



Censored Children's Literature During the Dirty War in Argentina

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Agenda

- ❖ Research Questions
- ❖ Significance of the Study
- ❖ Historical Context
- ❖ Literature Review
- ❖ Methods of the Study
- ❖ Biographies of the authors and analysis of their stories
- ❖ Findings
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<http://julietapozzutotic.blogspot.com/>

Research Questions



Source: indiareader.com

- ❖ What were the messages and central themes embedded in the children's stories of María Elena Walsh, Elsa Bornemann, and Beatriz Doumerc?
- ❖ Why were these stories censored by the military dictatorship during the Dirty War in Argentina?

Significance of the Study



- ❖ To learn about the effects of censorship on Argentina during and after the Dirty war.
- ❖ To learn how ideological development is impacted by children's literature and how it affects the development of a society.
- ❖ To understand the involvement of the U.S. in the Dirty War

Historical Background

Operation Condor: CIA involvement and funding of military dictatorships in South America to eliminate political opponents that favored communism and socialist ideas. (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay)

Argentinian Military: Augmented in power until they were able to execute a military coup in 1976.

Process of National Reorganization: Name used by the ruling military dictatorship in Argentina using the **Doctrine of National Security** as legal backing of their action.

The Dirty War 1976-1983: The military dictatorship recognized as a dark time in the countries history due to...

- Clandestine Prisons
- Violation of Human Rights
- Censorship
- Kidnappings
- Torture
- Assassinations



youtube.com



Source: Vector el Mapa

Review of Literature

❖ Definition of Culture

The philosophical perspectives, the behavioral practices, and the products of a society (ACTFL 32).

❖ Cultural Censorship

Examples of cultural censorship during the Dirty War in Argentina included literature, theatre, cinema, religion, limitations on teaching materials, and censorship of artistic expression (Rodríguez 66). The dictatorship linked the artistic expression of culture with ideas considered “subversive” (to do with political left, communism, and marxism) of the 1960’s and 1970’s (Rodríguez 66)

❖ Methods of Censorship

Not only were books censored but also authors, magazines, editorials, illustrations, publishers and more. People were obligated to burn, destroy and distance themselves from censored material. (Avellenda 39; Invernizzi and Gocio 211).



Source: e-Prophetic

Review of Literature (Continued)

❖ **The Study of Literature**

The relevance of children's literature as a new field of study for Argentinians.
(Colavita 1978)

Authors conveying social beliefs regarding individualism, collectivism and child development in children's literature. (Shannon 1986)

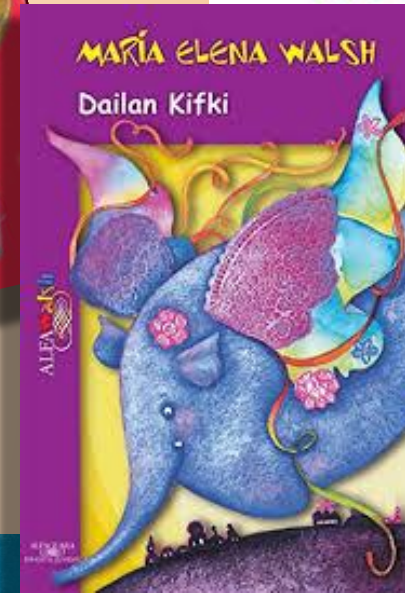
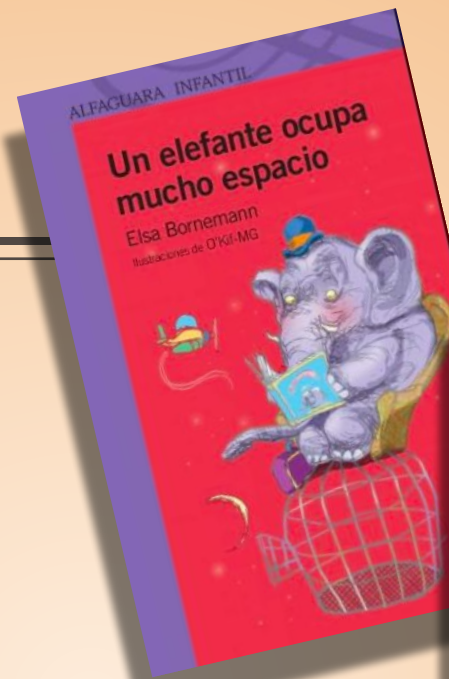
❖ **Analysis of Censored Children's Literature**

How to transcend what happened during the Dirty War to younger generations through the recovery of censored children's literature.
(Ministerio de Educación, Ciencia, y Tecnología 2006)

A collection of children's stories that transmit the past through representations of violence alluded in fantasies. (Garcia 2015)

Methods of the Study

- ❖ Analysis of the censored children's literature:
- ❖ **María Elena Walsh**
 - *Dailan Kifki*
- ❖ **Elsa Bornemann**
 - *Un elefante ocupa mucho espacio* (*An Elephant Takes Up A Lot of Space*)
 - *El caso Gaspar* (*The Gaspar Case*)
- ❖ **Beatriz Doumerc**
 - *El pueblo que no quería ser gris* (*The Town That Didn't Want to Be Gray*)



Source: freepngimg.com



Source: amazon.com

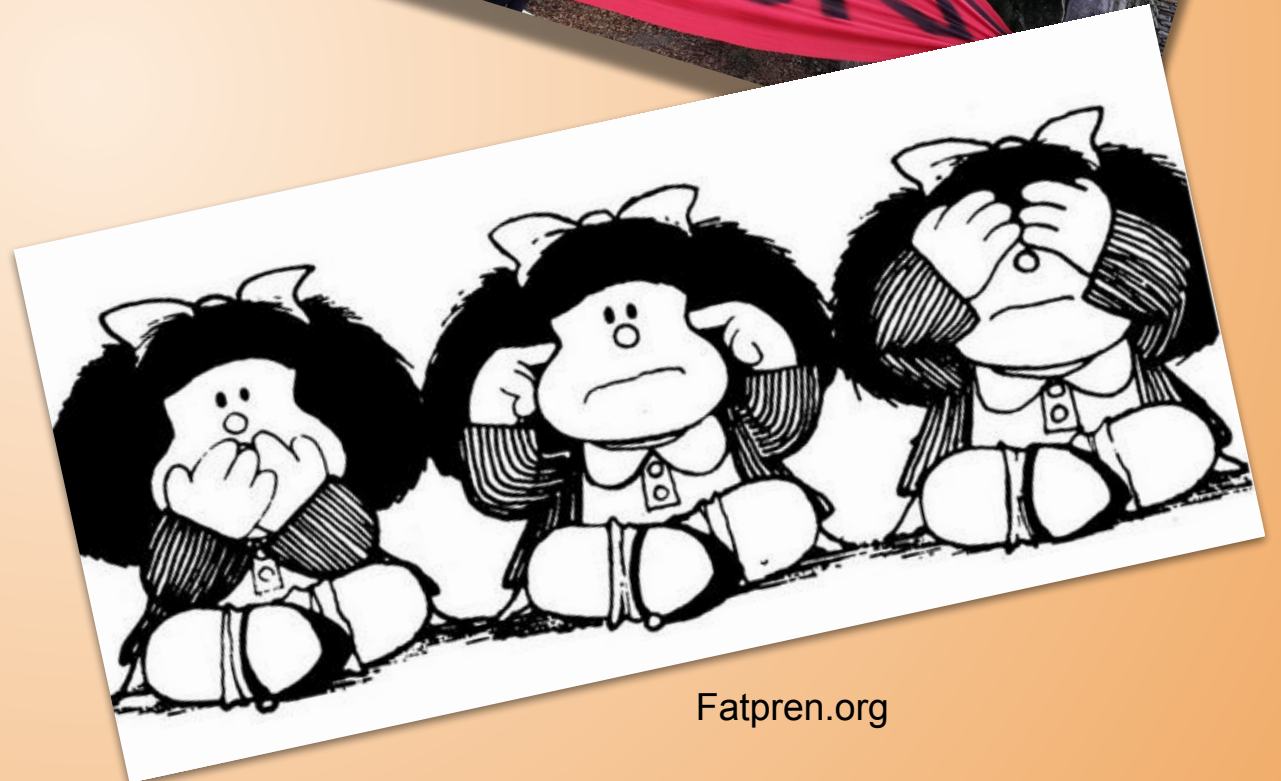
Methods of Analysis

- ❖ Biography of the Authors
- ❖ Structure
- ❖ Rhetorical Strategies (Literary Devices)
- ❖ Themes
- ❖ Reason for censorship



The worst thing
about censorship
is [REDACTED].
[REDACTED].

Tech-ish.com



Fatpren.org

Maria Elena Walsh (1930-2011)

- ❖ Born February 1st, 1930 in Buenos Aires Argentina
- ❖ Studied at the National School of Fine Arts in Argentina
- ❖ Poet, novelist, singer, composer, and script writer for theatre, film and television.
- ❖ Considered the Dr. Seuss of Argentina and a cultural legend.
- ❖ Awards:
 - Merit Diploma (1981, 1994)
 - Konex Platinum Prize (1981, 1994)
 - Konex Prize of Honor (2014)
 - Illustrious citizen of the City of Buenos Aires (1985)



V World News

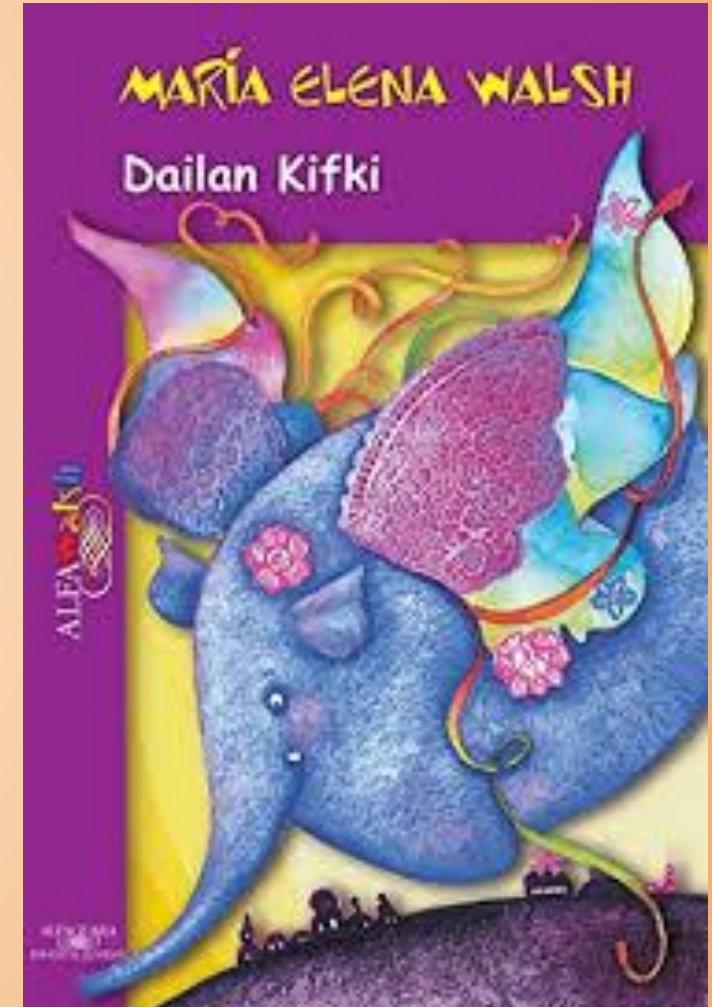
Analysis of *Dailan Kifki* - Walsh

❖ Structure

- Setting - Buenos Aires, Gulubú Forest
- Main character - Narrator, Dailan Kifki
- Plot - Dailan Kifki is an elephant that is put in the care of a young girl whose name is never revealed. She does her best to care for the elephant, but his impulsive character leads to many adventures.

❖ Literary Devices

- Personification of animals
- Colloquial language
- Play with words



Dailan Kifki- Maria Elena Walsh

Elsa Bornemann (1952-2013)

- ❖ Born on February 20, 1952 in Buenos Aires, Argentina
- ❖ Youngest of three daughters born to a German father and Argentinian mom
- ❖ Studied English, German, Latin & Greek at the University of Buenos Aires
- ❖ Professor of Letters
- ❖ Known for her children's literature, poetry, essays, & songs
- ❖ She received various awards for her work: Faja de honor de la sociedad Argentina (1972), National Award for Children's literature (1986), and the Premio Platinum Konex (2004)
- ❖ She passed away May 2013 at the age of 61.



Source: elsabornemann.com

Analysis of *Un elefante ocupa mucho espacio* - Bornemann

❖ Structure

- Setting - Circus
- Main character - Victor the elephant
- Plot - Victor organizes strike, captures the trainers, and arranges transportation for himself and his friends back to Africa.

❖ Literary Devices

- Personification of the circus animals
- Symbols
 - Elephant - wisdom, strength, intelligence
 - Circus - social organization of society
 - Animals v. Trainers - working class vs. wealthy elite of high society



Source: Cosos Ilustrados

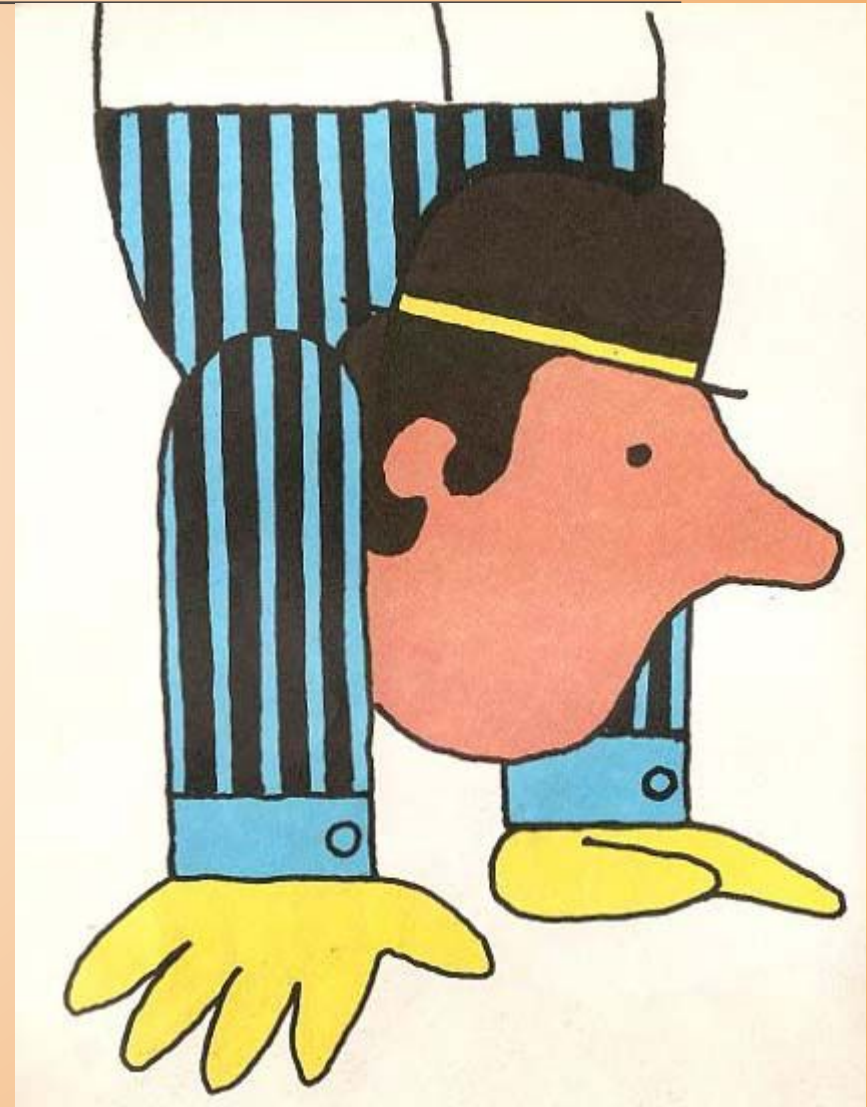
Analysis of *El caso Gaspar* - Bornemann

❖ Structure

- Setting - small town
- Main character - Gaspar the walking salesman
- Plot - Gaspar decides to walk on his hands to sell his wares. He is arrested by the police for being different. He questions the validity of his arrest and earns his liberty.

❖ Literary Devices

- Symbols
 - Gaspar - average, working class citizen
 - Police - authority, social norms of society
- Allegory for being different and deciding for yourself.



Beatriz Doumerc (1929 - 2014)

- ❖ Born in Argentina and resided in Spain while fleeing from persecution.
- ❖ Published more than 150 books, 30 were children's books.
- ❖ Published books in Spain, Italy, Venezuela, Uruguay and Switzerland.
- ❖ Awards:
 - Premio Casa de las Americas
 - Premio Lazarillo/ [Lazarillo Prize] (1987)



La Primera Piedra

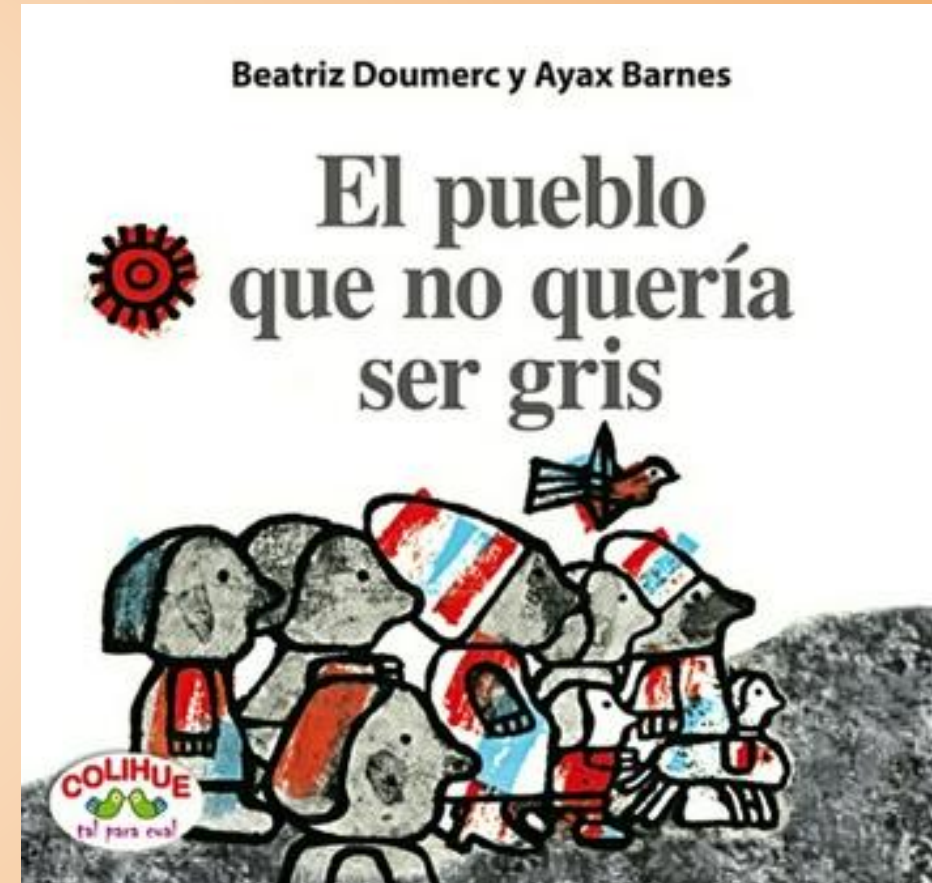
Analysis *El pueblo no quería ser gris* - Doumerc

❖ Structure

- Setting - An unnamed kingdom
- Main characters - The king, his guards, villagers
- Plot - The king orders around his village without ever taking into consideration their needs. One day, the king orders them to paint the village grey, but one villager decides to paint their house red, blue and white.

❖ Literary Devices

- Symbolism:
 - Dove: Peace and Freedom
 - Colors: Grey, Red, Blue, White
- Irony: Big King vs. Small Villagers
- Allegory: Dictatorships can be repeated but freedom can prevail



Findings: Recurring Themes

- ❖ What were the messages and central themes embedded in the children's stories of María Elena Walsh, Elsa Bornemann, and Beatriz Doumerc?

Individualism

- Being yourself
- Freedom of expression
- Free thinking

Collectivism

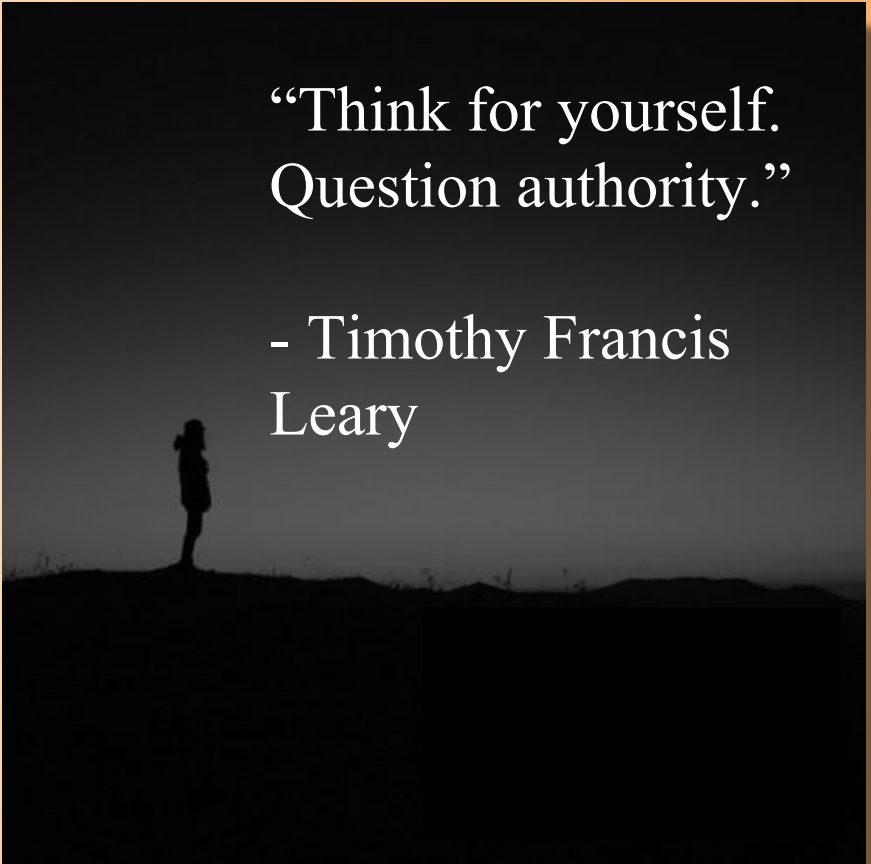
- Working together = Power
- Meeting the needs of the group rather than the individual

Questioning authority

- Subversive behavior
- Going against social norms
- Suggestive to uprising

Findings: Why Were These Stories Censored?

- ❖ **Genre** - stories with morals (didactic). Read not only by children but by their parents. Children are unlikely to organize an uprising, but their parents might.
- ❖ **Messages were threatening to the dictatorship** because they encouraged readers to be different, think for themselves, cooperate and stand up to authority. All of which are a threat to any dictatorship.
- ❖ Therefore, in an effort to **protect their power** and to try and **control the thinking** of the people of Argentina the stories were censored by the military dictatorship.



“Think for yourself.
Question authority.”

- Timothy Francis
Leary

Source: Timothy Francis Leary

[“ ... an energy swindler, a thief of our rights to imagination, that should be constitutional. Yes, we’re 25 million suspects for wanting to think independently, assume maturity and creatively reinvent ourselves, for however dangerous it may seem to well intentioned guardians.”]

- María Elena Walsh

“...un estafador de energías, un ladrón de nuestro derecho a la imaginación, que debería ser constitucional. Sí, somos veinticinco millones de sospechosos de querer pensar por nuestra cuenta, asumir la adultez y actualizarnos creativamente, por peligroso que les parezca a bienintencionados guardianes.”

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