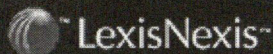


Anaya, Rudolfo - "Bless Me, Ultima" (see also Literature - Banned Books)



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Press Enterprise (Riverside, CA)

September 18, 2004, Saturday

SECTION: LOCAL; Pg. B03

LENGTH: 411 words

HEADLINE: Parents question 4 books on list

BYLINE: KATIE ORLOFF; THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

BODY:

A Colton couple wants the school district to reconsider four books on their daughter's Advanced Placement English reading list because of language and themes they find objectionable.

Ted and Kelly Bisceglia say they don't want their 16-year-old daughter to read Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale," Toni Morrison's "Song of Solomon," Rudolfo Anaya's "**Bless Me Ultima**" and William Faulkner's "The Sound and the Fury."

A Colton Joint Unified School District committee will review the books and bring individual recommendations on each book to the school board, possibly as early as Oct. 7, said Assistant Superintendent Angelia Wyles.

In a letter to Colton High School's principal, the couple details complaints. One is about "**Bless Me Ultima**," which they say portrays Christianity's God as petty, jealous and impotent. Others list use of profanity and racial epithets in the books.

The couple's objections also include "dysfunctional sexual morality" in "The Handmaid's Tale" and "Song of Solomon."

It just isn't necessary, they say.

"She's not 18 years old. She's 16 years old," Kelly Bisceglia said. "The materials in these books, she couldn't wear on a T-shirt to school."

The books appear on the states' suggested reading list.

Colton High School senior John Suh defended the reading list at a school-board meeting Thursday, saying that to ignore controversies does not prepare students for situations later in life.

"The teacher also never forced any of their beliefs on me or any of my fellow students," he said. "Instead we were inspired to understand human nature and master writing styles."

Some board members, including Robert Zamora and Marge Mendoza-Ware, said they share some of the parent's concerns about teens reading sexually explicit material. Zamora said he does not support total censorship of the books, but said families that object need an alternative.

The school already plans to offer alternate assignments.

All the books except "The Sound and the Fury" made the American

Library Association's list of the 100 most challenged books from 1990 to 2000. The association tracks books challenged in public schools.

Other challenged books in the Inland area include "The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby" in Riverside in 2003, "Slaughterhouse Five" in Moreno Valley in 2001, and "Of Mice and Men" in Bloomington in 1997.

LOAD-DATE: September 21, 2004

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