

# Censorship and Expurgation of the Selected Children's Literature

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**Abstract:** This study examines the issues of censorship and expurgation in children's literature, particularly in the works of James Barrie, Brothers Grimm, and Rudyard Kipling. It explores the critical theories of formalism, stylistics, and sociology, with a focus on the Social Interactionist Theory, Psychoanalytic criticism, and Speech Act Theory. The study aims to assess and provide solutions for the challenges faced by literature, considering the impact on young readers and their interpretation of literary genres. By analyzing the language and content of literary pieces, it investigates the influence on language development and the role of social interaction in meaning-making. The study addresses the need to consider the target audience, particularly children, and the stages of interpretation they may undergo. It highlights the importance of balancing artistic expression and social responsibility when publishing literary works for children. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of censorship and expurgation, while promoting responsible and appropriate literature for young readers.

**Keywords:** Censorship; Expurgation; Forms; Literary Approaches and Criticisms; Meaning and Universality

## 1. Introduction

For centuries, books have been written in an attempt to share knowledge, inspiration, and discoveries. Sometimes those books make such an impact that they change the way the world thinks about things. Books have done just that by providing readers an education in politics and government, literature, society, academic subjects such as science and math, and religion (Oedb, 2010). But for centuries, literary expression drives to create developments in constructing integration on literary remarks resulting to literary framework distortion which is the main motivation of the body to preserve and update the values and influences on every literary piece. The difficulties about literary expression is that, it reaches

the limitation and centers industrial priorities, political interest and fails to observe censorship that causes harm to young audiences or readers in their development, interpretation and acceptance. The issue of censorship as it relates to children's literature continues to provoke debate between opposing factions who each believe they have the best interest of children at heart. Deeply rooted in personal conviction, censorship is a perennial cultural flash-point, particularly when it involves children, whose own voice in the debate is muted at best. "*Their ignorance and luck of preconceptions,*" argues Julia Briggs, "leave children peculiarly vulnerable to outside influences" (Briggs, 2007; Lehigh, 2009).

Book censorship is when a person or group successfully imposes their values upon others by stifling words, images or ideas and preventing them from reaching the public marketplace of ideas. A challenge against a book is an attempt to remove or restrict materials at the request of a person or group, while banning is the actual removal of the book. The challenges are not just an individual expressing a point of view and complaining about the content of a book, but, rather, they are an effort to remove that book from the school's curriculum or library (Lehigh, 2009).

With the issues of censorship and expurgation on children's literature, parents all around the globe are fighting to lessen the effect or totally eradicate different kinds of reading materials which have sexually explicit, offensive language, and unsuited to the age group, which was published many years ago (Ballantine, 2014).

According to James Steel Smith of California State University, *Hansel and Gretel* is one of the famous German tales collected by the Brothers Grimm. It is thought by some to have underlying meaning that relates to children's psychological challenges. Peter Pan a pirate killing children is a story of Peter who teaches three children how to fly to Never Land so they will never have to grow up is still well known and loved among children. However, this piece of literature may have a great impact, on a child's connotation of growing up years. Stories like these can confuse children from reality to fantasy (Smith, 1967).

Another piece of literature reviewed by Smith is *The Jungle Book*. This reading material is inappropriate for children because it refers to the supernatural. Young children ages three to six may not know any small wild animals that are quite familiar to older children. Older children may have seen these animals in zoos and in their natural surroundings. They may have also read them in (Smith, 1967).

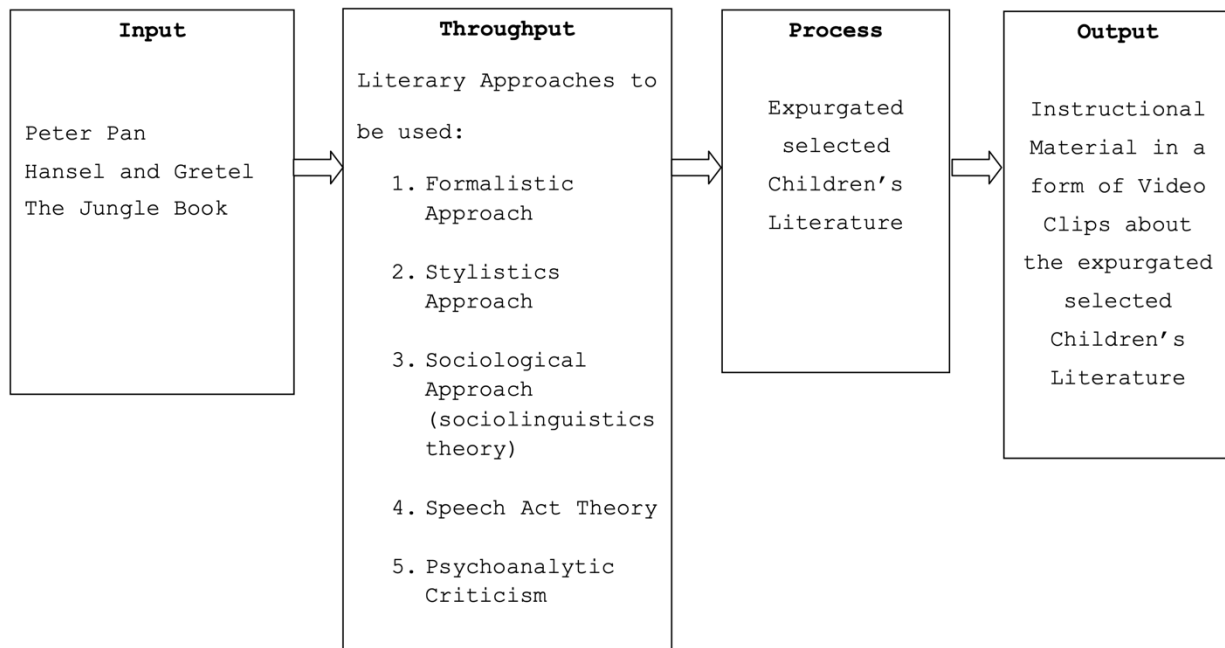
Since this study focuses on the censorship and expurgation in the selected children's literature, these selected literatures are considered fairy tales. Fairy tales are known to be controversial in nature and that the alterations done in it were made to match the needs of the society at a given point of time. Marcia Lane from Indiana University claims that decoding of story language is partly science, partly art, but not every translation is honest. Translator and storytellers frequently edit and rearrange the stories. Or quite innocently, a translator can simply miss a meaning or mistake a connotation (Lane, 1993).

Peter Pan, Jungle Book and Hansel and Gretel, have literary merits too; yet, many parents and school administrators agreed that these kinds of reading materials should be banned. In recent years, parents and others in some communities have opposed the reading of fantasy literature in school and have called for censorship of certain types of books. Quality in writing is never easy to define, but it has to do with originality and importance of ideas, imaginative use of language, and beauty of literary and artistic style that enable a work to remain fresh, interesting, and meaningful for years and years (Tomlinson, 1998).

The works included in this study are not only the factors for censorship and expurgation but also the values children can get to upgrade their social adaptation, change their outlook, broaden their interest, develop desirable attitudes and acceptance, refine their tastes towards literary, protection of young readers from the censored parts of a literary piece from the text influences and modify their interpretation about the meaning and form of the text expressed.

## 2. Methodology

The researcher used a descriptive method, incorporating content analysis as the approach. This study was brought out the words to be censored and how this censorship affects the literary text in terms of forms, meaning, and universality. The researcher analyzed how the works that were expurgated maintained the text's authenticity in terms of forms, meaning, and universality in the selected children's literature written by James Barrie, Brothers Grimm, and Rudyard Kipling respectively.



*Figure 1. Paradigm*

The content analysis involves gathering of information by analyzing written records and documents in order to solve a problem.

The method that was used gained a profound understanding of specific organization or event, rather than a surfaced description of a large sample of population. It focused on gathering of mainly verbal data rather than measurements; it gathered information which is not numerical in form.

Since the research is literary research, the method helped the researcher in its profound discussion about the subject.

### Sources of Data

The choice of literature pieces for this study, namely James Barrie's Peter Pan, Brothers Grimm's Hansel and Gretel, and Rudyard Kipling's The Jungle Book, was based on their relevance to the research topic of censorship and expurgation in children's literature. These stories were selected because they are well-known and widely studied works in the genre, and they have been subjected to discussions and controversies regarding their appropriateness for young readers. By examining these specific literary works, the study aims to explore the issues of censorship and expurgation within the context of these stories. These works serve as representative examples of children's literature that have faced scrutiny

and debates regarding their content. Analyzing these stories allows for a focused investigation into the specific challenges and considerations surrounding censorship and expurgation in the context of children's literature.

The secondary sources of data, including books, studies and theses, essays, commentaries, articles, the internet, and literary dictionaries, were chosen to provide additional insights, perspectives, and scholarly analysis on the topic. These sources contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the issues surrounding censorship and expurgation, and they provide a broader context for the study.

Overall, the selection of James Barrie's Peter Pan, Brothers Grimm's Hansel and Gretel, and Rudyard Kipling's The Jungle Book as primary sources, along with the inclusion of various secondary sources, allows for an in-depth exploration of censorship and expurgation in children's literature, considering their impact on forms, meaning, and universality. The goal of the research is to develop an instructional material that promotes the validity and reliability of these texts, taking into account different literary approaches to arrive at meaningful results.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

This part of the study presents the procedure on how the researcher will use the following approaches in gathering the data.

### **Formalistic Approach**

A formalistic approach to literature, once called New Criticism, involves a close reading of the text. Formalistic critics believe that all information essential to the interpretation of a work must be found within the work itself (Burriss, 1999).

The researcher used this approach in a way of examining a literary work regardless of generally established terms such as the name of the author, the author's background, or any biographical details.

The formalistic approach raised assessment concerning the authenticity of the text such as "How does the text participate in the interpretation of history? Specific question like, what roles does the text play in the circulation of discourses prevalent in the culture from which the work emerged, and/or how does the text's role change over the history of its reception (Tyson, Critical Theories Today: A User-Friendly Guide, 2006)?"

In this approach, the concern about the elements of the Selected Children's Literature will be treated in a structured way through answering the quests to

ensorship, supported with critical principles under Formalistic approach to maintain the authenticity of the text in terms of forms, meaning, and universality

### **Sociological Approach**

This approach examines literature in its larger social context; it codifies the literary strategies that are employed to represent social constructs through a sociological methodology. Sociological criticism analyzes how the social functions in literature and how literature works in society. This form of literary criticism was introduced by Kenneth Burke, a 20<sup>th</sup> century literary and critical theorist, whose article “Literature as Equipment for Living” outlines the specification and significance of such a critique (Burke, 2013).

The psychoanalytic approach helps the narrative on how can the character’s behavior, narrative events, and images be explained in psychoanalytic concepts of regression, crisis, projection, fear or fascination with death, sexuality—which includes romance as a primary indicator of psychological operations of ego, id, and superego Tyson arranged.

The sociological approach used in this study caters to the two influential principles that greatly combine to create a rigid identification of issues. Marxist and Psychoanalytic criticism supports the censorship and the expurgation of the texts to maintain the authenticity of the selected children’s literature in terms of forms, meaning, and universality of the text.

### **Stylistics Approach**

This approach explores how readers interact with the language of texts explain how we understand and are affect by texts when we read them. It combines linguistics analysis with knowledge of the psychological processes involved in reading. This approach will help to ensure the language and tone of the messages exchanged by each character are appropriate and do not sound offensive or derogatory. It also ensures the authenticity of the text in terms of forms, meaning, and universality

### **Treatment of the Data**

Descriptive method with the use of content analysis as the approach was applied to treat the data of this study. In this regard, the problem of the study was answered in the following manner:

Problem one used *Stylistic Approach* in censoring words that appears indecent and improper. This theory studies the varieties of language whose properties that language in context. The researcher analyzed the language of text in explaining how we understand, and are affected by text when one reads them. *Speech Act Theory* is also used in censoring words, utterances and how does the style of utterance established expressions that are offensive and exaggerated resulting to create ambiguity. *Sociolinguistic Theory* censored words in the form of *Taboo Language* where this approach treated words that are not socially acceptable and looks on the politeness of the language, examines impoliteness, politically correct or offensive, depending on whether the person's uttered words appear 'sweet talking', 'straight talking' or being deliberately rude (Allan & Burridge, 2006). Lastly, *Social Psychology* is being used in considering the characters that are affected in the style of language, theme, and expressions upon establishing censorship in children's literature by Erick Erickson in his formulated developmental stages review as to how children during their growing years adapted values, practices, and behavior from their environment and peers. This social psychology involves Theory of Imitation by Baldwin which explains social responses.

Problem two used literature and society to analyze the problem as a whole and became aware of how literature and society are merged together to produce a unified effect. Like, the researcher also used speech act theory which may be included in the context of utterance and paralinguistic features which may contribute to the meaning of the interaction.

Problem three, established the creation of an Instructional material through Audio-visual presentation following the model of Elizabeth Claire, which is "*Dangerous Synonyms and Related Words*". The model created by Claire identifies the words that established violence, blasphemy, off-color words, and obscene words which is classified and supplied with the different used of words and how it treated the identified censored words into euphemistic way. The model classified the formal use of words, general use, euphemism, children's words, slang, and vulgar words.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the classification of censored words and suggested words in the selected children's literature.

Table 1:

Censored word(s)	Classification	Selection	Suggested word(s)
cockier boy	sexually explicit words	Peter Pan	arrogant or boastful boy
silly	off-color word	Peter Pan	weak, helpless, and plain
ass	sexually explicit word	Peter Pan	human
silly ass	off-color, sexually explicit word	Peter Pan	weak human
gay children	homophobic language	Peter Pan	Happy or cheerful children
fool	off-color word	Hansel and Gretel, The Jungle Book	weak, helpless, and plain
stupid goose	expletive oaths	Hansel and Gretel	weak, helpless, and plain
wicked children	expletive oaths	Hansel and Gretel	unpleasant children

Table 2 shows the censored theme and suggested in the selected children’s literature.

Table 2:

Censored theme	Classification	Selection	Suggested theme
killing and shooting	violent theme	Peter Pan	Magical theme /Diplomatic theme
		Hansel and Gretel	
		The Jungle Book	
Sharp-pointed materials	rebellious theme	Peter Pan	Magical theme /Diplomatic theme
		Hansel and Gretel	
		The Jungle Book	
kiss		Peter Pan	



	erotic or obscene theme	Hansel and Gretel	Friendship (embrace and shake hands)
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The words that are censored are classified as sexually explicit, off-color, violent, obscene, expletive oaths, and homophobic respectively identified from the plot of the selected children’s literature. The tables showed suggested words for expurgation in maintaining the authenticity of the text/s in terms of forms, meaning and universality. It represents the model developed in this study to supply the urgency of censorship and expurgation in publishing Children’s Literature as suggested idea. This model is used in developing the instructional materials of the study.

**Expurgated texts that maintained the authenticity of forms, meaning and universality**

<b>Peter Pan</b>	<b>Forms</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Universality/Children’s Words</b>
	cockier boy	Sexually motivated boy	Arrogant boy
	Silly ass	Stupid, fool; buttocks, private parts of human body	Weak, helpless, and plain, weak human/heinie, coolie
	Gay children	homosexual	Happy, cheerful children/third sex
	Killing and shooting	To end someone’s life	Magical theme/Diplomatic Theme
	Sharp-pointed materials	Dangerous tools	Magical theme/Diplomatic Theme
	kiss	To touch (someone with your lips as a greeting or as a way of showing love or sexual attraction)	Friendship (embrace and shake hands)

<b>Hansel and Gretel</b>	<b>Forms</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Universality/Children's Words</b>
	fool	Stupid, silly	Weak, helpless, and plain
	Stupid goose		
	Killing	The act of ending someone's life	Magical theme /Diplomatic theme
	Sharp-pointed materials	Dangerous tools	
	kiss	To touch (someone with your lips as a greeting or as a way of showing love or sexual attraction)	Friendship (embrace and shake hands)

<b>Jungle Book</b>	<b>Forms</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Universality/Children's Words</b>
	fool	Stupid, silly	Weak, helpless, and plain
	killing	The act of ending someone's life	Magical theme /Diplomatic theme

The findings from the analysis of the selected children's literature (Peter Pan, Hansel and Gretel, and The Jungle Book) in terms of forms, meaning, and universality provide insights into the potential issues of censorship and expurgation in these stories.

In Peter Pan, certain words and phrases are identified as having different forms, meanings, and universality when interpreted by children. For example, the term "cockier boy" is interpreted as a sexually motivated boy, highlighting a potential concern regarding explicit or inappropriate content. Additionally, words like "silly ass" have multiple meanings, including "stupid" or "fool" as well as referring to buttocks or private parts, suggesting a need for careful consideration of context and audience. The notion of "gay children" is also noted, which could be interpreted as a reference to homosexuality or simply cheerful and happy children. The presence of themes related to killing, shooting, and sharp-pointed materials raises questions about the appropriateness of violence in children's literature. However, it is worth noting that these themes are balanced with magical and diplomatic themes in the story.

In the case of Hansel and Gretel, similar patterns emerge. The term "fool" is seen as having the meaning of "stupid" or "silly," but it also implies weakness and helplessness. The presence of killing and sharp-pointed materials again raises concerns about violence in children's literature. However, the act of kissing is interpreted in the context of friendship rather than as a romantic or sexual gesture, emphasizing a more innocent interpretation.

In *The Jungle Book*, the term "fool" is again associated with being silly or stupid, indicating a common theme across the selected literature. The presence of killing is once again observed, suggesting the need for consideration regarding violence in children's stories.

Overall, the analysis highlights the importance of examining the forms, meanings, and universality of words and themes in children's literature. It underscores the potential for different interpretations and the need for careful consideration when addressing sensitive or potentially inappropriate content. The findings contribute to the understanding of the challenges faced in censorship and expurgation, as well as the importance of maintaining an appropriate balance between magical or diplomatic themes and potentially problematic elements in children's literature.

#### 4. Conclusions

In the light of the findings of the story, the following are the conclusions that the researcher had drawn:

1. The findings emphasize the significance of examining the forms, meanings, and universality of words and themes in children's stories. The interpretations of certain words in *Peter Pan* (1911), such as "cockier boy" and "silly ass," raise concerns about explicit or inappropriate content and highlight the need for careful consideration of context and audience. The presence of themes involving killing, shooting, and sharp-pointed materials in *Peter Pan* (1911) and *Hansel and Gretel* (1812), *Jungle Book* (1890) brings attention to the appropriateness of violence in children's literature. However, it is important to note that these themes are balanced with magical and diplomatic elements.

2. Furthermore, the analysis underscores the need to consider different interpretations of words and actions in children's literature. The term "gay children" in Peter Pan can be understood as a reference to homosexuality or simply cheerful and happy children, showcasing the potential for varied understandings. The act of kissing in Hansel and Gretel is interpreted in the context of friendship, highlighting the importance of recognizing innocent interpretations rather than assuming romantic or sexual connotations.
3. Overall, the findings emphasize the complex nature of censorship and expurgation in children's literature. It is crucial to navigate the delicate balance between maintaining the authenticity of the texts and ensuring that they are appropriate for their intended audience. By examining forms, meanings, and universality, this analysis contributes to a better understanding of the challenges involved in creating and evaluating children's literature, ultimately guiding efforts to provide engaging and suitable content for young readers.

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