

"Candy, Little Girl?"

Poetry

Books raise censorship question

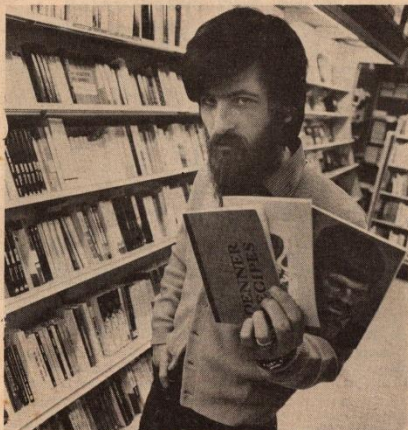
by Barbara Rhines

The question of who has the right to decide what UA students may read has arisen with the censoring of a book of poetry from the university bookstore.

"In Roth vs. United States, 354 S 476 (1957) 'obscenity' was defined by Mr. Justice Brennan as that which was 'utterly without redeeming social importance.' What did Brennan intend by 'obscenity'? Material 'which deals with sex in a manner appealing to prulent interests.'"
--Censorship Landmarks
Edward DeGrazia 1969

The book, written, illustrated and printed by student Richard Denner, was termed "unsuitable" by William Hogan, manager of Business Service and omitted from bookstore shelves.

Hogan is the superior of Leroy Rich, manager of the UA bookstore. "I thought it was ob-



"Some candy, little girl?" Student poet Richard Denner displays copies of his works now on sale at the University Bookstore. Photo by Jon Metzger

scene," Hogan stated.

Denner had originally agreed to provide six books for sale in the bookstore. Upon receiving the books, Rich was concerned that one of the books would be considered pornographic.

After consulting his superior, the decision was made to "omit" the book. The rest of the books were to be kept under the counter and sold only if asked for specifically.

At the same time, English instructor John Hulbert presented copies of the books to the library. In a letter which accompanied the books, Hulbert wrote, "My own opinion is that he (Denner) is a sincere and talented artist, and that as he grows the university will be glad to have collected his early attempts at writing and printing."

Hulbert also wrote, "I'll be using several of his things during this term as reference material." (Hulbert was referring to a graduate writers workshop.)

The library accepted the books, Director Ted Ryberg

said, "Our function is to present both sides of all topics and let our patrons make up their own minds. We don't have a position on any topic. We are to support the curriculum."

When Rich and Hogan were informed of the library's decision, the books were classified as text books, and supposedly put behind the text counter. The "black sheep" of the lot was included, making the total again six.

Rich said, "The bookstore and the library should have the same policy about books. I'm not going to buck the library."

In an attempt to explain the original censorship, or "selection" as Hogan prefers, he offered the following statement:

- 1) "Because of faculty children we are compelled to censor;
- 2) The fact that we don't carry it in the bookstore doesn't mean we are denying it....we're pressed for space anyway. We don't carry every book that has ever been published; and
- 3) I think it's reasonable that

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UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA

POLAR STAR

Vol. XXIX No. 4

Friday, October 16, 1970

university assembly

Campus gripe group to be considered today

The University Assembly will act today on a move to set up a grievance committee with wide investigative jurisdiction.

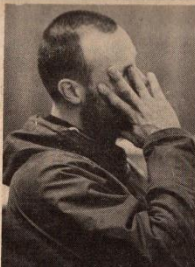
The move to establish the committee is in the form of a proposed change in the assembly by-laws to be presented for a vote at the assembly's regular monthly meeting 2 p.m. in the Nanook Lounge at Patty Gym.

The committee is a proposal of Charles Parr, a foreign language professor and chairman of the Professional Staff Affairs

hear a grievance.

The committee may keep its proceedings and files secret and can make confidential recommendations to the president. It can also make non-confidential policy recommendations to the president, the assembly or ASUA.

The guidelines also say the president should consult with the committee before overriding its recommendations and that he should notify the committee of his approval or rejection.



The Old Soft Shoe: UA President William R. Wood and Dean of Students Robert Hilliard speak on the proposed \$29.7 million Higher Education Bond issue at Khyber Inn last Monday. The purpose of the discussion was to sample student opinion. Also present were academic Vice President Donald R. Thorsburn and University Relations Director Gerald...

Denner

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material other than texts should be judged."

Hogan suggested that because the books had been printed by hand and were made by a student that they had attracted undue attention. "If this was intended to throw sand in the machine, it has done it," he said.

Hulbert commented, "It wasn't meant to bother anybody and I'm surprised that it has. A lot more graphic and bothersome things have been classics for the last 15 years."

Terrance Choy, professor of art, said, "I'm an artist, not a poet, and I think the books have artistic merit. Richard shows a proficiency in dealing with woodcuts."

Choy was concerned that there were no rules or an official definition of censorship for the university. "Pornography exists in the mind of the beholder. Any person who is offended by it can ignore it," he stated.

Director of Student Activities, Don Scott, said, "It's not that the books are great, or really bad...it's just because they are different."

Lyle Harris, associate professor of journalism was refused the opportunity to see the books while they were being kept under the counter.

Harris stated, "I went over to the bookstore and asked to see 'Poemebooks.' The girl clerk said she didn't know where they were. I asked her to find out, and she looked around the store

for several minutes. She returned and said she couldn't find them. I asked her to find out why they weren't around. After a conference in the back she returned and told me that the books were thought to be unfit to be sold by the manager. She said the manager was out of town."

Harris commented, "I think the whole thing was utterly ridiculous to advertise a book and then pull it off the shelf because it offends one person's standards."

Assistant professor of journalism, Don Wright, who was with Harris when the incident occurred, commented, "I'm against any form of censorship." He also brought up the age-old, "Who shall judge the judges?"

Author-artist Denner said, "I'm upset that people have no sense of humor about the whole situation. I wanted them to be received with a sense of humor."

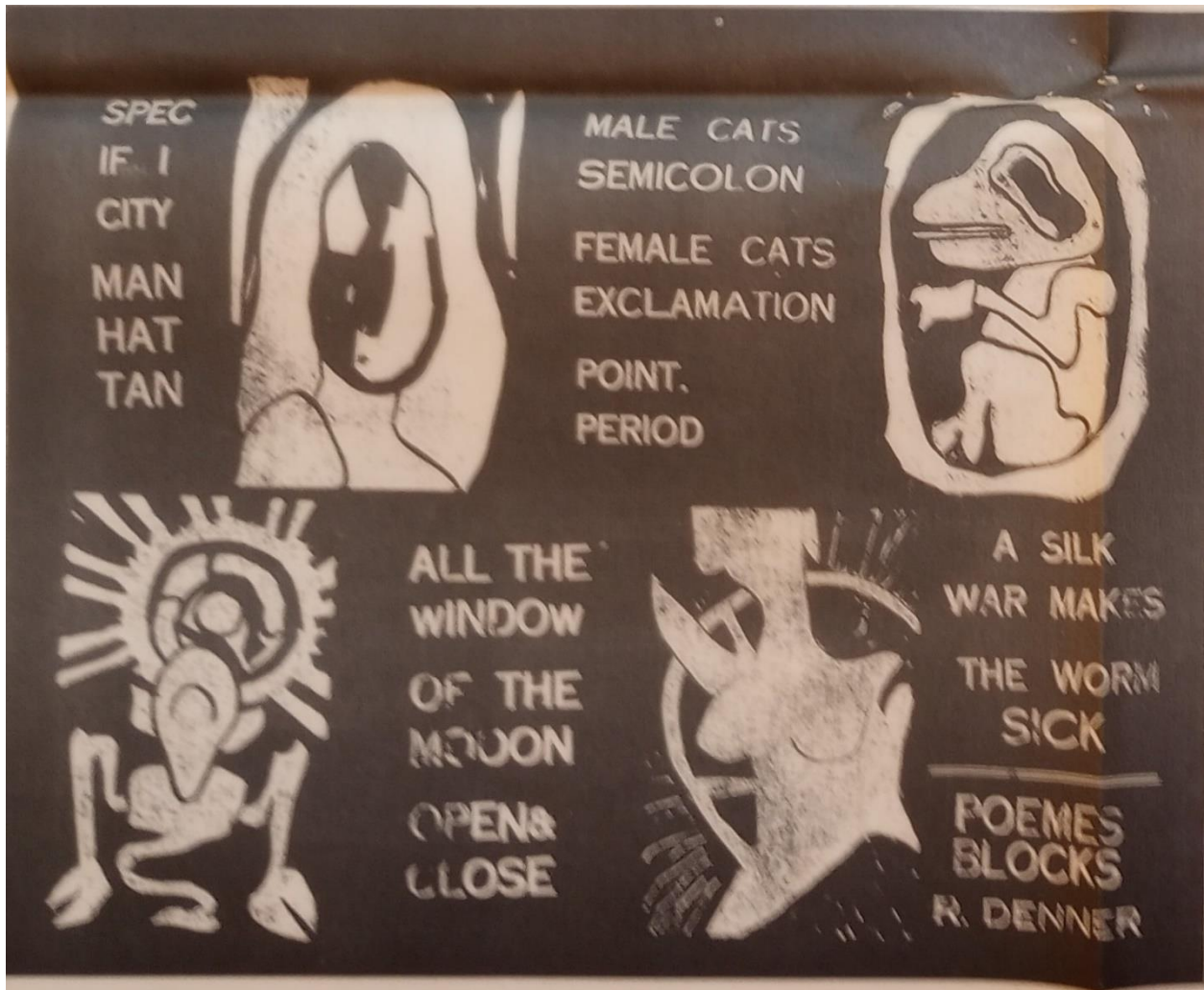
Denner said the uproar "aroused a bewildered feeling."

"The works will endure no matter how much they are criticized," he commented.

Asked if he was angry, Denner replied, "About the only thing that would make me angry is if someone should destroy them."

The books are now on the poetry shelf, accessible to the general public, but the vital question of the authority of UA employees and administrators to censor or "select" student reading material remains.

Quipped Ryberg, "A little bit of censorship is like a little bit of pregnancy...it just ain't."





Poemebookes

by

RYCHARD

now

at the

University

Bookstore