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Hey, parents, don't censor my vagina **TEACH ENGLISH OVERSEAS**

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oys have scrotums, girls have vaginas. It's a basic fact of life. However, the particulars of revealing this to children have been aggressively debated for years, and two specials cases recently made it into the public eye thanks to the incredible ignorance on the part of some protesters.

With children's book The Higher Power of Lucky by Susan Patron, an uproar was caused by the use of the word "scrotum" on the first page of the book. Armies of school librarians across America uttered a collective, "Think of the children!" and banned the book from their libraries. Of course, they apparently forgot that the book won the Newbery Medal, the most prestigious award in children's literature, an award that is actually given out by the Association for Library Service to Children.

To put it in context, the book's main character overhears "scrotum" when someone tells a friend where his dog was bitten by a rattlesnake. So the word wasn't used in an objectionable or sexual manner. Scrotum, in this case, was an anatomical word used to describe a specific body part-and it "Florida's The Vagina Monologues was pressured because parents were flustered when children read it off a public billboard and wanted an explanation. If a child is advanced enough to read and intelligent enough to ask, then they should know. Art shouldn't be censored because parents aren't prepared."

wasn't even a human body part, for Pete's sake! It wasn't like the book described how the dog was bitten on his "mandangle," or his "sperm factory." One particularly deluded woman considered the whole affair "a Howard Stern-type shock treatment." Really? Because of the long list of colourful words that refer to the male genitalia, I don't imagine Howard Stern would rely on the most professional and respectful of the lot.

But that's not the worst of the recent paranoia regarding genitalia. doesn't even solve the problem.

"hoohaa" is, and I imagine the parental talk that ensues will be even more embarrassing, because "hoohaa" is to "vagina" what "hooters" is to "breasts." Hooha is a childish, funnysounding, misogynistic euphemism for a female body part that basically tells girls that their genitalia is too weird or dirty or gross to talk about properly in public.

What it all seems to come down to is a lack of preparation on the part of authority figures. Most parents, school teachers and librarians object because they believe that there's a certain time when children are "ready" to know about sex (or at least anatomy), but truth be told, it's actually the the parents, teachers and librarians who aren't ready. Patron's book, which was written for tento twelve-year-olds, was hounded because eight-and nine-year-olds were reading it and asking questions. Florida's The Vagina Monologues was pressured because parents were flustered when their children read it off a public billboard and wanted an explanation. If a child is advanced enough to read and intelligent enough to ask, then they should know. Art shouldn't be censored because parents aren't prepared.

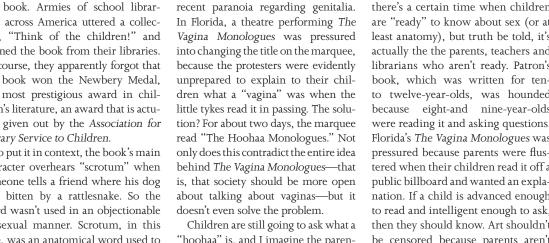
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