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★ You Can't Say That! Writers for Young People Talk About Censorship, Free Expression, and the Stories They Have to Tell

Ed. by Leonard S. Marcus. Candlewick, \$18.99 (240p) ISBN 978-0-7636-9036-6

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Marcus's 13 interviews with writers whose works have provoked controversy deliver more than the book's title suggests, beginning with an introduction that traces the history of censorship back to attempts at "regulating moral behavior" in ancient Greece and Rome. Conversations exploring the writers' childhoods and creative lives evolve gracefully into discussions of censorship experiences, including highly publicized challenges to works such as Lesléa Newman's *Heather Has Two Mommies* in 1990, and Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell's *And Tango Makes Three* in 2005. Readers may be surprised to learn that several of Katherine Paterson's books were banned for their "gutter and unholy language" or featuring a sibling's "hateful feelings," or that Dav Pilkey's *Captain Underpants* series regularly tops banned books lists for its "violence" and "offensive language." Many interviews highlight the crucial role of librarians in fighting for public access to books, though the collection does not cover why some may object to texts on reasonable grounds, such as detrimental portrayals of marginalized people. Still, this is a thoughtful examination of the barriers young people may face when seeking "polemical" reading material, with high crossover appeal. Back matter includes source notes, selected reading, and an index. Ages 10–up. (July)

DETAILS

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