Being this Zoe's story and the unlikeliness that either Madigan or Angela will confront Mr. H about this situation in order to prove or disprove her claims, leaves the possibility that her claims may be untruthful.

It could be argued that instead of obscuring this situation its exposition would be much more advantageous. Throughout the novel Madigan and Angela constantly remind Zoe of her behavior with Mr. H for it would inevitably lead to a difficult situation as was the hot tub incident near the end of the novel. Most students in an instant of their lives have personally experienced or at least have heard from their peers of having crush on a teacher which can range from fantasizing about it to acting upon it, yet rarely think about the negative consequences this

may bring not only them, but the teachers as well. This novel may present an opportunity to educate students on the responsibility of their actions and the awareness of the diverse consequences that flirtatious behavior may have towards educators.

The main reasons for censors to attempt removing Lauren Myracle's *ttyl* is because of the themes that each protagonist deals with (Angela's interest in having sex, Madigan's obsession with peer acceptance, and Zoe's teacher using religion to take advantage of her). Evidently, the episodes previously presented may distress censors for being too explicit or suggestive. Yet, it should be noted that many school aged and adolescent readers will identify with these or similar situations, therefore making the text relevant and of utilitarian value to their lives. For this reason, we must question if censoring this text due to its content and themes is truly appropriate.

Chapter 4: Censoring the Nest

Justin Richardson's and Peter Parnell's *And Tango Makes Three* is a picture book that focuses on the true story of Roy and Silo, two male chinstrap penguins from New York's Central Park Zoo. Though this nearly forty-page picture book is mostly focused on imagery, its short narrative has been enough for censors to make it the most challenged text in 2006 and 2010. The picture book recounts how every year female penguins, begin noticing male penguins and vice-versa in order to create a family, but there was a unique case that consisted of "two penguins in the penguin house [that] were a little bit different. One was named Roy, and the other was named Silo. Roy and Silo were both boys. But they did everything together." (Richardson, Parnell, 6). Roy and Silo were eventually given the opportunity to create a family with an egg that Mr. Gramzay, the zookeeper, provided and after caring for the egg "out came their own baby! She had fuzzy white feathers and a funny black beak. Now Roy and Silo were fathers" (Richardson, Parnell, 22).

Justin Richardson's and Peter Parnell's *And Tango Makes Three* deals with homosexuality and same sex parenting. All of these themes have been reason for conflict between censors and those that oppose it. The prevalence of homosexual families in our present society must be addressed in order to avoid discrimination and promote equality among peers. This leads to question if challenging *And Tango Makes Three* is an adequate action.

Contrary to *Myracle*, Richardson and Parnell were not subjected to hateful remarks from extremist (probably because of the delicate topic), yet their story book was also target for censorship in school libraries in states such as California, Iowa, Virginia, and Missouri. These censors were mostly composed by parents who believed that *And Tango Makes Three* should be banned on the basis of being "not age-appropriate" (*Baldassarro*) or as the superintendent of

schools in Charlotte, North Carolina states "First, it is a picture book that focuses on homosexuality. Second, we did not feel that such information was vital to primary school students. Next, we did not believe the book would stimulate growth in ethical standards, and the book is too controversial."(Mcclatchy).

The very notion of obscuring Richardson's and Parnell's *And Tango Makes Three* can unconsciously create prejudice among its target audience. As previously discussed, Rushdie and Rauch argued that in order to effectively understand a situation it should be on constant exploration in order to gather as much information about it. If children were to ask parents, teachers or whomever wanted to censor why they could not read this storybook the authority figure would only have two possible ways of dealing with this situation; they could choose to simply state it is "bad", "improper" or even ignore the child's question or they could engage in a complete explanation of why these are not appropriate. Both of these actions have flaws. In the case of ignoring the inquiries, children are left with no concrete explanation; they are deliberately left ignorant to a very delicate and controversial situation which could lead them to formulate unconscious prejudice against homosexuals or "unconventional" families. In the other scenario if they (censors) were to engage in an active explanation about why they are not permitting the children to read such texts, there is no objective way to argue about this theme.

All of the possible explanations that can be given to children are based on subjective assumption or unreliable claims which can lead the child to become unconsciously prejudiced towards this theme. Regardless of the route the censor chooses to take, in both situations Freire's Banking Method is being employed for in none of these cases the children are given the opportunity to engage actively with the situation and create their own assumptions. Again, this puts into question how the preservation of intellectual freedom and the students' right to know

can be protected if censorship serves as catapult to indoctrinate individuals from childhood, which may eventually lead to prejudice caused by beliefs imposed upon them by censors.

For both of these texts, censors motivation is based on speculation. Rather than building a wall to protect the target audience, censoring serves, in both these cases as barriers that confine knowledge. Both of these texts were not created detached from society, but rather as part of it as Trotsky states art “is not a disembodied element feeding on itself, but a function of social man indissolubly tied to his life and environment.”(1015). New historicists as Donald Hall, Hunter Cadzow, Wesley Morris, and Stephen Greenblatt share a similar understanding that literature does not unexpectedly appear, but originates from social conditions. Evidently, censors are trying to limit the accessibility of both of these texts influenced by their social environment in an attempt to promote their own agenda of downplaying same sex families and teenage promiscuity. Needless to say the worlds portrayed in *And Tango Makes Three* and *ttyl* are places filled with sexual curiosity, where not every friend is a good person, where a teacher might try to seduce a student or where same sex couples desire to start a family. These themes have caused discomfort amongst censors as Scales argues:

Novels and picture books featuring gays and lesbians are now the biggest targets of censors. *Annie on My Mind* by Nancy Garden had its day in court in Kansas in the 1990s; more recently, *Daddy's Roommate* by Michael Willhoite and Heather Has Two Mommies by Lesléa Newman have been the topic of heated discussions on talk radio shows across the nation. *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell is the latest book to cause debate on this subject.

(534)

In *ttyl*'s case Corbett states:

Myracle's work for tween and teen girls has kicked up a hornet's nest of angry protest. Complaints about the Internet Girls series -- three books written entirely in the truncated chat-speak of the online world -- earned her a place on the American Library Association's Top 10 Banned Books list for the last three years.

(31)

The themes as presented in these texts immerse the reader in human behavior. It could be argued that through these texts, readers can learn about the society that surrounds them helping in the creation of social and personal perspective regarding these topics. There is no gain for individuals to be alienated from these themes, by trying to maintain a crafted one-dimensional view of the world that directly or indirectly surrounds them.

Furthermore, despite the notoriety that *ttyl* and *And Tango Makes Three* received from the censors and critics, these texts do not only focus on presenting relevant themes, but more importantly they present how to confront them. In the case of *ttyl* each of the protagonists faced a difficult situation which they did not know how to properly confront. It was through the means of their friendship and trust that they were able to help each other deal with the adversity they faced. It is interesting to point out that even though Myracle receives a great amount of hate mail, Corbett acknowledges that Myracle receives thousands of e-mails from young readers particularly females for helping them deal with difficult situations, meaning that this text has had positive results. In the case of *And Tango Makes Three*, Richardson and Parnell are creatively narrating an actual event. The text does not focus on homosexuality; in fact they only make reference of Roy and Silo being fathers three times in the book. The text primarily focuses on

portraying how two penguins of similar sex can find true happiness with each other and have a family equal to one composed of a male and female penguin. Censors have been cautious when dealing with this text because of the fragility this theme is dealt with.

Finally, it must be stated that interaction with a challenge text will not guarantee that it will have a utilitarian value for its audience. Similar to censoring a text, the outcome of its use is purely based on speculations that are impossible to verify because of the immense diversity between individuals. But when discussing the justifications of censoring Justin Richardson's and Peter Parnell's *And Tango Makes Three* and Lauren Myracle's *ttyl*, not censoring them will be advantageous because as previously discussed, this gives the audience a chance to explore, learn, and understand these themes rather than just censoring and placing barriers in knowledge that only serve to undoubtedly promote alienation.

Censorship has attempted to obscure Myracle's novel *ttyl* and Richardson's and Parnell's picture book *And Tango Makes Three* for themes considered unsuitable or inappropriate. Evidently, censorship is not limited exclusively to these themes as there are others that have had to confront this misfortune. As presented by the ALA (see chart 2) other themes frequently challenged are; abortion, anti-ethnic, anti-family, drugs, homosexuality, inaccurate, insensitivity, occult, political viewpoint, nudity, racism, religious viewpoint, sex education, sexism, suicide, violence and sexually explicit material which is the most commonly challenged and all have been the cause of challenge for a variety of texts in Children and Young Adult literature. Additionally, the ALA (see chart 4) displays that challenges commonly occur in educationally based institutions which are schools, libraries or school libraries where subsequently most interaction with texts takes place. It could be deduced that when a text is challenged or censored from an educational institution it loses exposure towards its audience, in the case of Children and

Young Adult literature being students. It is appropriate to explore and question if the censors' arguments to keep certain texts out of these institutions have prosperous outcome or if providing these will be useful for the students' educational experience.

When censors attempt to limit the access of a text towards its target audience, the reasons are essentially to keep the audience estranged from the "inappropriate" theme(s) because of disapproval or opposition to them. Parting from Eagleton's definition of ideology as "the process of production of meaning, signs and values in social life" (1) and "that which offers a position for a subject" (1) censors have every right to enforce their reason, yet this may conflict with students' intellectual freedom. Intellectual freedom embodied in the Library Bill of Rights enforces that "libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval" (ALA) and "should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment" (ALA). How then can these educational institutions broaden their field of knowledge if censors are set out to impede the access of this knowledge? This not only hinders students' access to texts in schools and libraries, but prevents educators from making use of these as well. In this sense censors are becoming educational oppressors. Friere argues that for these "exists only one right: right to live in peace, over against the right, not always even recognized, but simply conceded" (58) for they are the ones being offended or enraged by such "controversial" topics, disregarding the position of the audience they aspire to protect. Here censors reach an educational paradox in which their best interest in students' educational advancement consists of curtailing the access of information to the same.

By censoring a text, educational opportunities are taken away from students and can result in imprecise or misleading knowledge. Grounded on the previously discussed new historic concept which presents that literature is influenced by the very environment that surrounds it, these controversial themes, though unwanted by censors, may provide purposeful knowledge for the student, especially if they encounter a similar situation. An example of its effectiveness is when dealing with the always present topics on human sexuality. When students are confronted with sexual situations such as losing their virginity, they may not feel comfortable discussing these topics with parents or any other adult figure. Instead, many decide to consult this among peers that may not provide complete or accurate information or they may even opt to remain unfamiliar to the theme. Texts that deal with such topics will be useful for the student in two different variants; if the text is available in the library or school library the students may privately access to it or an educator may have the opportunity to discuss this topic by means of implementing it as part of a lesson. Reading these texts and/or discussing these themes will not assure a clear answer to all of their questions, but it will undoubtedly provide knowledge and offer perspectives for them. Partial information or misinformation may additionally lead the student towards misconception or biased assumptions. If a text which deals with a controversial topic such as abortion is censored based on the assumption that it is a negative feat that should be frowned upon, the student will only understand this particular aspect. It is interesting to notice that censors oftentimes target the text rather than the theme they want to suppress. If not so, then, if a text is being challenged because it deals with violence, would it not be appropriate to ban all the texts that discuss this theme, including history books? This oppressive imposition of knowledge is similar to what Freire defines as the “Banking Method” where knowledge, rather than being presented, is imposed to the student who will learn, imitate and repeat onto others

keeping in motion the transferal of partial information. Furthermore, it is probable for students to be indoctrinated by the censors' feelings towards these themes without having the proper knowledge to create a personal opinion.

As previously discussed, censorship seeks to control the access of a text based on topics in the areas of abortion, drug abuse, ideological standpoints, violence and sexuality. Even though all of these have been motives for challenges, there are substantial differences in the amount of challenges based on the reason of objection. For example; challenges based on violence numbered 1,258 challenges and sexually explicit material had a total 3,046 (see chart 2) in the past two decades. If all of these themes are considered inappropriate why is there a vast difference between the amounts challenges based on the themes or topics they expose? As of 2011 the ALA's most challenged texts, six out of the ten texts presented (led by Myracle's *ttyl*), deal with sexually explicit material, yet only one (*The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins) deals with violence. Clearly censors target sexual issues more over than violent themes and issues as reported in the ALA challenge chart (see chart 2). How can censors direct their attention towards a natural process that every individual goes through rather than the capacity of individuals violently harming each other? Žižek provides a possible answer for this phenomenon with his definitions for "objective" and "subjective" violence. The level of regularity or "objective violence" that is consistently seen in the environment is what influences the level of threat that censors may perceive from a particular theme and influence the level of severity which it is dealt with. Themes such as drug abuse and violence though being matters of concern are actively involved with the immediate environment and are constantly present in diverse forms. Such themes are regularly exposed in major media outlets as news and social networks; these are also present in schools when discussing the effect of drug abuse in a health course or

discussing casualties of war in a history course. Regardless of where these themes are manifested, their consistent presence will eventually be perceived as normal. These themes will be embedded in what individuals understand as part of their daily lives thus losing their threatening imagery. On the other hand, dealing with “subjective violence” the level of normality is interrupted and threatened. These are themes not normally encountered or purposely avoided because of fear, discomfiture or pure disapproval. Regardless of the reasons the outcome is the mystification of these themes transforming them into taboos.

Once it is categorized as a taboo, themes such as the ones that are regarded as sexually explicit endure severe criticism and evaluation as for example; Kim Dong Hwa’s *The Color of Earth*, Dori Hillestad Butler’s *My Mom's Having A Baby! A Kid's Month-by-Month Guide to Pregnancy*, Sherman Alexie’s *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, Sonya Sones’ *What My Mother Doesn't Know*, and Cecily Von Ziegesar’s *Gossip Girl* all were frequently challenged in 2011 for discussing these despite the fact that these are not the focal themes of these texts.

For many years now, texts have been targets of censorship for presenting topics considered inappropriate and as previously discussed, schools and libraries are the ones mostly affected by it. It is evident there is a key relation among “subjective” and “objective” violence and those topics that can or cannot be discussed in the educational institutions, an occurrence similar to what Giroux’s defines as the “hidden curriculum”. Not only are educational institutions responsible for great amount of the knowledge that individuals acquire, but these promote social behavior and ideologies that are not actively exposed, nevertheless, are always existent. Because of this, censors, in their best interest, try to limit texts that are a threat to the

values of the established curriculum in order to maintain the level of normality (objective violence) appropriate for the students.

The effort to keep the “hidden curriculum” unaffected may explain the particular way in which themes are regarded based on its presence in day to day life. Censors are alarmed by a text that depicts personal and ideological preferences contrary to theirs, yet texts that expose slavery and war are crucial historical events that must be known. If one was to use the same argument used by censors that “inappropriate” themes may teach negative behavior or values to the target audience, would it not be much more disturbing to teach students how throughout history humans have harmed each other and engage wars in search of supremacy, rather than discussing sexuality? Despite that fact that both of the previously mentioned themes have been target for censorship, one of these has a larger presence in a daily basis (war being a topic consistently discussed by media outlets), and the other one is still viewed as a taboo. It is interesting to notice the direct influence that interaction has with tolerance or acceptance. The main problem with this particular action of protecting the established curriculum for the sake of normality is that those themes considered taboos do not receive the opportunity to be studied or discussed, thus holding back educational expansion. Permitting themes to be categorized as taboos does not have any positive outcomes other than merely obscuring and preventing exposure. If students possess the ability to understand and internalize violence they are certainly able do so with other topics as well.

Chapter 5: From Indoctrination to Education

It is crucial to understand the ideological significance book censorship provides. When censors successfully target texts because of their themes they impose their ideologies. For example, censors believed that *And Tango Makes Three* should be banned because homosexuality and the alternative families themes are inappropriate for children. The act of implying these themes are inappropriate can lead the individual to question if there is something wrong with being homosexual or part of a non-conventional family. This misconception will inevitably lead to prejudice and possibly discrimination originated from an uneducated and biased position. It is irrational to consider that censoring will avoid individuals of encountering these themes as they grow older and interact with their environment. This is why it is crucial to censor censorship, to replace false conceptions with factual knowledge about the society that surrounds them, and to promote critical thinking, instead of imposing what to think and believe, giving opportunity to individuals to think for themselves.

As previously discussed, Justin Richardson's and Peter Parnell's *And Tango Makes Three* and Lauren Myracle's *ttyl* have both been a matter of heated debate in the United States since their publication. Even though many have opposed to the availability of these texts in libraries and classrooms in the United States, they can provide purposeful use to the Puerto Rico Educational system. Similar to the United States, Puerto Rico's Educational system has a parallel history with literary censorship. Though censors and the process have been different to that of the United States, the intentions are similar and equally devastating for authors and students' opportunity to interact with the target text.

Before discussing the usefulness that *And Tango Makes Three* and *ttyl* will provide to children and young adults in the Puerto Rico Educational System, it is important to expose that,

even though Puerto Rico has dealt with literacy censorship, its encounters have been directed particularly to the Spanish curriculum (no articles concerning literary censorship of English texts in the Puerto Rico Public school system in the past decade were found). Spanish being the primary language in Puerto Rico, the Department of Education provides more scrutiny to the appropriateness of the texts in that language. This can be advantageous for the integration of these *And Tango Makes Three* and *ttyl* in the Puerto Rico educational system, for predisposed idea about these texts being “inappropriate” or “explicit” might be overshadowed by the fact that both of these texts are relatively unknown in Puerto Rico. Not having these ideals will help avoid hasty decisions of removing these texts without a fair chance of being employed as in the United States where they are mainly known for their notoriety because of their themes and not for their full content.

Integrating both of these texts to the Puerto Rico educational system will provide two immediate advantages for students and educators. Firstly, ever since Puerto Rico was invaded by the United States in 1898 the language of instruction in schools has been an ongoing issue that concluded in the agreeing that even though Spanish would be the medium of instruction, English would be a required language to learn and obviously incorporating the English texts will help expand the English curriculum to help achieve the desired objective. Secondly, it will diversify the amount of material that educators have to structure their lessons for the sake of being relevant to students. The more material educators have to their access to expand their lessons, the greater opportunity they will have to provide a purposeful learning experience.

In order to fully grasp the advantage that both *And Tango Makes Three* and *ttyl* have for the Puerto Rico Educational System, it is responsible to thoroughly discuss their use individually. The main reason to individualize how to employ these texts is because of the fact

that their target audience in Puerto Rico is entirely different. *And Tango Makes Three* is a very simple picture book with a basic language and a straight forward plot designed mainly for students in elementary school. Furthermore, *ttyl* is designed for a much more mature and computer savvy audience, specifically for teenagers in high school for it provides multiple plots carried out simultaneously and a much more complex dialogue. This compels us then to discuss how to adequately make use of these texts based on their target audience.

In elementary curriculum Justin Richardson's and Peter Parnell's *And Tango Makes Three* can provide purposeful insight and relevance if employed inside the classroom. The first immediate benefit that this text presents for students is the use of English as a Second Language (ESL). As previously stated, in the Puerto Rico public educational system it is a requirement to learn the English language and this text provides adequate level of language for ESL students in elementary schools. This text is designed for native speakers beginning the age of four and up which would be appropriate for students in grade school, for the curriculum instructs the use less challenging English texts for ESL students. The second advantage this text presents for students is the discussion of same-sex families. At present Puerto Rico still faces paternalistic and chauvinistic ideologies, and gender discrimination which in many cases is acquired from the immediate cultural environment with no apparent explanation. As a consequence subjective violent acts have made hate crimes against homosexuals prominent in the media. By the use of *And Tango Makes Three* educators can discuss with their students the realities of same sex relationships and treating of others with respect. This could be engaged by making reference to how Roy, Silo and Tango were treated with equality and respect by the other penguins. Additionally, the educator can discuss with students the love that parents have for their children regardless as to whether they are a traditional family or not by addressing the nurture, care and

love invested by Roy and Silo in order to create a comfortable environment for their daughter Tango.

In general, the integration of *And Tango Makes Three* to the Puerto Rico educational curriculum will significantly deride the misleading ideas many people have concerning gender orientation issues. It is crucial to engage discriminating ideas embedded into society that are rarely challenged or addressed. In the interest of equality biased ideas regarding same-sex families must be substituted with clear and conscious understandings that teach respect and fraternity within every individual of society, rather than loathing and segregating based on biased assumptions.

Similar to the benefits which *And Tango Makes Three* presents to its audience, Lauren Myracle's *ttyl* provides a varied array of information that will be useful for teenage students. The first advantage that this text will provide for the Puerto Rico educational curriculum is the augmentation of the young adult literature genre for use in the classrooms. Educators have debated over the advantages that young adult literature will have in the classroom, yet in the Puerto Rico educational system these are rarely implemented. If public high school students were asked to identify what readings they engaged in the English course most would reply the classics, commonly Shakespeare. Firstly, it must be stated that there is nothing wrong with teaching Shakespeare's texts to students, it is understandable that the ambiguity of these timeless themes presented is what makes them classics and pertinent to teach. Yet, it should be understood that, themes, do not stand alone as the only requirement needed to gain the students interest in the readings. One of the main aspects of young adult literature is that authors place their themes within a setting relatable to the target audience. An example of the success of these texts is; J.K. Rowling *Harry Potter* series, Stephenie Mayer's *Twilight* series and most recently

Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* series at one time have been among the most highly influential and sold text for young adults (usatoday), in which all of the protagonists are teenagers. It is more likely that twenty-first century students in Puerto Rico can relate to the contemporary setting of *And Tango Makes Three* and *ttyl* than to *Hamlet's* seventeenth century Denmark. If students have the opportunity to relate to what they are reading chances are they will have a deeper interaction with the texts which will result in a richer educational experience. Educators can take advantage of this interest in order to engage with students in flourishing and active learning.

Another benefit for incorporating Myracle's *ttyl* into the Puerto Rico educational curriculum is because of its themes. Most of the themes presented in *ttyl* may be relevant to situations that teenagers face today and each of these can be used to educators' advantage in the classroom. One of the themes that could be addressed through the use of this text is the interest in engaging in sexual activities. Even though the educational system in Puerto Rico designs courses on sexual education, these do not actually engage into situations that students may find themselves in. Throughout *ttyl* the protagonists find themselves in various situations regarding sexual curiosity. Educators can use these themes to engage in a dialogue with students to understand the level of complexity and responsibility that sexual curiosity brings within it. A second theme presented in the text that will provide a great advantage for students is peer influence. Throughout the novel Myracle efficiently depicts how the protagonists are influenced by their peers and the outcome these situations have for example; Madigan protects and pleases the antagonist of the novel, Jana, in order to be part of the popular group in school and eventually deceived by Jana resulting in a humiliating situation. Educators can use this specific situation among many others presented throughout the novel to discuss how peer influence can have

negative effects and that it is probable some peers will try to take advantage of them.

Additionally, educators can discuss student teacher relations as the one of the protagonist, Zoe, finds herself in a situation which a teacher tries to take advantage of her. Educators can discuss the parameters there should be between teachers and students in order to avoid any type of undesirable situation.

Besides the advantages that educators will have by making use of these texts, there are wide arrays of possibilities of the ways these can be implemented into the Puerto Rico educational curriculum. Because of the themes presented in both of these texts, educators have the opportunity to integrate and relate these to current themes that surround their students' immediate environment.

Throughout this thesis, it has been discussed how the themes presented in both *And Tango Makes Three* and *ttyl* have been the key factor for the challenge of these texts in the United States, yet these very themes possess great utilitarian value if employed in the classroom. Besides educating students about traditional texts or classic literature it is equally important to look for texts to which they can relate to in order to increase their interest and diversify their learning. This is where texts such as Justin Richardson's and Peter Parnell's *And Tango Makes Three* and Lauren Myracle's *ttyl* present new themes for students to engage in order to enrich their educational experience.

This thesis sets out to explore an understanding of literary censorship in Children and Young Adult Literature. Identify what censorship is, its various stages and what each of these encompasses. Taking from Trotsky's and new historic theory, inquires about justification of challenging Lauren Myracle's *ttyl* and Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson's *And Tango Makes Three* were addressed. In addition based on Eagleton and Žižek's arguments, it was discussed

how some controversial themes were scrutinized over others because of the consistent presence in daily lives. Finally this study explored the results of censorship in the educational systems specifically Puerto Rico. Before engaging into these inquires, insight was gathered from various sources in order to properly engage them.

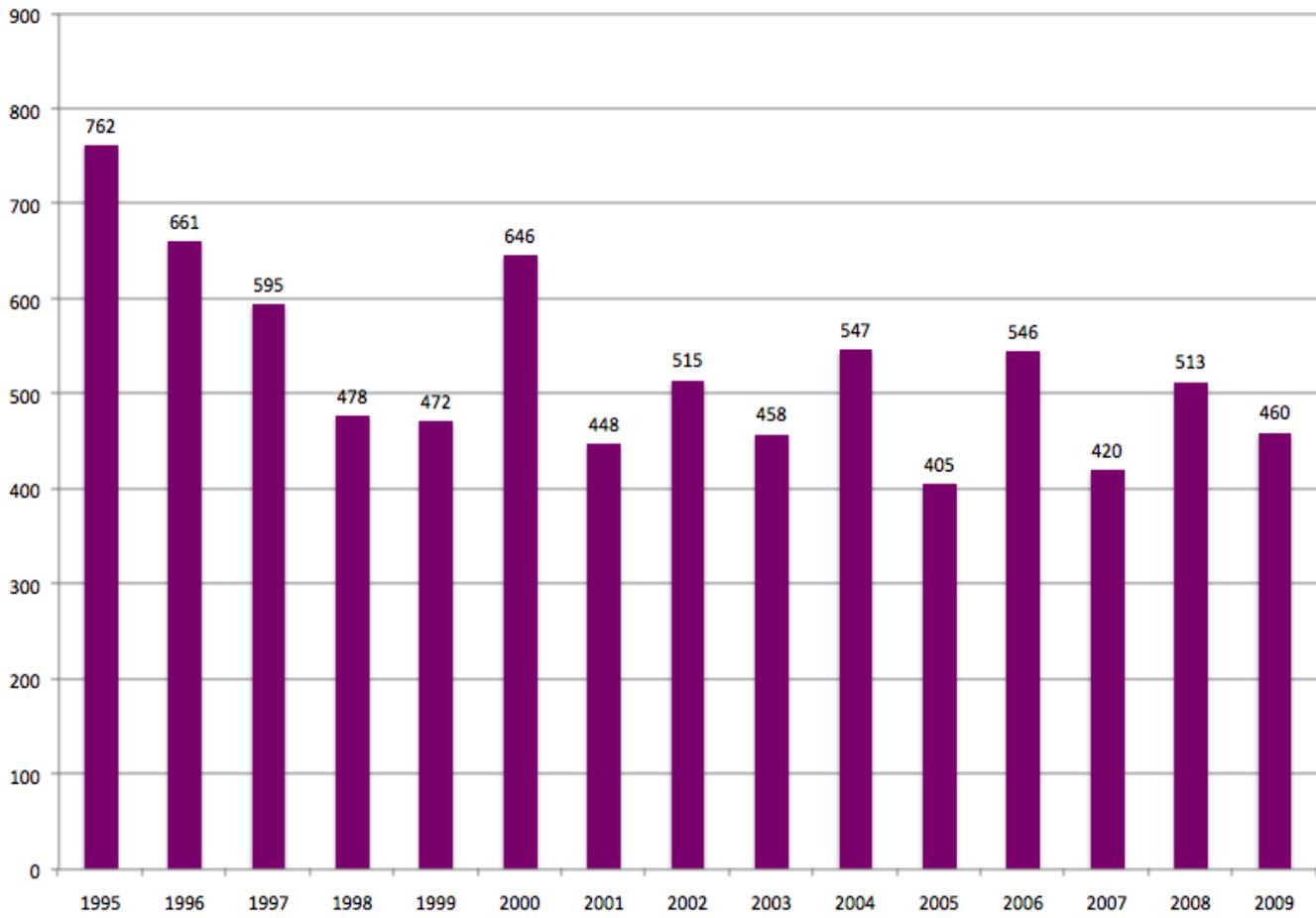
How can the United States, whose slogan is “Land of the Free” call itself free if censors try to enforce limitations? When did freedom include parameters? Instead of the limitation of information and the imposition of knowledge should not true freedom consist of the opposite? True and free education should provide for students as many texts as possible in order to provide them an ample source of information to take advantage from. Contrary to preventing information on the claim of inappropriateness, educators should employ these “controversial” themes in the classroom presenting and discussing these among students which as mentioned previously Freire defined as the “Dialogical Method”. By means of this method students have the opportunity to engage with these themes and truly develop an understanding and an opinion rather than being told how to think and feel towards a given theme.

Additionally, the main objective that censors strive for is to eliminate undesired texts. In the quest to achieve this action, it is inevitable for these texts to acquire recognition whether it is through newspapers or media outlets. The more recognition towards censorship the text receives, the more intriguing it will look towards readers. Moreover, the target audience may find appealing to gain access to these “undesired” text exclusively to read about the themes that censors want to limit. As a result this makes censorship not only futile because it grants exposition to that which they aim to obscure, but could also result as counterproductive for a text will be recognized specifically for those themes rather than its central story.

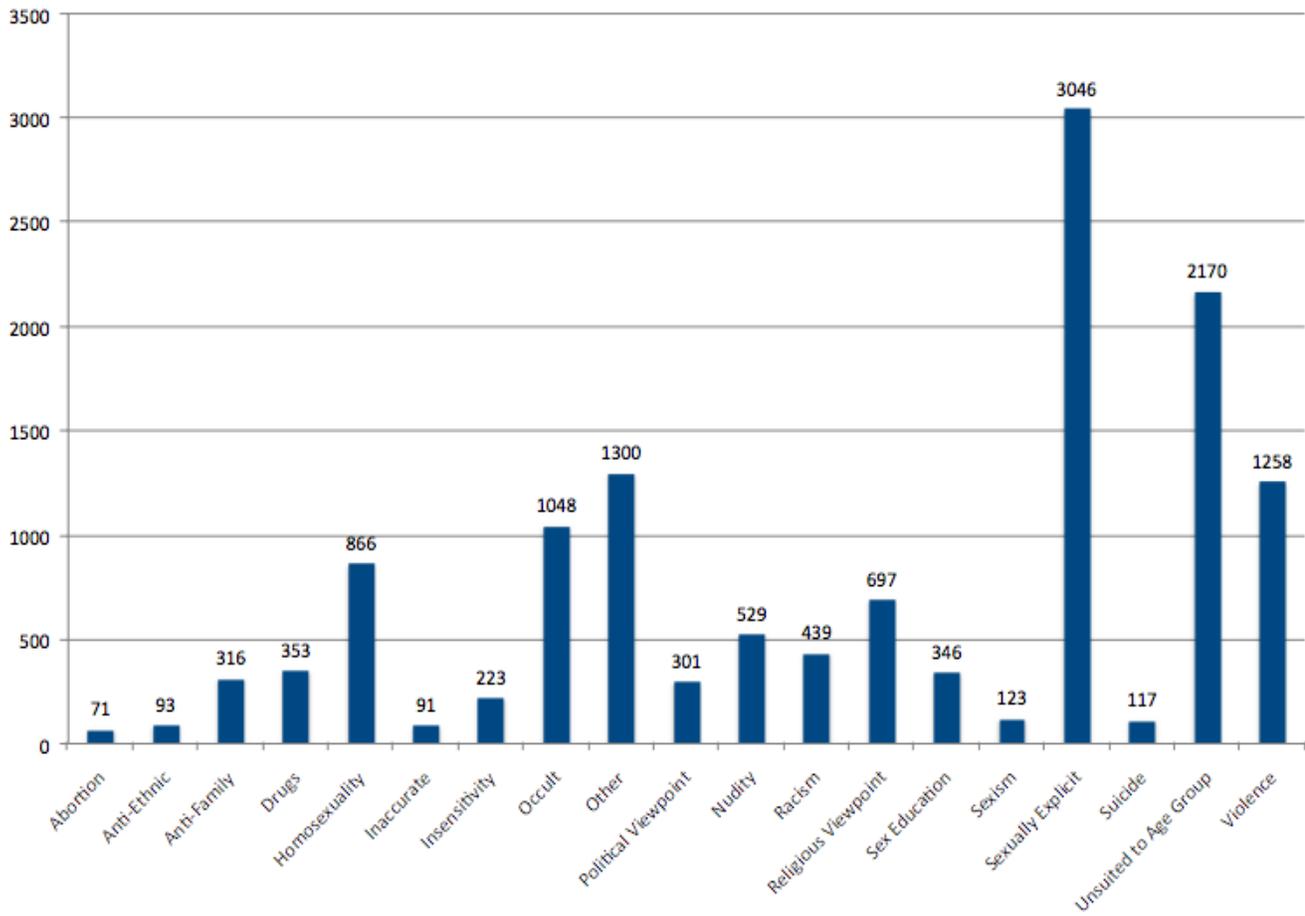
Finally, when inquiring about the right that censorship has over the students' right to know, fundamentally, it should not go beyond an opinion because of the fact that in a democratic society each and every member should have equal opportunity to the access to information. It is appalling to understand that a nation founded on freedom has to confront a predicament that opposes its claim. Every time that a text is censored in an educational institution the ones who experience the dire consequences are the students. There is no advantage for censors to attempt concealing a text that may be useful for its intended audience, whether it helps them deal with a situation or simply to be informed of it. Placing limitations towards to what students can or cannot know insults their capabilities of being critical thinkers and depicting them as incapable of dealing with controversial themes.

Appendix A

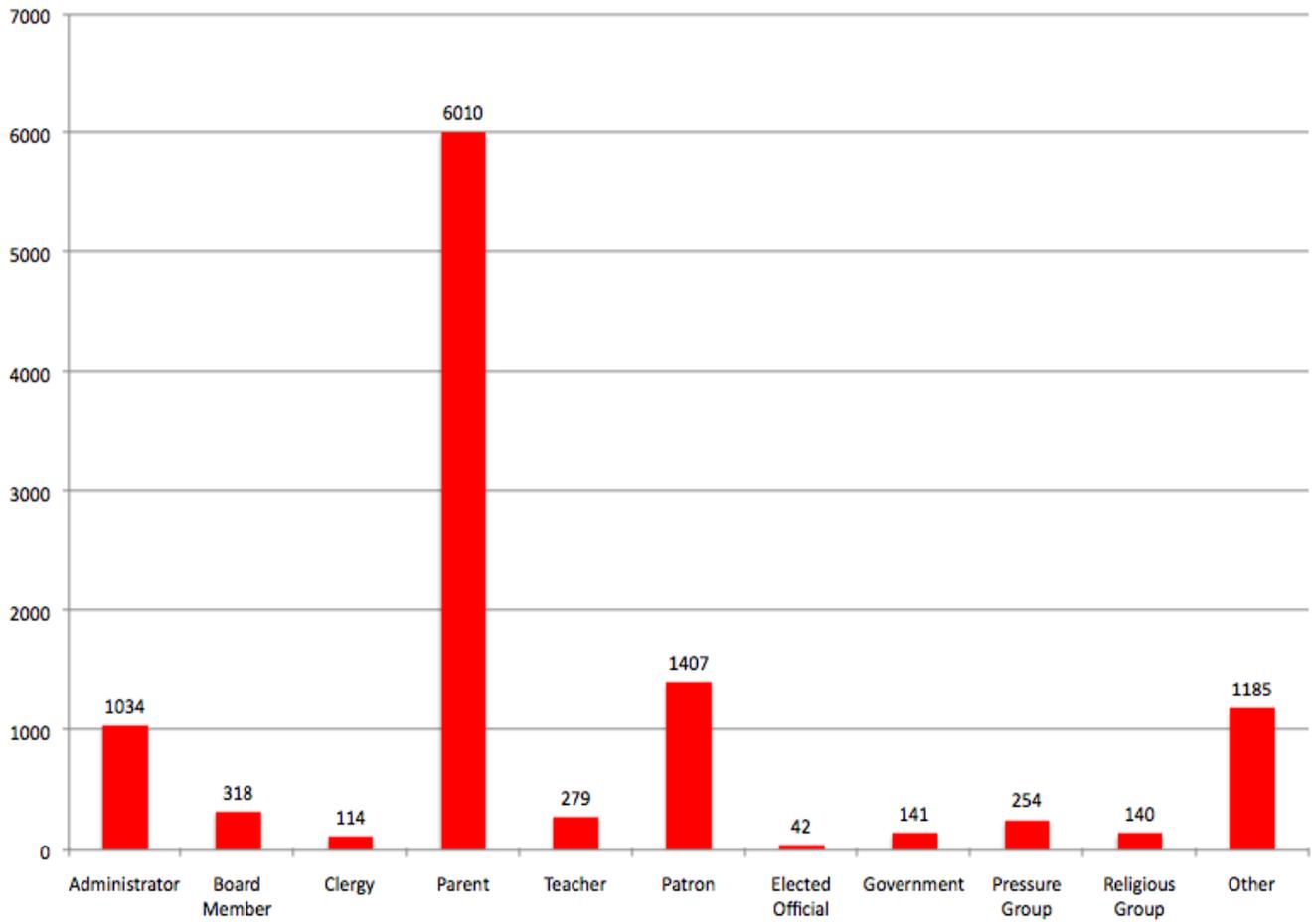
Challenges by year



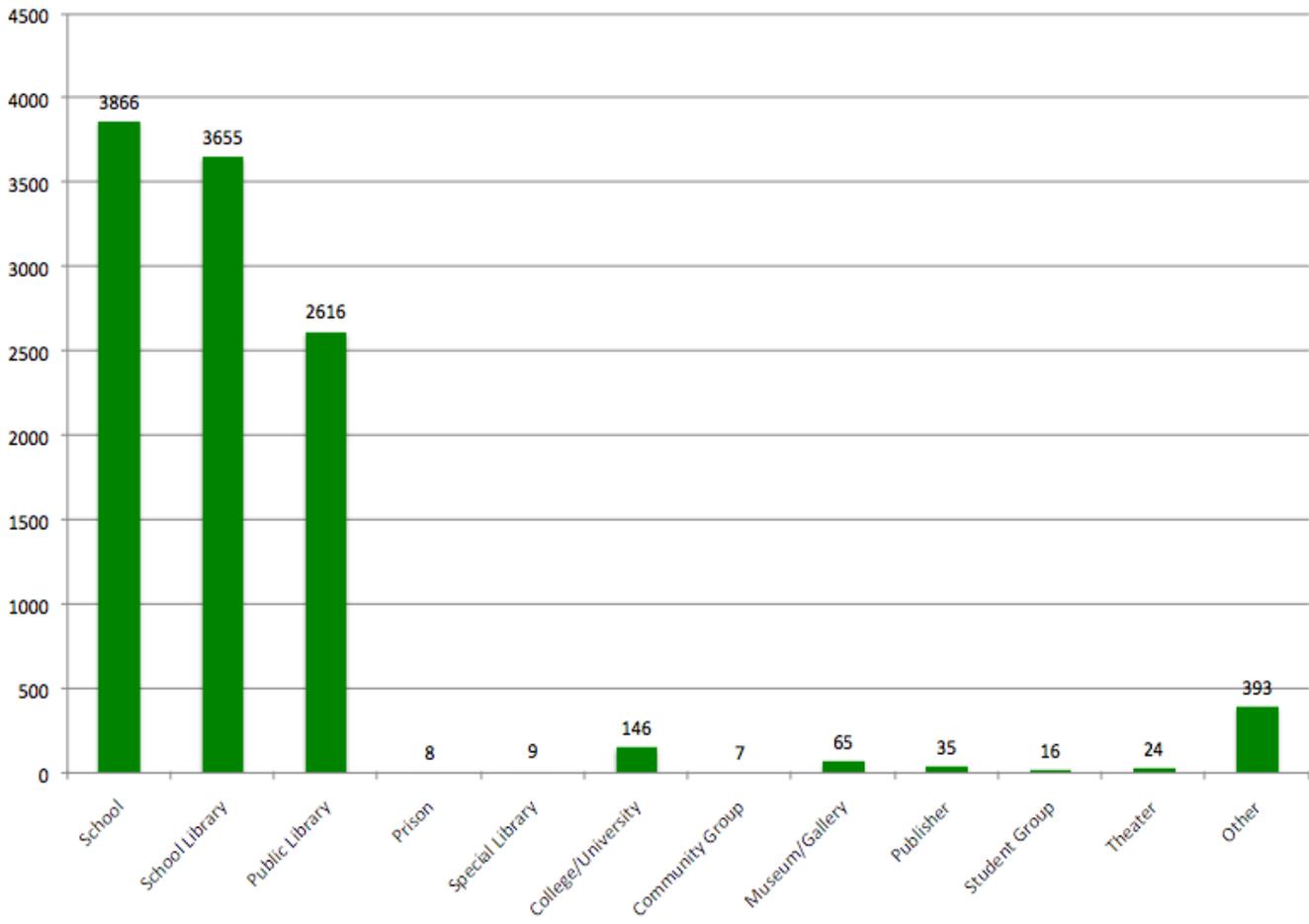
Challenges by reason



Challenges by initiator



Challenges by institution



Appendix B

(Cerra, 1990; 1991)

Table 1: Response to the Question: If an award-winning book you have chosen to read aloud to your class has language which you feel might be offensive, what action would you take?

Action	f	%
Select another book	60	16.3
Read the book exactly as it is written	51	13.9
Alter the text so it is more suitable	256	69.8
Total	367	100.0

Table 2: Response to Question: When you are warned that a favorably reviewed book which you have read is risky because of its subject matter, what action do you take when considering purchase of the book for your classroom?

Response	f	%
Purchase the book anyway, and do not limit student access	55	15.8
Purchase the book, but limit student access	86	24.7
Do not purchase the book	207	59.5
Total	348	100.0

Table 3: Decisions about Types of Children's Books Teachers Would Permit in Classroom

Type of Book	Yes		No		Undecided	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Stories from the Bible	203	54.9	99	26.8	68	18.4
Stories from the Koran	181	49.2	89	24.2	98	26.6
Stories from the Torah	179	48.6	90	24.5	99	26.9
Native American mythology	349	93.8	9	2.4	14	3.8
Greek myths and fables	358	96.2	5	1.3	9	2.4

Table 4: Subject Matter Basis upon Which to Reject a Book for School Library

Subject Matter	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
Religion	74	20.8	281	79.2
Sex	186	53.4	162	46.6
Politics	41	11.8	307	88.2
Racism	223	61.6	1139	38.4
Sexism	209	58.2	150	41.8
Other	13		28	

Table 5: Responses to the Question: It is a common practice for textbooks to have excerpts from children's books. Do you agree with the practice of rewriting selections to satisfy reading difficult demands?

Response	f	%
Yes	274	74.3
No	95	25.7
Total	369	100.0

TABLE 6: Agreement of Teachers with First Amendment Rights for Students in Elementary School

Response	f	%
Strongly Agree	69	19.0
Agree	207	57.0
Disagree	34	9.4
Strongly Disagree	6	12.9
No opinion	47	12.9

Works Cited

ALA. "About Banned and Challenged Books." American Library Association. Web. 23 Mar.

2011.

<http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/banned/aboutbannedbooks/ALA_print_layout_1_501522_501522.cfm>

---. "First Amendment of the Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution" American Library Association. Web. 23 Mar. 2011.

<<http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/firstamendment/firstamendment.cfm>>

---. "Intellectual Freedom and Censorship." American Library Association. Web. 23 Mar. 2011.

<http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/basics/ALA_print_layout_1_388255_388255.cfm>

---. "Number of Challenges by Year, Reason, Initiator & Institution (1990 - 2009)" American Library Association. Web. 23 Mar. 2011

<<http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/banned/frequentlychallenged/challengesbytype/index.cfm>>

---. "The Censor: Motives and Tactics." American Library Association. Web. 23 Mar. 2011.

<http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/banned/challengeslibrarymaterials/essentialpreparation/censormotives/ALA_print_layout_1_438480_438480.cfm>

---. "100 Most Frequently Challenged Books: 1990–1999." American Library Association. 29

July 2009. Web. 1 Apr. 2010.

<http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/banned/frequentlychallenged/challengedbydecade/1990_1999/index.cfm>

Baker, John. "Book banning blues: A New Chorus." Publishers Weekly. 237.47 Literature

- Resource Center (1990): 6. Web. 18 Dec. 2011.
- Baldassarro, Wolf. "Banned Books Awareness: "And Tango Makes Three" by Justin Richardson." *Global education network* 13 Feb. 2011. Web. 12 Oct. 2011.
<<http://world.edu/banned-book-awareness-tango-justin-richardson/>>
- Banuchi, Rebecca. "Chardón defiende prohibición de libros." *Primera Hora* 14 Sept. 2009: Web. 15 Mar. 2012.
<<http://www.primerahora.com/chardondefiendeprohibiciondelibros-330760.html>>
- . "Secretario de Educación dice que prohibición de libros es un asunto de educación especial." *Primera Hora* 16 Sept. 2009: Web 15 Mar. 2012.
<<http://www.primerahora.com/secretariodeeducaciondicequeprohibiciondelibrosesunasuntodeeducacionespecial-331164.html>>
- Brown, Jean. *Preserving Intellectual Freedom: Fighting Censorship in Our School*. Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1994. Print.
- Burrell, Lee and Edward B. Jenkinson. *The Students' Right to Know*. Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1982. Print.
- Bushman, John and Kay Parks Haas. *Using Young Adult Literature In The English Classroom*. 4th Ed. New Jersey: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2005. Print.
- Cadzow, Hunter. "New Historicism" *Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Michael Groden, Martin Kreiswirth, and Imre Szeman. London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1994. 534-53, Print.
- Campbell, Ryan. "Re: Clarification about a concept" Message to Jo Robles 6 April 2011. E-mail.
- Corbett, Sue. "Lauren Myracle: 'This Generation's Judy Blume'." *Publishers Weekly* 258.8 (2011): 31. Web. 20 Dec. 2011.

- Díaz, Maritza. "Fotuño apoya la censura de libros en las escuelas públicas." *Primera Hora*. 14 Sept. 2009. Web. 25 February 2012.
<<http://www.primerahora.com//XStatic/primerahora/template/content.aspx?se=nota&id=330731>>
- Downs, Donald A. "Book Banning." *Dictionary of American History*. Farmington Hills, Michigan: The Gale Group Inc., 2003. Print.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Ideology: An Introduction*. New York: Verso, 1994. Print.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum, 2007. Print.
- Ginsberg, Allen. *Howl and Other Poems*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1956. Print.
- Giroux, Henry. *Theory and Resistance in Education*. Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey, 2001. Print.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. Print.
- "Guideline on Censorship: Don't Let it Become an Issue in Your Schools." *National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)*. Reprinted from *Language Arts* (February 1978). 13 Aug. 2008. Web. 29 May 2011.
<<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/dontletitbecome/contenthistory>>
- Hall, Donald. *Literary and Cultural Theory*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001. Print.
- Heins, Marjorie. *Not in Front of the Children: "Indecency" Censorship and the Innocence of Youth*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2007. Print.
- Imeah, Pretty. "Theory of Education." *Conexions*. 9 Feb. 2010. Web. 2 April 2011.
<<http://cnx.org/content/m33794/latest/>>
- "Incapacitado De la Torre para evaluar textos prohibidos por Educación." *Primer Hora*. 16 Sept. 2009. Web. 5 Mar. 2012.

<<http://www.primerahora.com/incapacitadodelatorreparaevaluartextosprohibidosporeducacion-331148.html>>

“Legislatura debe rechazar la censura de libros en Educación.” *Primera Hora*. 16 Sept. 2009. Web. 27 Feb. 2012.

<http://www.primerahora.com/legislatura_debe_rechazar_la_censura_de_libros_en_educacion-331098.html>

Mcclatchy, --..” Schools chief bans book on penguins: Tale describes males raising egg” *The Boston Globe*. 20 Dec. 2006. Web. 6 April 2012.

<http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2006/12/20/schools_chief_bans_book_on_penguins/>

Morris, Wesley. *Towards a New Historicism*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972. Print.

Myracle, Lauren. *ttyl*. New York: Amulet Books, 2006. Print.

Trotsky, Leon. “From Literature and Revolution.” *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Vincent Leitch. London; New York: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd, 2001. 1002-17. Print.

Richardson, Justin and Peter Parnell. *And Tango Makes Three*. New York: Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2005. Print.

Rivera, Ivelisse. “Leen los libros prohibidos para protestar por la censura.” *Primera Hora* 16 Sept. 2009. Web. 18 Feb. 2012.

<<http://www.primerahora.com/leenloslibrosprohibidosparaprotestarporlacensura-331150.html>>

Saltman, Judith. “Censoring the Imagination: Challenges to Children's Books.” *Emergency*

- Librarian* 25 (1998): 8-12. Web. 18 Dec. 2011.
- Scales, Pat. "What Makes a Good Banned Book?" *The Horn Book* 85.5 (2009): 533-6. Web. 20 Dec. 2011.
- . "Too Much Information?" *SLJ* 54.9 (2008) Web. 20 Jan. 2012.
- Suárez, Limarys. "Opiniones encontradas." *El Nuevo Dia* 14. Sept. 2009. Web. 25 Feb. 2012.
<<https://www.adendi.com/archivo.asp?Xnum=615031&year=2009&mon=9>>
- Stay, Byron L. *Censorship: Opposing Viewpoints* Ed. David Bender and Bruno Leone. San Diego: Greenhaven Press Inc., 1996. Print.
- . Rushdie, Salman and Jonathan Rauch. "Censorship is Harmful." Ed. David Bender and Bruno Leone. 25-33.
- . Stork, Thomas. "Censorship Can Be Beneficial." *Censorship: Opposing Viewpoints*. Ed. David Bender and Bruno Leone. 17-24.
- "'TTYL' Pulled from School Libraries." KXAN TV. LIN Television of Texas, LP, 18 Nov. 2008. Web. 13 Jun. 2012.
<http://www.kxan.com/dpp/news/local/williamson/TTYL_pulled_from_school_libraries>.
- "USA TODAY's Best-Selling Books List." *USA Today*. Gannett Satellite Information Network, Inc., n.d. Web. 13 Jun. 2012.
<<http://books.usatoday.com/list/index>>.
- Watson, Steven. *The Birth of the Beat Generation*: New York: Random House, 1998. Print.
- Žižek, Slavoj. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*: Cynicism as a Form of Ideology. London; New York: Verso, 1989. Print.
- . *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*. New York: Picador, 2008. Print.