Books That Inspire, Books That Offend

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Abstract

A content analysis of 298 statements describing books included in the University of Oklahoma Books That Inspire exhibit was conducted to identify the reasons members of the academic community found particular books inspiring. Twenty-six recurrent themes in seven concept clusters were identified. Books from the exhibit that have been challenged or censored were examined to compare the perceptions of exhibit contributors and book challengers in the context of those themes. These responses often focused on very different aspects of literary works; however, some relationships did emerge between the reasons books were found variously inspiring and offensive. Findings are analyzed in the context of the academic mission and the role of academic librarians in promoting leisure reading.

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