Reading *The Catcher in the Rye* in the EFL Classroom

*A didactic perspective of the reasons and consequences for banning or censoring literature*

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Abstract
By discussing the ethical issues with banned and censored literature, students can learn how to approach a text written in different contexts. The essay brings to light the triggered instances, which lead to banning *The Catcher in the Rye* in American schools in the 1950s. Using a cultural studies approach allows an in-depth investigation of the patterns in the triggering instances and leads to findings of possible reasons for ban- and censorship. These instances, sums up to; unrealistic protagonist, vulgar language, blasphemy and a pessimistic and depressing point of view. To introduce these instances into a Swedish classroom can hopefully bring an insight into another historical time and another context, to better understand the Swedish context, e.g. democratic values as well as freedom of speech.

Keywords
The Catcher in the Rye, banned literature, censored literature, EFL classroom, cultural studies, triggered instances, ideologies, America, Sweden

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1. Introduction

“The mark of the immature man is that he wants to die nobly for a cause, while the mark of the mature man is that he wants to live humbly for one” (Salinger 188). This quote is taken from the protagonist Holden Caulfield in the novel *The Catcher in The Rye* (1951) by J.D. Salinger. He is not the common protagonist but more of an antihero. He fights the world with strong feelings, reactions and obsessive lying. Moreover, Holden has a sensitivity that prevents him from finding his place in the world; a feeling to which many teenagers can relate (Privitera 203). *The Catcher in the Rye* is a coming of age novel, where the protagonist searches for a purpose in life and dreams about becoming “the catcher in the rye”; a savior for children. Holden hates many things and perhaps what he hates most is adults and their way of living in society.

*The Catcher in the Rye* received both praise and criticism at the time when it was first published. In schools, it was highly censored or banned and teachers who used the book for educational purposes could lose their teaching positions. Today it is considered a classic and is one of the most widely read and discussed works in the American literary canon (Privitera 203). Because of its honesty, norm criticism and criticism in reception it has received throughout many years, there are possibilities to work with this novel as part of a theme on banned books in the classroom. Niccolini claims that “cultural constructions of youth tend to be focused on notions of teens as predictable and hardwired for certain behaviors” (23) and that “nothing sparks more interest in a book than mentioning it’s been banned” (23). Since society is constructed with this prejudiced image of adolescents, which connects well with Holden Caulfield’s characteristics, it is possible to challenge these prejudices in the classroom in a way that becomes relevant in a Swedish context as well.

In addition, Rossuck states that the there is no time like the present to explore censorship and no better place than the English classroom. She further claims that the project of working with banned books is highly-motivating for students, since they can put the literary analysis to a real-world use (67). By making students aware of triggering instances for banning or censoring a novel, it is also possible to teach students about historical issues and other cultural contexts. The syllabus for English 6 in Sweden does state: “students should be given the possibility to discuss and reflect on living conditions, social issues and cultural features in different contexts where English is used” (Nat. Ag. For Ed. “Syllabus, English 6” 7). Therefore, it is essential to discuss banned books in America even from a Swedish perspective, since it is important for
students to understand other cultural contexts and the consequences banned books attain on a national as well as an international level.

The main reason why a book is banned is often because of the sex and sexual play it contains, and the second most cited reason is the offensive language (Niccolini 25), which could very well be the reason why *The Catcher in the Rye* was banned when it was first published in the 1950s. In either case, it is “one of the most widely read and discussed works in the American literary canon” (Privitera 203). However, Niccolini stresses the importance of banned books for adolescents and states that “every burned book enlightens the world” (23) and “banned books are often complex, surprising, and confounding. They shake up expectations, challenge norms, and at times raise interminable questions. They’re complex and should be valued in our classrooms, like the adolescents we teach” (27).

The aim of the essay is therefore to analyze banned literature. The essay will analyze the triggered instances through cultural studies to try to find out if the instances are connected to cultural influences in the 1940s-1950s. The method which will be used is discourse analysis, which stems from a structuralist idea that reality is linguistically structured. That human beings construct the reality and therefore, there can be no reality independent on language. Yet, since the essay investigates banned literature in a cultural context of a certain time, the analysis will focus on the reception the novel received but will also consider the written language which caused that reception.

Since “it is with the discovery of patterns of a characteristic kind that any useful cultural analysis begins” (Bennet 547), the comments in the reception, will be used as the central core of the essay to discover patterns in the written form. These located patterns will be concluded into triggering instances for ban- and censorship. Thereby, the essay investigates the written identical pieces and shared ideas within a society, which banned the novel from schools, from the time when it was published, till today in the 21\textsuperscript{th} century, and the consequences that might bring on society. The essay argues for using banned books in the EFL-classroom in general and *The Catcher in the Rye* in particular and explains ways to work with the novel in the EFL-classroom in a Swedish, 21\textsuperscript{st} century context.
2. Cultural studies

‘Cultural studies’ is often explained as the study of contemporary culture/literature (Storey 15). However, Barker and Jane argue that cultural studies has always been a multidisciplinary field of enquiry that blurs the foundations between itself and other ‘subjects’ (5). Since the field has multi-disciplinarians and cultural studies has been reluctant to draw on any historical lines where it ends and where it begins (7), other factors must also be considered.

Other descriptions concerning cultural studies, Barker and Jane explain as: firstly, “it is specified as practices, institutions, and systems of classifications which are inculcated in populations’ values, beliefs, competencies, routines of life and habitual forms of conduct” (7). Thus, cultural studies is in part classifications which are made by social values and beliefs or certain habits in a specific social context. Secondly, “cultural studies seeks to explore the connections between different forms of power and to develop ways of thinking about culture and power that can be utilized by agents in the pursuit of change” (7). Thus, it explores the connections between multiple values and habits in a social context to develop and criticize culture and power in a social context as well as the world.

Based on the statements just described, cultural studies can be explained as a way for a specific society to look upon the world (Storey 15), and there is a certain cultural construction (a certain prejudiced image) to be found in society when, for instance, considering adolescents’ behavior. “Contradictory, insecure, rebellious, and moody”, are some of the notions of behavior Niccolini mentions in a stereotypical adolescent (22) and many of the qualities can be found in the character of Holden in *The Catcher in the Rye*. However, Lisa Privitera claims that Holden is not the stereotypical teen found in many novels (203), since movies and novels usually paint an ideal picture of reality as well as people in it and fails to view the actual reality. Thus, a paradox between the stereotypes of adolescents in novels compared to reality is visible. *The Catcher in the Rye* helps the reader to view a more honest picture of adolescents’ feelings and thoughts. Therefore, an example of a cultural construction is stereotypes that are based on the cultural values in society and are found in different behaviors and qualities of that society.

Another way to explain cultural studies is, according to Storey, as an approach that insists by analyzing the culture of a society, the textual forms, and documented
practices of that culture, it is possible to reconstitute the patterned behavior and constellations of ideas shared by the men and women who produce and consume the texts and practices of that society (23). Therefore, by analyzing the texts and documents written in a specific culture and time, it is possible to visualize the values and opinions of the people who lived in that society. Furthermore, it can hopefully explain why a novel like *The Catcher in the Rye* was banned from schools, even though it speaks so well to adolescents.

Storey further refers to theories stated by Stuart Hall and states that Stuart Hall discusses that “to understand a text, we must locate it in its moment of production analyzing the historical conditions that produced it” (56). Therefore, it is essential to identify the dominant ideologies in the United States in the 1940-50s to be able to interpret the cultural context of America in that time. Thus, the cultural surroundings will be the focus in this essay and less focus will be put on the actual aesthetic form of the novel. This, because of the analytic focus on the reception the novel received from both critics as well as ordinary people, rather than the written aesthetic form which the novel possesses. Therefore, to contextualize the novel from a cultural studies standpoint, discourse analysis will be used to investigate ideological aspects.

### 2.1 Ideologies in the 1940-50s’ America

Cultural studies include one part that focuses on ideologies. The ‘ideological divide’ characterizes the relations between The Soviet and the West of the post-war era after 1945, both sides attempting to secure their positions, which later lead to the fight against communism (and Stalin) in the United States (Foertsch 25). A ideological divide means that society is divided between two or more social opinions or values. Therefore, this essay discusses these ideologies which created a divide in society and which fought simultaneously for greater values in society in the 1940-1950s. Furthermore, it explains how these ideologies made an impact on society as well as people in it and therefore, led to banned literature because of these ideologies. Even though the *The Catcher in the Rye* was not published until 1951, Salinger wrote the novel in 1940s and was probably much influenced by the post-war society and culture.

There are many competing definitions of ideology, but Storey explains it as; “the mental frameworks – languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representations – which different classes and social groups deploy to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works” (17). Storey
claims that an ideology is the categories and concepts in which distinct groups of the society place themselves in order to make sense of society (17). Thus, human beings need to categorize themselves to function and survive in society and it is within these categories a ideology creates itself.

According to Hall, another definition of ideology is that “each culture has its own way of classifying the world we live in and ideology has become a material force; a site of struggle and a stake; a price to be won” (Storey 120). He further explains that ideology is an accepted standard of a culture; a kind of normality which a certain cultural context is sought-after to have or to become, e.g. sexual restraint. A historical context is dependent on a balance between different material forces (120-124). With too many ideologies at once, society would collapse. Therefore, when one ideology breaks through, struggles and tries to win the prize, another must make room for the new ideology. Still, even though a society would collapse with too many ideologies, there are multiple values as part of a society at once. Only, the dominant force which drives a society forward with its civil rules and laws (what Hall describes as the material force which wins the price and becomes normality) cannot have more than one or two, much like the explanation Barker and Jane discuss in the next paragraph.

Barker and Jane explain ideology as a historically specific understanding that obscures and maintains power (15) (e.g. the view different people – part of a society – have on different nations). This explanation is the one the essay will focus on the most, since ideologies is an idea or representation of a cultural construction which has the most power in a certain time (e.g. the belief in God). In the following essay, the focus will therefore contain the representations of ideas and values, which had the most power in the 1940-1950’s America – the time of the postwar.

2.1.2. Literature

It is difficult to ignore the vital historical context of the major novels of the 1940-50s, where the war novels’ depiction of conflict is fundamental to our understanding of them today (Foertsch 36). Therefore, in the 21st century it is essential to consider the historical aspects of the novel, especially in a cultural studies analysis, which will be analyzed.

Many of the literary works between 1910-1945 were inspired by the two great world-wars and American fiction was divided in two major categories; the war novel and the American South (Foertsch 33). Although The Catcher in the Rye is not actually
mentioned as a ‘war novel’, it suits the description of one very well. Foertsch claims that a war novel is characterized as:

Any canonical novel focused on the war itself and/or on an alienated, seemingly shell-shocked, solitary male – often at war with (or defeated by) an undifferentiated, uncaring mass society. These pushed-to-the-limit loners enlarge upon, or in certain cases anticipate, the specific intellectual phenomenon of existentialism that swept philosophical and literary circles in the United States. The existentialism was defined as the moral choices one forces to make when one realizes the pointless absurdity of life existence. (Foertsch 34)

However, the anti-war sentiments sprang mostly from conservative civilians and novelists depicted politics in much of the literature at the time (33). In other words, literature in the 1940-50s contained many conservative ideas and values (e.g. Protestant religious beliefs, sexual restraint and republic ruling), which is perhaps not surprising since much of the literature was still written by the privileged, white male, which is also the case with *The Catcher in the Rye*.

### 2.1.3. Education

Schools and education were highly influenced by the religious ideology in the 1940-1950s America and is still to this day. Protestant education continued to be promoted and taught in public schools at the end of the nineteenth century and Protestant religious instruction was still common in public schools well into the 1960s (Carrier 166). Regular Protestant prayer and Bible reading, for example, were central to the plans for a universal public-school system at the end of the nineteenth century (Allitt 17).

A nationwide hysteria regarding Communist infiltration ruined the career of many in government, entertainment and education (Foertsch 26), since the 1950s’ America feared anyone or anything that seemed different. Radio and television shows played on these fears and spread paranoia nationwide. Schools showed children propaganda films, where they depicted communism as hell on earth (Carrier 128-129).

### 2.1.4. Religious beliefs

American religious groups were among the most enthusiastic anti-Communists, and among those especially Catholics (Allitt 32). The overwhelming majority of Americans were Protestant, Catholic or Jews. Protestants were numerically dominant and made a mark on America’s institutions, its moral and civil traditions (Allitt 16-17). In other
words, as stated in the education section, the Protestant religion was the ruling ideology in post-war American society. Still, Darwin's theory of evolution questioned the beliefs, and a debate began if the study of evolution should take place in school (19). Teachers who tried to use evolution theories could risk losing their jobs, much like many could who used *The Catcher in the Rye* (Foertsch 26). Therefore, Protestant beliefs still ruled the schools as well as society in whole and it was difficult to fight against it.

Catholicism and Christianity were part of the popular press and had high influence on society, which can be found in newspapers as well as the following statement on the atomic bomb that fell over Hiroshima in Japan: “We thank God it has come to us instead of our enemies. And we pray that he may guide us to use it in His ways and for his purposes” (Foertsch 18). The fact that God and prayers have major impact on tragedies and events in the American society is also evident in the post-war era, where many Americans craved spiritual aid and comfort in the harsh circumstances of the war. Previously indifferent men suddenly began to pray when they went into combat (Allitt 14). Moreover, preachers voiced that the world was coming to a crisis and that everyone should prepare for the end of the world (23). By the end of the 1940s, many Americans were anxious, adrift, unsure of their identity and purpose (26).

In the 21st century, religion is still a vital part of American culture. Carrier even states that Americans are many times more religious than other people (108) and in 2008 as many as 76 % claimed to be Christians (107). However, the religious beliefs are beginning to lose its dominant power, since approximately 15 % of the Americans in the same study gave the response as having no religion or were atheists or agnostics (108). Even so, a 2011 Gallop Poll found that 92 % of Americans still believe in God (108) and atheists beliefs still have a great struggle in America and are considered immoral, wicked and angry (109). Carrier writes that out of the Swedish population, only 23% of the people reported a belief in God (109) and therefore, are substantially less religious than the American population.

### 2.2. Reception

In the following section the reception on the novel will be stated, i.e. how the novel was received and what kind of criticism it collected in both United States’ population and the Swedish population. The section contains 3 parts: One method section, which explains how the reception is used in the essay, one section about the comments from the United States and finally one section on the comments from the Swedish population.
2.2.1. Method

To be able to find and analyze the triggering instances (my own analytical tool, which describes the provoking written parts in the novel which led to ban or censorship in schools) in the latter analysis, one must consider the comments and criticism the novel received at the time when it was published, together with the criticism it still receives in a contemporary context. The criticism in the reception is analyzed through a cultural studies approach. Tony Bennet states that:

Cultural Studies identify three distinctive aspects of culture so defined: first, it interprets culture as ‘the whole pattern or configuration of values and meanings in a society’; second, it includes all forms of culture, whether ‘high’, ‘popular’ or ‘low’; and third, it views these expressive forms as an integral part of social life. (Bennet 546)

Thus, the comments found in the reception has been researched, together with the discourse analytical tool. The most common criticism has then been gathered into patterns, to be able to view the ideological values in the expressive forms of the reception.

Since the essay investigates triggering instances for banning and censoring the novel in the United States and how to use this in a Swedish classroom, the content in the reception will contain criticism within both the United States and Sweden and compare these two contexts. Thus, to find whether the reception has changed and how it can be used in the classroom based on the criticism it received. The reception contains responses from both critics and ordinary people, which is why references as Common Sense Media, Goodreads and Boksidan from the common people is considered. The reason for this mixture between ordinary people’s reviews and critics’ reviews, is that it was often ordinary people (like parents and teachers) who thought the novel was inappropriate as teaching material and wanted it banned and therefore their comments is closer to the school context.

When explaining the source, used in the essay to analyze the reception in the United States into distinct patterns, Niccolini writes that:

Common Sense Media, offers to “rate, educate and advocate for kids, parents, and schools. “Common Sense Media assumes that all parents want to police what their kids are reading, and they use the following emoticons as warnings: bombs for violence, lips for sex, #! for language, $ for consumerism, and martini glasses for drinking, drugs, and smoking. In addition to rating books in these five
categories, the site also decides whether books have any educational value and redeeming role models” (Niccolini 24-25).

Moreover, the site Good reads is the world’s largest site for book recommendations and their mission is to help people find and share books they love. The site consists of several million books, 68 million reviews and 65 million members. Further, the books are rated and commented on by the members themselves (Goodreads).

In addition, similar to the American page Goodreads, the sources used to analyze the reception in a Swedish context is Boksidan, which is a Swedish site featuring different genres and top lists. Members can view book reviews as well as write their own. You can also receive suggestions on novels through links to other sites (Boksidan).

2.2.2. The United States

When a novel or any piece of literature is published in the United States, critics from newspapers, magazines, and various other sources flock to interpret the book and critique its style. The same was true for Salinger's novel (Lomazoff).

Many comments have been made on the protagonist Holden Caulfield and common critique of the novel, is that the character Holden Caulfield is unreliable, an asshole, unrealistic or “the problem is that he is the biggest phony he knows” (Goodreads). One parent pointed out that; “the protagonist is not in the least bit endearing or enticing. He is just incredibly annoying, and I did not care in the least what happened to him” (Common sense media).

Some critics highly criticize the cursing and the coarse language. “It is the ramblings of a selfish, spoiled jerk who squeezes any positivity out of the story with profane language and constant moaning” (Common Sense Media). There are in fact, people from all over America who to this day, have problems with the language, e.g. a girl who wrote a book-review in Goodreads wrote: “I read this book for the first time in the 8th grade. I had to get my mom to sign a permission slip because of the cursing”. The comment shows that the language is still an issue in the United States in many schools. Other common comments from adolescents who have read it in school are; “there are a lot of swearing, sexual references and no moral” (Common Sense Media). It is still interesting that more adults than adolescents seem to be against the content of the story; “Never let a child read this! Terrible!” (Common Sense Media) and parents have rated the book not appropriate form kids under 15 compared to kids who only says 13.
Finally, many religious aspects become visible in American reviews, where Virgilian Peterson in New York Herald Tribune commented on Holden Caulfield's innocence. Peterson wrote that Holden was on the side of the angels, despite his contamination by vulgarity, lust, lies, temptations, recklessness, and cynicism (Peterson qtd. in Lomazoff). Another comment concerning religious beliefs was; “For my son to read God's name being taken in vane over & (sic) over was disturbing” (Common Sense Media).

2.2.3. Sweden

The Catcher in the Rye is sometimes pointed out as the model of the teenage-novel and it was first translated into Swedish in 1953. Teenage-novels are characterized by breaking norms and introducing topics that had earlier been strikingly taboo, e.g. sex, alcohol and violence. Since the teenager was acknowledge as a period in life separated from adults and children for the first time, authority of the books became challenged (Wright 506), i.e. who was the books for and who had the right to ban novels from the education. Thus, the novel became valuable as a literature form in Sweden at the time. However, it was difficult for society to decide who would be in charge of the text, and teachers could therefore, receive trouble if deciding to distribute the novel to students.

The Catcher in the Rye as a teenage-novel has received both criticism and praise in Sweden. Comments similar to many of the comments from Americans include; “unreliable, unrealistic, annoying and obviously deranged main character” (my translation) (Boksidan). Some adolescents even complain that the novel is no different from any other random teenage-story and one person states that; “the description is brilliant but no more informative than a visit at a secondary school” (my translation) (Boksidan).

Despite the similar comments between Americans and Swedes, there seems to be a higher understanding for Holden’s pessimism and depression and furthermore, there are much less comments on the swearing and vulgar language in the reviews from a Swedish point of view. “Holden Caulfield is not discreet with his dislike to most things in the world. It perhaps does not sound like fun, but it is really entertaining. The plot is about Holden, who goes through an existential crisis” (my translation) (Boksidan). One girl states that; “the character of Holden is both gender-less and class-less” (my translation), which makes her connect to the novel even though Holden is a boy and from a richer family than hers (Boksidan). It also seems to contain much less complaints
on sexual references, swearing and on subjects of alcohol, drugs and smoking, which can be found in a great part of the reception in the American context. However, this might not be that surprising, given the higher domination in religious beliefs and less acceptance towards converse values in America.

Nonetheless, Swedes on the other hand might have trouble understanding the cultural context where the plot takes place, since America lives with diverse values and ideologies compared to Sweden. That is why it is important to educate students in the American context if using the novel in school, for better understanding other perspectives and to be able to interpret the message.

3. Reasons for banning or censoring *The Catcher in the Rye* and the consequences banning or censoring literary texts could induce on society

The following section researched and analyzed the shared ideas found in the reception the novel have received and contains the probable reasons for banning or censoring *The Catcher in the Rye*. The shared ideas in society is then collected into patterns. These patterns is the analyzed triggering instances found in each subheading below. Also included in the section below is the consequences banning or censoring books could bring on society.

3.1. Triggering instances

To be able to work with the novel in the EFL-classroom, teachers need to have a historicist understanding of the surrounding culture from the place and time when it was first published. Storey explains cultural studies as an approach that insists that; by analyzing the textual forms of a society it is possible to reconstitute the shared ideas of the men and women who lived in that society (23). Therefore, by using triggering instances (the provoking written pieces in the novel, which lead to banning or censoring it in schools) as a textual form and the analytical tool, it is possible to state the reasons for getting the novel *The Catcher in the Rye* censored or banned in the 1950s and argue for the consequences for censoring a literary work. The phrase “triggering instances” is my own made up literary term, hence, it is one I do see fit into the research of analyzing reception of a novel.
Additionally, Bennet claims that cultural studies is about the pattern or configuration of values and meanings in a society found in expressive forms, which are part of social life (546). Since cultural studies is used to find patterns in the novel which can be located to the ideological values in society, the triggering instances found in the novel (which contains on peoples’ shared ideas and values) will be collected into patterns to conclude which ones is the most common and therefore should have led to banishment or censoring in the American society. The patterns are concluded and explained in the divided subheadings below.

Unrealistic protagonist

One of the comments the novel often received in America as well as in Sweden is the fact that the protagonist Holden Caulfield is unrealistic, since Holden is against many of the middle-class values, even though he lives by them. Thereto, the main reason for Holden Caulfield to be interpreted as unrealistic is when he contradicts himself. Privitera explains that Holden Caulfield is not the common protagonist in a story, but someone who lacks heroic qualities, (203), meaning that Holden has no courage or morality. Still, he does not care about being liked or putting on a show for the people reading his story, hence he does not want to be a hero. He does not care about being a ‘good’ guy or to fit into society’s codes and rules – or so he says. He does put on a show at times in the novel, when he contradicts himself: “The navy guy and I told each other we were glad to’ve met each other. Which always kills me. I’m always saying ‘glad to’ve met you’ to somebody I’m not at all glad to have met. If you want to stay alive, you have to say that stuff, though” (Salinger 94). However, some of the critics claim that Holden is distressed often by the occasional realization that he, must be phony to exist in the adult world, which means that he only does what he must to survive and be accepted.

Even so, Yazdanjoo et. al. claim that it is true that Holden dares to question social arrangements, yet it seems erroneous to take him as a rebellious person in the strict sense of the word (765). Furthermore, they explain that Holden behaves quite politely in front of his “mentor” (Spencer) and that a distinction should be made between Holden’s inner and outer world when using words like “rebellious” or “nonconformist” (765). Hence, Holden Caulfield is perhaps only rebellious inside his inner self, while on the outside he is trying to behave and fit into the ideologies dominated by society.
This confusing and rebellious mind, yet behavioral exterior, is a classic distinction of a teenager’s thoughts in a teenage-novel (Wright 506). It explains someone who is not ready for adulthood and the obligations the adult part of life entails. Furthermore, Alyssa Niccolini states that adolescence is often characterized with thinking you know it all but actually being utterly ignorant (23). Still, it is visible in the reception that it is mainly adults who complain about the unrealistic aspects in the novel, while many adolescents feel related to the plot as well as the protagonist. Thus, by taking away some of the content in the novel or everything entirely, the conflict between adults and adolescents will perhaps not be seen. Also, since this conflict is one of the key aspects to understand the novel, censoring this part would be a mistake.

It is fair to say that it is not strange that many readers interpret the protagonist as unrealistic, due to the interpretations stated above. However, Holden Caulfield is a complex character and the fact that he contradicts himself should not be perceived as criticism but seen as one of the essential cores of the story. Thus, by censoring pieces of the novel, this essential core risks to be deleted. Also, if a school was to ban the novel, it would delete the discussions on challenging stereotypes and students’ chance to process their confusing thoughts and experiences in the world.

Vulgar language

Banned books bring up uneasy topics—topics that often make adults uneasy (Niccolini 27), which means that it is more often adults than teenagers how have a problem with the content of a banned book. Terms like “vulgar” and trashy” have been used for a long time to criticize popular entertainment and its consumers, even though cultural studies works to remedy this disparity. In fact, “the deployment of these expressions have remained remarkably stable over time” (Barker 54-55). Perhaps not at least in America, where religion and belief in God is still a dominant ideology in society and where The Catcher in the Rye is still banned in some schools. As stated in the theory section in reception, many critics have commented on the vulgar language in the novel and—along with many parents for children, who have had the book assigned to them in school—tried to get it banned because of it. Some examples of vulgar language the novel contains are; “bastard”, “goddamn”, “touchy as hell”, “damn”, “soar as hell”, “sad as hell”, “swear to God”, (Salinger 1, 13, 57, 72, 86, 90, 100, 115, 122, 125, 129, 134, 170, 194 etc.), which the protagonist uses in every other sentence throughout the novel.

With that said, you could understand why readers would react, since it contains much
more vulgar language than many other books. Even so, that creates the authenticity and honesty that is *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Even though vulgar language is an essential factor with the novel, Niccolini explains that attempts to control language have a long history with youth (25). Moreover, she goes on by stating; “when we balk at a text because of its use of profanity… we should consider if we are protecting our students or ourselves from feeling uncomfortable” (25). When analyzing the reception, it is visible that adults seem to have greater issues with the language than adolescents do, for example: “Never let a child read this! Terrible!” (Common Sense Media). Therefore, by removing the vulgar language, part of the honesty that adolescents seem to appreciate vanishes and as Niccolini further states; “it is Holden’s angsty use of slang and profanity which set him apart from adults” (25). Thus, it is the conflict between adults and adolescents which constitutes one of the most crucial factors of the novel and the most interesting to analyze. Furthermore, any reception on vulgar language in a Swedish context cannot be found, which means that a novel like *The Catcher in the Rye* might be easier to use in a Swedish context than in an American one (at least in the aspect of vulgar language).

Another reason why the language is important for the plot and interpretation is the fact that it is used for expressing solitude, isolation and repressed anger. As Yazdanjoo et. al. explain;

Holden uses language as an ideological toolkit. Language provides Holden with the opportunity to both assert and differentiate himself from others. This, instead of engaging himself with vandalism or anarchism, Holden resorts to language to express his raging behavior. Although Holden belongs to an educated Northeastern American family and attends an elite school like Pencey, he uses language in a manner quite different from a WASP1. (764)

Clearly, Holden plays with language by using his own grammatical ‘rules’ and structure. “She sings it very Dixieland and whorehouse” (124), “vomity-looking” (83), and “sonuvabitch” (26) are examples of Holden Caulfield’s use of language. “Such unusual structures represent Holden’s disobeying personality and mocking attitude toward norms and prescriptions” (Yazdanjoo et. al. 764), since language is sometimes used in novels to state a character’s longing or resentment towards a situation or a way of life. In Holden’s case, he wants to not only disconnect himself from the “WASP”-way of life, but also from his parents and adults in general. Hence, it would be a mistake

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1 Acronym for white Anglo-Saxon Protestant in the 1960s and refers to an upper- or middle-class American white Protestant, considered to be a member of the most powerful group in society.
to censor or ban the novel from schools due to language issues, since it brings a deeper understanding of both plot and protagonist.

Depressing and pessimistic

In a great part of the comments from Americans, a wish for innocence in literature is visible, where readers try to explain Holden’s unruly behavior by referring to religious aspects and that Holden has simply been contaminated by evil thoughts and actions. Of course, one could argue that the reader might be referring to the difference between Holden’s inner and outer self, as stated above. Nonetheless, a resentment towards “bad guys” is evident in this statement and perhaps even a critical statement against reading about depressing things. Moreover, the comments seem to be discriminating the stereotypical “bad” behavior. However, Chambers explains that previous knowledge has a profound impact on how we look upon a new text, and if a reader has not faced a certain type of text before it is likely that the reader will not be prepared for it (155). In the same way, the comment on Holden’s contaminated behavior might be something the reader has not faced before and is, in turn, not ready for it. Thus, the reader might not understand the evident image of Holden’s pessimistic views or his behavior. In either way, the importance of lifting these pessimistic literary texts to the surface becomes evident due to criticize the terms “bad” and “good” behavior.

The comments on depressing and pessimistic thoughts in the novel can be found in multiple places, but an example of the pessimistic view Holden Caulfield possesses is in the very beginning of the book, where he says:

If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you’ll probably want to know, is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don’t feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth. (Salinger 1)

Nevertheless, much like everything else in The Catcher in the Rye, there are purposes with the pessimistic language and depressive views Holden presents to his readers. Hale claims that Dickens’s great novel David Copperfield is a felt presence, e.g. in the hero’s name. The surnames “Copperfield” and “Caulfield” are very similar. Obviously, they share the initial C and concluding -field. They also have a very similar phonological patterning. Thus, a connection towards intertextual material is visible in the novel and intertexts (a text based on another text) can help readers to find different narrative paths and help them to do an interpretation in depth (Beach et. al. 68). Thus, readers should
not be as quick to judge the characterization of the protagonist, since there might be more to it than what first meets the eye.

Finally, when analyzing Holden’s depression and pessimistic views, it is important to have in mind that the post-war literary period was driven by the war novels (Foertsch 33). If the novel *The Catcher in the Rye* is presented to students as a war novel and put into that context, it might bring both understanding and interest to the novel and in turn, readers will hopefully feel empathy towards the character Holden Caulfield instead of feeling anger towards the language he uses.

**Blasphemy**

The fear of anything different was great in the 1940-50s in the United states and the fear of Communism was perhaps the strongest. As stated in the theory section on education, schools showed manipulated films to children in schools, where they viewed Communism as the enemy (Carrier 129). Thereby, it is fair to say that many people were manipulated in feeling hatred towards Communist beliefs and anything that did not fit into the Protestant beliefs at the time when *The Catcher in the Rye* was published. Barker and Jane state that “cultural studies seeks to explore the connections between different forms of power” (7), which is why the power of communism as well as the belief in God will be explained in the section below.

Since Communists were considered Atheists and many Americans saw them as something terrifying, it is no wonder that the novel was considered Communist-propaganda. Holden Caulfield disparage God’s name in many ways, e.g. when using words like “goddam” and “Chrissake”. Many parents were outraged and stated that: “For my son to read God's name being taken in vain over and over was disturbing” (Common Sense Media). Also, he lives a life which is perhaps not considered to be a righteous Christian way of life, i.e. he drinks, smokes and is open to sexuality before marriage. Even so, sometimes it is almost as if Holden makes his way into different circumstances because of his depression: “It was against my principles and all, but I was feeling so depressed I didn’t even think. That’s the whole trouble. When you’re feeling very depressed, you can’t even think” (Salinger 99). Although Americans turn in their depression towards God when life is difficult (Allitt 14), many seem to be too quick to judge the novel and do not seem to understand Holden’s miserable state, due to blasphemy or other unchristian notions in the content. Nonetheless, a reason for Americans to criticize the novel despite the obvious depression, could be the fact that
Holden is disparaging God; at a time when he should be searching for his help and mercy.

Due to the strong Protestant beliefs, it is fair to say that a contributive factor for banning *The Catcher in the Rye* was based on fear for Communism, since communists were considered Atheists and God haters. However, to avoid or ban books in the classroom due to political and cultural beliefs, is something that should be avoided in classrooms. Beach et. al. explains that teachers should choose texts based on informed experience and critical judgement, not out of feelings or fear that sometimes inspire text censorship (54). Since the Swedish society is not as driven by religious beliefs, Swedish readers might find it easier to overlook the vulgar language towards God and instead look at the novel as a work of art and as a contribution to the time when it was written, which would make it easier to use in a Swedish context.

3.2. Consequences

Censorship opens up to the possibility of working with literature, as a way of creating a sense of critical attitudes in students towards multiple sources, i.e. what are the consequences of censoring literature? Beach et. al. state that one reason for censoring literature is because of the fear of mature and harmful content teachers bring to adolescents (55). Thereby, in the pedagogical implications, the analysis proposes ways to work with the novel in the classroom and argues for the learning possibilities students can collect from ‘mature and harmful content’. Moreover, this section investigates the triggering instances analyzed above in a contemporary view and argues for the consequences of taking away the author’s freedom of speech and the students’ right to read what they choose and about any topic they see fit. The analyzed consequences for censoring a literary text is collected in the subheadings below.

By censoring a literary text, the message is destroyed

When censoring a novel, the message or essential values might be destroyed. Jennifer Rossuck discusses that censors never read the whole text they challenge and thereby, when a text is censored, readers must read the whole text to analyze each part (69). Holden Caulfield uses many swearwords and vulgar language, which is one of the reasons the novel has been censored or banned from schools. Nonetheless, by taking away Holden’s language and his pessimistic view on life, you would not have much left of Holden Caulfield but another character entirely. Moreover, censors may not realize
that they also delete the honesty which closely characterize Holden and which students seem to like.

Censorship is a form of denial

Since adolescents already have a clear image of the reality they are part of, protecting them from language, alcohol, profanity, homosexuality etc., by censoring or banning novels, will not keep them from knowing (Rossuck 69). However, it will give adolescents a certain image of what is “normal” and what is not. It will give them an image of what they should stay away from and protect themselves from. The ethical problem is that it is not teachers’ or parents’ right to take away someone else’s words. It is not their right to decide what adolescents should or should not read. Especially since adolescents want to confront painful and controversial issues in the present (69). Moreover, Beach et. al. quote the writer Sherman Alexie who claims that: “I don’t write to protect them. It’s far too late for that. I write to give them weapons – in the form of words and ideas – that will help them fight their monsters. I write in blood because I remember what it is like to bleed” (55). Thereto, not only does literature, when not censored, give students a chance to recognize themselves in the words and experiences written, but it also teaches them how to protect themselves against the challenges.

Censoring novels delete our historical mistakes

By censoring or ban any literature it is almost as if we delete a piece of history. Thus, if a novel is banned or censored, human beings cannot learn from mistakes, e.g. racial issues. Tony Doyle writes in his article A Millian Critic of Library Censorship, where he justifies the author John Stuart Mill’s views against censorship:

All ideas, even the most offensive, preposterous, or potentially injurious to be expressed and canvassed should be allowed; even those opinions that seem so well established as to be beyond controversy should be subjected to the criticism of “all gainsayers; “’ and the criticism of all values, even those that lie at society’s very foundation, should be tolerated. Only under these conditions can members of the society have any reasonable assurance that they are closing in on the truth or that the values they accept are the values that they ought to accept (i.e., do those values adhered to, in fact, promote the most overall well-being). And this, of course, implies that censorship of ideas is never justified. (Mill qtd. in Doyle 241)
Therefore, by banning or censoring literature, the truth is taken away along with the words. It is essential to see the other perspective, the other view, on values accepted or to be able to find the truth in a value. For example, any racial issues done in the past should not be censored or banned since people need to see the words or pictures made through history, which are racist, to be able to accept the non-racial values. In connection to *The Catcher in the Rye*, human beings can learn to criticize the image of adolescents and accordingly, the expectations this image set out for them. Besides, students can learn about Holden and other adolescents’ problems and thoughts in connection to their own experiences and share knowledge about depression in connection to the content in the novel. Mental illness is after all one of our major global issues in society today (Center for Discovery).

Reading for self-development is limited

One of the reasons for reading is to process experiences and develop thoughts and feelings. Literature can help adolescents deal with complex situations they inevitably encounter and may already be navigating. Literature can help students become ethical citizens and more capable cultural critics (Beach et. al. 55). All the things that Beach et. al. discuss, dealing with students’ own situations in life and becoming ethical citizens, are the things this essay argues for and which connects to the school context. Also, Niccolini claims that “banned books can offer an illuminating glimpse into social construction of ‘normal’ and ‘healthy’ adolescent development” (22). Thus, to censor or ban novels makes it difficult to be able to work with students’ own problems and to challenge the stereotypical images of adolescent behavior.

3.3. Pedagogical implications

The following section argues for why and how to educate students about cultural studies and why banned literature is evident to teach in the classroom, even in a Swedish context. Furthermore, the following section will show ways to work with *The Catcher in the Rye* in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) -classroom, based on support in the reception the novel has collected together with the goals in the Swedish curriculum.

3.3.1. Banned literature

It is helpful to consider a few things before and when working with challenged books in the classroom, i.e. in this case, novels which have been banned. Beach et. al. mention that the teacher should invite others as allies to text choices, e.g. discuss with colleagues
and parents about your ideas and try to encourage parents to read and work together with their children at home (55). To communicate with parents is therefore important as a teacher. Let them be part of the ideas for the lessons to come, without letting the parents control the teaching. One example is to email the parents the plans for a following project in class or send a handout home with the students and make sure to state the reasons for choosing the text/s which are chosen. This, since when looking at the reception the novel received, parents in America had great issues with the fact that their children would read his type of literary text. In Sweden, parents’ influence was not as strong. Nevertheless, teachers in Sweden do received much criticism from parents, and therefore, letting parents be part of the information given to their children would hopefully make them understand the aims with a literary text.

Additionally, Niccolini claims that challenged books in general offer an opportunity to explore how youth is culturally constructed and the effects these constructions have on the texts deemed age appropriate for them (23). Thus, by discussing challenging literature, with stereotypical behaviors and attitudes, it is possible to work with the stereotypical norms in society. It is visible in the reception that stereotypes are in fact part of society, e.g. comments on Holden’s “bad” behavior or expectations Holden receives because he is a teenager. The curriculum in the Swedish upper secondary school does state that one task of the school is that “students should develop their ability to think critically, examine facts and relationships, and appreciate the consequences of different alternatives” (Nat. Ag. Of Ed. “Curriculum” 5). Niccolini further makes a description of banned novels and says that “banned books are often complex, surprising, and confounding. They shake up expectations, challenge norms, and at times raise interminable questions. They’re complex and should be valued in our classrooms, like the adolescents we teach” (27). Thus, working with banned and censored literature, creates an opportunity to develop knowledge of stereotypes in society and learn how to challenge those stereotypes (both teachers and students).

Furthermore, Niccolini claims that you can challenge the cultural constructions, by working with a literary theory called the Youth Lens (YL) (22-23). Thus, by drawing on a literary theory as a reading-tool, it is possible to help students develop their reading skills and understand the content to a greater extent. Another teaching method that helps students develop their reading skills is something Harmer calls “comprehension questions” (314), and he states that students should be given a chance to read questions expected to be answered on a text before the actual reading takes place. By going
through the triggered instances for banning the novel (analyzed in this essay), it is therefore, possible to activate their schema and develop their reading skills rather than testing it. Moreover, by giving the students a chance to explore the American ideals and ideologies in the 1950s, they will receive a higher development in reading skills as opposed to starting to read the text directly without such information.

Also, adolescents have an interest in the forbidden and therefore working with banned books can increase motivation. Niccolini claims that “nothing sparks more interest in a book than mentioning it’s been banned” (23). Thereby, working with such a theme could be promising in the right classroom. Besides, motivation often increases when the teaching material is connected to students own lives and when they can recognize themselves in a character or story. The syllabus for English 6 claims that teaching should contain: “concrete and abstract subject areas related to students’ societal life; thoughts, opinions, ideas, experiences and feelings; ethical and existential issues” (Nat. Ag. of Ed. “Syllabus, English 6” 7). Since the novel has much reception on honesty and seems to connect well with adolescents’ thoughts and opinions, the material connects well to their own lives and could therefore, hopefully increase motivation.

Related to the statement above when discussing consequences on censorship, reading novels in school can prevent mental illness and create self-development, e.g. becoming an empathetic human being. The writer Sherman Alexie states: “As a child, I read, because books were the most loving and trustworthy in my life. I read books about monsters and monstrous things, often written in monstrous language, because they taught me how to battle the real monsters in my life” (Alexie qtd. in Beach et. al. 55). Moreover, Castano and Kidd explain in their study of literary fiction that “Experiment One showed that reading literary fiction, relative to nonfiction improves performance on an affective Theory of Mind task. Experiments Two through Five showed that this effect is specific to literary fiction,” (Castano and Kidd). Thus, by working with novels, students have a chance to progress the horrors and difficulties in life by discussing difficult topics and thoughts in the classroom. This is not possible if one was to ban or censor different novels to “protect” adolescents from uncomfortable content.

In addition, reading books through the literary form of the teenage-novel, which contains characteristics as sex, violence and alcohol, can have positive impacts. Niccolini discusses a downside with censorship of sex and sexuality in education materials, arguing that young people are “given little critical guidance in negotiating the
various and contradictory discourses they encounter, particularly in relation to sexuality” (8). Thus, by censoring young adult literature or literature that depicts as a *teenage-novel*, it could result in teenagers being deprived of the valuable guidance in sexual relations and other difficult topics, which is a vital part of adolescents’ life. Besides, adolescents will encounter knowledge about sexual relations anyhow, and thereto, by trying to avoid the topic as a teacher, adolescents will only be skeptical to the avoidance rather than staying innocent.

### 3.3.2. The Catcher in the Rye and the EFL-classroom

In the same way that novels in general can prevent mental illness, the text in *The Catcher in the Rye* can help students become aware of the social issues we all share and learn how to become empathetic human beings. Learn how to become empathetic human beings is one of the goals with education in the Swedish curriculum for upper secondary school; “The school should promote understanding of other people and the ability to empathize” (Nat. Ag. Of. Ed. “Curriculum” 4). The empathetic abilities have a chance to increase when students discuss their own thoughts and opinions from other people’s perspectives. This is not possible if every book ever written (or any book at all) were to be censored.

Although the text can help students become empathetic human beings and help to prevent mental illness, many of the ideologies in America do not apply to Sweden, which could make it easier to use in the classroom in a Swedish context. It is also visible from the reception in the United States versus Sweden that the novel is not as highly criticized in Sweden as it is in the United States. Thereby, working with the novel as teaching material in Sweden could create more positive aspects than negative. Besides, it would be possible to work with the text on a more profound level than the surface and hopefully create a higher understanding of both the plot and the protagonist, which seem to be the primary features which have caused banishment of the material in the past.

What is evident when working with *The Catcher in the Rye* in a Swedish context, however, is to make students aware of the historical epoch in which it is written. Beach et. al. discuss coming of age in an era of Globalization and explain that it means to use texts from different time periods or geographies, asking students what it means to come of age when you are crossing cultural and religious boundaries (42). Moreover, working with historical epochs connects well with the Swedish syllabus for upper secondary
school, where it states that; teaching in English 6 should cover: “themes, ideas, form and content in film and literature; authors and literary periods” (Nat. Ag. of Ed. “Syllabus English 6” 1). What is more, the curriculum for upper secondary school explains that a historical perspective in teaching enables students to develop an understanding of the present, and a preparedness for the future” (Nat. Ag. of Ed. “Curriculum” 6). Since the present is part of the past and the future, it is important to educate students about literature in preparation for their future. When working with an uncensored version of The Catcher in the Rye, it is also possible to learn from our history and from each other to not repeat our historical mistakes.

Besides the historical factors, it is evident for students to work with The Catcher in the Rye in the context of another country where English is used, since the syllabus for English also states; “teaching should provide pupils with opportunities to develop knowledge about and an understanding of social and cultural phenomena in the areas and contexts where English is used” (Nat. Ag. of Ed. “Syllabus” 32). Moreover, the curriculum for the upper secondary school states; “An international perspective is important to understand one’s reality in a global context and in order to create international solidarity… Having an international perspective should also contribute to students’ developing greater understanding of cultural diversity within Sweden” (Nat. Ag. of Ed. “Curriculum” 6). Hence, to be able to find one’s own place in the world, it is important to educate books to students, that can help them with the creation of an identity. Further, it can hopefully create a chance to understand cultural diversity, by making them aware of other cultures values, ideologies and perspectives.

Additionally, since the novel is closely connected to the description of a war novel (see theory section), a project on this historical period would be possible. The students get to discover what features are typical for the war novel as well as the instances for banning a novel in the United States in the 1950s. Beach et. al. discuss using texts from different time periods and explain that it asks students what it means to come of age when you are surviving political upheaval (42). For that reason, the novel is a fitting example of such material, since it is published in the post-war era. Also, the project connects well with the syllabus for English 6 in upper secondary school, where it says that teaching should cover: “themes, ideas, form and content in film and literature; authors and literary periods” (Nat. Ag. of Ed. “Syllabus, English 6” 7). Since the example focuses on war novels and the post-war historical period, it is closely connected to a literary period. The exemplified project also covers themes, ideas and
content in literature, since the triggered instances are discussed as well as the war novel as a literary form.

Another aspect to consider when teaching about *The Catcher in the Rye* in the EFL-classroom, is the visible adolescent life and common struggles and thoughts the novel depicts. *Chicago Tribune* reviewer Paul Engle commented that the story was "emotional without being sentimental, dramatic without being melodramatic, and honest without simply being obscene" (Engle qtd. in Lomazoff). The honesty in the novel is what makes it interesting and what makes it connect so well with many of the adolescents’ views in the reception of this novel. The connection with adolescent’ life can also be found in the syllabus, where it is stated that teaching in English 6 should contain: “concrete and abstract subject areas related to students’ societal life; thoughts, opinions, ideas, experiences and feelings; ethical and existential issues (Nat. Ag. of Ed.” Syllabus, English 6” 7). Moreover, according to Privitera, many adolescents can relate to the strong feelings, reactions and obsessive lying Holden goes through (203). Therefore, by discussing Holden’s thoughts and actions, it is also possible to discuss the existential and ethical issues in connection to students’ own lives.

Finally, as the essay focuses on a historical and cultural context as part of a cultural studies approach in the EFL-classroom, a connection to freedom of speech and democracy is possible to work with in a Swedish context. A discussion why Sweden as well as America have freedom of speech could be made and ethical questions whether it is right or wrong for a teacher to decide what adolescents can or cannot read. Moreover, a historical point of view could involve the students in how long freedom of speech has existed and whether other countries and contexts are involved in the freedom of speech as well as democratic values.

4. Conclusion

Even though many critics and other people gave the novel standing ovations, it did obtain a lot of criticism, which led to banishment of the novel in schools in America. The aim with the essay was therefore, to analyze banned literature and to investigate why literature gets banned in the first place. To be able to analyze the reasons for Americans to choose to ban or censor *The Catcher in the Rye*, the essay investigated patterns in reception of the novel connected to values in society. This was made to be able to find the triggering instances (the provoking pieces in the novel), which lead to
banishment and the consequences that could induce on society. The essay argues for using banned books in the classroom in general and *The Catcher in the Rye* in particular and explains ways to work with the novel in the EFL (English as a Foreign) -classroom in a Swedish, 21st century context.

The most obvious criticism *The Catcher in the Rye* collected was the vulgar language it contains. Given the religious background the United States is built upon, it is no wonder that they complained about the cursing and the disparage against God. However, because of their strong religious beliefs, Americans seem to overlook the essential message with the vulgar language. Firstly, the reader must remember that the novel was written in a dark historical period (post-war), and therefore, one of the reasons for the language is to strengthen Holden’s pessimistic view of the world he lives in. Secondly, the language is a way to connect to the stereotypical image of adolescence. By looking at the novel through this analysis, it is also possible to gain understanding in the depressing and pessimistic factors, which also became triggering instances for ban and censorship.

Other common criticism the novel received were that the protagonist was unrealistic, unreliable or deranged. These comments seem to derive from the complex paradoxes Holden Caulfield lives in. He wants to fit in and be accepted in society at the same time as he wants to break free from society’s dominant ideologies. Moreover, these complex paradoxes are better received by adolescents than adults, which creates a conflict between the two. This conflict is evident for the plot, since Holden does not seem to want to grow up, but rather to save children from the horrible fate of adulthood. Thereby, it is not strange that the book speaks more to adolescents and that teenagers can relate to the protagonist. This is also the reason why the novel creates such advantages to use in the upper secondary school.

What is more, even though Sweden do not have the same issues with banned or censored texts, due to different cultural constructions and ideologies, banned or censored literature can still bring promising insights to students in a Swedish context. It can teach students to become critical thinkers, through ethical discussions on censorship. Furthermore, by working with *The Catcher in the Rye*, students can learn about the American context in another historical period. Finally, the protagonist Holden Caulfield has an honesty in his character which speaks to adolescents in any culture, which makes the novel a teaching material that the students can relate to at the same time as it increases motivation.
The essay has argued that the book *The Catcher in the Rye* has been misunderstood and therefore, should not be a subject for censorship or banishment in schools, but rather a great teaching material to work through some of adolescents’ issues. From a Swedish point of view, it creates an understanding of another context and perspective. Thus, by censoring or banning the book, some consequences come along with it. The consequences the essay has concluded sum up to (1) by censoring a literary text the massage is destroyed, (2) that censorship is a form of denial, (3) censoring novels delete our historical mistakes, and (4) reading for self-development is limited. Given these aspects, the essay strongly argues against ban and censorship, in all novels.

For further research, it is possible to add feminist perspectives when analyzing the text. Feminist perspectives could for example criticize the fact that the novel is about a white male and female characters have small roles in the story. What is more, they seem to have a certain innocence much more obvious than in the male characters. Another aspect possible for future research is the language the book holds. The essay has made some analytical conclusions towards the language in connection to banishment and censorship. Still, the analysis is mainly on a surface level and it is possible to be able to consider other aspects in connection to the theme. Thus, it could be desirable to analyze the language in greater depth, since the language is such a vital part of the story. This could be done by comparing the novel to another literary work with a similar story line but with less vulgar language or, contrary, the same matter of vulgar language in a different kind of story. A final example of future studies on banishment and censorship is to take on the other perspective than the one in this essay, i.e. what can be some positive effects with banishment of novels?

In conclusion, the essay has only touched upon the surface in studies of censored and banned literature. Even though *The Catcher in the Rye* is a classic which has been discussed in many classrooms, the topic of banishment is still unexplored and the possibilities to study this topic are therefore many. Furthermore, as stated in the essay, the theme on banishment and censorship in the classroom is highly motivating for students in the EFL-classroom and is thereby recommended.
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Reviews on reception


