Statement on Harmful Content

**Full Statement**

Princeton University Library’s collections contain historical and contemporary materials documenting human expression and lived experience, thus some content includes harmful, offensive, distressing, or inappropriate images or language, including but not limited to materials that document violence or hate speech. Library users may encounter images and language that are now recognized as offensive and unacceptable; some may have been widely viewed as unacceptable when they were created. Inclusion of such content in Princeton’s digital collections is not an endorsement of its language, images, or ideology. Princeton University Library openly rejects oppressive views reflected in our collections, and we believe in the importance of fostering access to our collections in a responsible and transparent way that preserves historical evidence of social conditions and attitudes.

Princeton University Library strives to describe and provide access to all the content in its collections in ways that are inclusive, respectful, and do not cause harm to those who interact with the collections. This includes people who create, use, and are represented in the collections Princeton stewards. Staff are currently engaged in addressing or contextualizing this content and language, including the addition of notes in the description of materials and the implementation of content warnings or cover images for distressing images, audio, or video. We are also working on developing a feedback form for users to report instances where they come across harmful content that has not been identified or contextualized as such. (For archival collections, researchers are encouraged to use the Report Harmful Language form on the finding aids website to submit feedback.)

For more information on how Princeton University Library staff describes collections, please see the Statement on Language in Description. Please also see PUL’s Takedown Policy statement regarding copyrighted materials and privacy concerns.

This statement was informed by similar statements of other institutions, including Yale, Drexel, and Tufts Universities.

**Recommendations**

- The Working Groups recommends that the full statement live in a location that is discoverable and accessible to users, whether that be Confluence or on the PUL website. We also recommend that the statement be managed in the same manner as similar library-wide statements such as the Statement on Language.
- The Working Group has authored a brief statement in case this version would be appropriate to include on any of PUL’s discovery platforms. Staff who oversee or manage these sites should decide whether this would be appropriate or not.
- The Working Group also recommends adding a “Harmful Content Statement” icon to all Figgy records that links to the full statement (mirroring how the “Rights and Permissions” (Takedown Policy) icon is currently accessible).
- We also recommend that instructions be provided for users who identify harmful content once the PUL feedback form is developed.
- Lastly, we recommend that DPOG and/or the Inclusive and Reparative Metadata Working Group assess and revise this statement and the feedback/reporting mechanism as needed on a regular (ideally annual) basis.