

Is it right to ban certain books?

In the modern era where people jealously guard their right to think what they want it is easy to immediately disregard this question saying that it is a person's given right to have access to any information they so choose regardless of whether this information may be considered controversial. Whilst on the surface, I would agree, the increasing amount of information and the varied perspectives through which people see the world which can be explored through books should indeed be celebrated; I think it is important to also consider that this freedom of information includes information which promotes prejudicial viewpoints which can be detrimental to many demographics especially minorities.

Going back to previous dictatorships in history, and even throughout the history of education censorship has been widely used to influence the opinions of the general public. The first example that immediately comes to mind is the use of book burning in Germany during the years 1933 - 45 which was used both to turn the public against Jews and other demographics ruthlessly persecuted by the government at the time. If you regard this question from this angle, you could argue that censoring books is preventing people from being able to make up their own minds about matters and dictating what the opinion of the public should be, a notion which goes against the consensus of individuals who believe, rightly so in my opinion, that they should be able to find their own path and form their own opinion.

However, it is also important to note that it was not only censorship which was used to propagate certain opinions and thought processes, production of certain literature which has been used as a political tool is also a notion seen throughout history. King James I of England's book 'demonology' was greatly influential in shaping the climate of fear surrounding supernatural occurrences and greatly contributed to the growing popularity of convicting individuals of witchcraft, something that continued after his reign and gained traction in the US resulting in the execution of hundreds of people, mainly women. Books that propagate such opinions should arguably be banned as they could result in the unfair persecution of minorities and other demographics or to further political agendas.

Overall, whilst I understand why some people may argue that certain books are banned, it is my opinion that such books and works of literature are still parts of our history, the lessons which can be learned through the many works of literature are far more important than censoring information out of fear. We as humans can teach people from a young age to

be tolerant of others and especially when looking at these books through an objective lens, they can become much more constructive, even more so than if they had been banned. No matter how little we may agree with the information presented, I think we cannot afford to ignore things that do not agree with our personal point of view, or the lessons which can be taught by history so that such transgressions do not occur again.