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Free Speech

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Posted by [Maria Hanrahan](#) at 02:12 PM on March 18, 2009

While I do not want my children looking at or reading some of the material the Maziarkas have complained about, I believe they belong in the library in the Young Adult section. These books have been written for that age group and should be shelved accordingly. I believe that it is my responsibility to protect my children from library and/or public materials I feel are inappropriate. I will do so by visiting the library with them, keeping their library card in my possession or monitoring what they check out through the library's "My Account" component of the website, monitoring Internet use, and through parent-child discussion. I do not believe it is my place or right to say what others or other parents' children can or cannot view. I will not determine what is appropriate or inappropriate for the community or other people's children.

I do not understand the concept of the Maziarkas wanting "balance" within the "Out of the Closet" category. They profess that this category is "pro-homosexual." (I do not know how this is possible; most of the titles listed in this category are fiction, pure storytelling, so I do not know how they promote or condone homosexuality.) The Maziarkas have used the term "ex-gay" in some places. If I use Amazon.com to search the term "gay young adult fiction" I get 307 results. If I search "ex-gay young adult fiction" I get 30 results (many the same titles in my first search, so they are not really "ex-gay"). If I search "anti-gay young adult fiction" I get 13 results (again, many of them the same titles in my first search, so they are not "anti-gay.")

There will always be an unequal balance in categories and material. For example, I'm sure the library has a higher percentage of religion books about Christianity that they do about the Muslim religion, Buddhism, and other religions. I was joking with someone today that the library has a whole lot of books about becoming a good/better cook. Perhaps I should complain to the library about the disparity of books about becoming a bad cook! Disparities, imbalance, and inequality exists in the world, and therefore within our libraries and their collections.

I believe the Maziarkas complaint is without merit and should be dismissed. I welcome your comments on the issue.