

students with information or ideas. Furthermore, he argued, the school library could not be viewed separately from the rest of the school. Justice Burger objected that the "right to receive" doctrine would give students a "First Amendment entitlement" to books and would by extension support a constitutional right of citizens to have public libraries. Justice Rehnquist argued that there was no precedent for such a right: Brennan had fashioned the doctrine "out of whole cloth." Education, he wrote, consists in the selective presentation and explanation of ideas, and therefore the Constitution could not possibly require eclecticism in public-school education.

Justice Brennan's second doctrine—that school boards may not remove books if by doing so they intend to suppress ideas—was somewhat more favorably received by the Court. Blackmun concurred with his reasoning, and Rehnquist, though he judged that the doctrine did not apply to the *Island Trees* case, "cheerfully conceded" that it would apply in such extreme cases as those hypothesized by Levine—though, he wrote, these were unlikely to occur. Justice Powell, however, found no merit in the second doctrine, or in the decision as a whole. He wrote:

The plurality's reasoning is marked by contradiction. It purports to acknowledge the traditional role of school boards and parents in deciding what should be taught in the schools. It states the truism that the schools are . . . vehicles for "inculcating fundamental values necessary to the maintenance of a democratic political system." Yet when a school board, as in this case, takes its responsibilities seriously and seeks to decide what the fundamental values are that should be imparted, the plurality finds a constitutional violation.

Further, he wrote:

A school board's attempt to instill in its students the ideas and values on which a democratic system depends is viewed as an impermissible suppression of other ideas and values on which other systems of government and other societies thrive. Books may not be removed because they are indecent; extoll violence, intolerance and racism; or degrade the dignity of the individual. Human history, not the least of the twentieth century, records the power and political life of these very ideas. But they are not our ideas or values.

Powell, who attached the original PONY-U compilation of excerpts from the banned books to his opinion, called the nine books "vulgar or racist." Whether he had read the books in question was not clear. (Justice O'Connor, in her dissent, said she per-

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