

Systemic Oppression in Children's Portal-Quest Fantasy Literature

by

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B.A. (Hons), Wilfrid Laurier University, 2013

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(Children's Literature)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

April 2015

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the representation of systemic oppression in Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Employing Foucauldian poststructuralism and critical discourse analysis, this research identifies how the social systems of the fantasy texts construct hierarchies based on race and gender, and social norms based on sexuality and disability. Privilege and oppression are identified as the results of the relaying of power relations by social institutions through strategies such as dominant discourses. This study questions the historically understood role of children's and fantasy literature as socialization tools, and the potential negative consequences of this.

Preface

This Master of Arts thesis is an original, unpublished, independent work of the author, Christopher Owen, as a partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts in Children's Literature Program at the University of British Columbia. Dr. Eric Meyers of the University of British Columbia's School of Library, Archival and Information Studies supervised the writing of this thesis. Drs. Theresa Rogers and Rick Gooding, of the Language and Literacy Education and English Departments at the University of British Columbia respectively, acted as second readers.

I will present portions of this research at the International Research Society in Children's Literature 22nd Biennial Congress, "Creating Childhoods" at the University of Worcester, in the United Kingdom in August 2015.

I also intend to further this research with a PhD dissertation.

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Acknowledgements

The writing of this thesis would not be possible without the support and patient guidance of several people. First, I would like to thank God for blessing me with this opportunity and with the education necessary to complete this work. I pray that He will bless me further with new opportunities to use this research to further His plan.

I would also like to thank my parents and family for all of their generous support. I would not be where I am today without any of you, thank you for always believing in me and supporting me. I love you with all of my heart. Thank you.

A huge thank you goes out to my thesis supervisor, Dr. Eric Meyers, for his patient guidance. Thank you Eric for encouraging me in my career and supporting my efforts to further it. Thank you for always being patient with me when I am at my most stressed. Thank you for being willing to listen. Thank you for testing me when I need to learn more and prove myself. Thank you.

I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Theresa Rogers and Dr. Rick Gooding, for all of your helpful advice and thoughtful suggestions. You both pushed me to improve my research in ways that have shaped my approach to academia, and have helped make this thesis all the better for it. Thank you.

Thank you to the friends who stuck with me through it all. To my UBC friends who have worked with me, especially Laura MacDonald, Yashaswi Kesanakurthy, Roza Nozari, Russell Hirsch, Stephanie Dror and Nafiza Azad. And to my friends back home, who have supported me from the other side of the country, namely Darian Banks, Lindsay Hurst, Cory Sousa, and Lai-Tze Fan. Thank you.

And finally, a thank you to those of you named in the dedication.

Dedication

To my wonderful parents, Carol and Todd Owen. You have not only supported me financially, you have encouraged me time and again, pushing me forward through the stress. I cannot thank you enough for believing in me.

To my sisters, Katie Owen and Emma Johnston, my brother-in-law David Johnston, and my nephews and niece Hayden, Zachary and Charlotte Johnston. Thank you for inspiring me and supporting me every single step of the way.

This thesis is also dedicated to those people in my life who have gone above and beyond expectations in their support of my education and academic success:

- Lai-Tze Fan
- Merran Dunlop
- Lisa Funnell
- Michael Sardine
- Adam Lawrence
- Judith Saltman
- Eric Meyers

Thank you for everything.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Historically, fictional worlds such as Baum's Land of Oz have been understood to potentially empower the child reader through identification with the questing character(s) (Nikolajeva, "The Development of Children's Fantasy" 58-60). As traditional children's literature has been written by white, heterosexual and abled men (Grenby & Immel xiv), it ostensibly follows that the social structures of fictional worlds reflect the privileging of the same sociocultural positions. As Nikolajeva argues that fictional worlds can teach readers about the social structures of the actual world (*Reading for Learning* 31), I propose that the representation of systemic oppression in fictional worlds can be disempowering for minority children. With an understanding of systemic oppression, my thesis draws on Foucauldian poststructuralism and critical discourse analysis to investigate how the systems of oppression of Western society are reflected in the social systems of the fantasy worlds of two children's portal-quest fantasy novels.

1.2 Motivation

The motivation for this research stems from the intersection of two different points of interest. The first is my interest in systemic oppression, which first came to my attention when I began the process of unlearning while working at the Wilfrid Laurier University Rainbow Centre, a queer resource centre. Unlearning is defined by Steve D'Amico as a process of questioning what we have learned through classical conditioning, deconstructing how we understand identities, and removing negative values

that blind us to seeing authenticity (“About Us”). Unlike with individual bigotry, it is quite easy to be ignorant of systemic oppression, even by those experiencing it. My second point of interest is in children’s literature, especially children’s fantasy literature, both as a field of study as well as its use as a socialization tool. The intersection of these two different points is the motivation for this research as I am curious how children’s literature, specifically children’s fantasy literature, can potentially contribute to the socializing of children and embed oppressive ideologies. As people can be ignorant of systemic oppression, so too then can literature theoretically represent these systems in a way that may not be altogether obvious, but rather as an underlying set of themes, norms and or principles. I am thus curious how children’s literature contributes to systems of oppression. However, I am not a sociologist but a student of literature, and therefore this is not a long-term research project involving human subjects, but rather a close reading of systemic oppression as it is represented in children’s fantasy literature. Hence, I am investigating whether systemic oppression is represented in some of the same texts that potentially contribute to the socialization of children, and am motivated by the social consequences and future research possibilities of this.

1.3 Positionality

Following the example of scholars like Peggy McIntosh in the tradition of stating one’s positions of privilege and oppression, I acknowledge that while I have faced systemic oppression as a gay man, I am otherwise privileged as a white, Anglo-Saxon, cisgender, able-bodied, upper-middle class, educated, Canadian, Christian man. My sociocultural position has shaped my understanding of the world, and I too have

unconsciously imbedded oppressive ideologies. I recognize that the process of unlearning is continuous, that I cannot speak for or represent the opinions of other people and that I am accountable for what is written in this work.

1.4 Problem Statement

Children's literature has been understood historically as a socialization tool. Literature for children has bourgeois origins, and was, as Zipes argues, "first and foremost a rationalization of a social hegemony" (20). While today the extent that literature and other cultural products influence the socialization of children is under some debate (Reynolds 2011; Killmister 2013; Nikolajeva 2014; Stepanova 2014), Zipes argues that a "culture cannot do without some form of internalization of its values through literature as a system of communication" (30). Therefore, while the amount of influence literature may have may be under consideration, it is clear that literature still expresses cultural values. But does this include dominant discourses and systems of oppression in works of literature for children?

Systemic oppression or systems of oppression refers to what many scholars call an "intellectual colonialism," a societal preference for white, patriarchal and Western paradigms that are then internalized and expressed by members of Western society (Akhtar 7). This should not be confused with the prejudice or bigotry of each individual, but, as Feagin argues, an ideology of all major Western social institutions (2). I am interested in the representation of what bell hooks calls interlocking systems of domination, or the oppression model of racism, sexism, heterosexism and ableism (Heldke & O'Connor vii). With the cultural domination and imposition of white values in

Western texts, Feagin claims that a society's historically racist ideologies become a part of children's conscious and unconscious minds very early in their lives, making it an embedded part of their socialization (25-27). Peggy McIntosh agrees with this, stating that white children are taught through social discourses and ideologies that their identities are normative and neutral, and non-white children are taught that they should behave and think more like white people (128). While both theorists use racism to exemplify this theory, it is likely true of all sociocultural positions, including but not limited to: sex, gender, sexual orientation and ability.

The portal-quest fantasy genre works well to present an unquestionable moral paradigm in the fictional world's social structure (Mendlesohn 11-13). The reader learns about the fantasy world at the same time as the protagonist, putting the reader in a position of naïveté (Mendlesohn 1,7). In this way the genre is characterized by a structure that narrows possibilities for having a subversive reading or a polysemic discourse, relying on institutions in order to validate the quest (Mendlesohn 3, 12-13). As Tolkien explains, the reader approaches a fantasy text with a “secondary belief” that allows for an acceptance of the fantasy world presented (139-140). Therefore, when a child reads Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, the child can dispel realism and then desire to go to Hogwarts. This provides a freedom for the reader's imagination to explore values and ethics more abstractly, which in turn creates a joy from glimpsing the text's underlying reality or “truth” (Tolkien 147-155; Manlove 14). The portal-quest fantasy genre works well to present an unquestionable moral paradigm, not only in the book's major themes but also in the Secondary World's social structure, making texts in this genre highly didactic (Mendlesohn 5-7, 11-13; Nikolajeva, *Reading for Learning* 46).

While fantasy worlds can act as excellent pedagogical tools, ignoring the covert messages for the sake of the overt themes may lead to a socialization of children with oppressive embedded values.

1.5 Purpose of Research

Previous research on fantasy literature has focused primarily on setting (Timmerman 1983; Tolkien 1983; Hunt 2001; Armitt 2005; Mendlesohn 2008), while previous research on oppression in children's fiction has almost exclusively centered on character representation (Lowery 2000; Nikolajeva 2002; Stemp 2004; Botelho and Rudman 2009; Mallan 2009; Abate and Kidd 2011; Pugh 2011). While Botelho and Rudman argue, "fantasy is not context free and [...] class, gender, and race figure as largely in a work of fantasy as in any other genre" (214), they do not elaborate further on the social systems represented in different fantasy worlds that contribute to class, gender or race oppression. I have otherwise yet to find any research on the relationship between the study of setting and the social values of children's portal-quest fantasy literature and the intersecting systems of power and oppression within the contexts of racism, sexism, heterosexism, heteronormativity and ableism in Western society. Thus I will investigate this space in current research, contributing to the larger goals of children's literature scholarship by investigating the possibility for children's literature, which is written and mediated as a socialization tool, to (potentially) embed oppressive social ideologies in children. I will examine the representations of the systems of oppression within the social structures of the fantasy world settings of children's portal-quest fantasy fiction,

analyzing these systems as the potential roots of the problem of negative character representations.

1.6 Research Questions

This investigation is framed using the overarching research question: What is the nature of the systems of oppression in portal-quest fantasy literature for children? I further this question with three more specific inquiries:

1. How are the portal-quest fantasy worlds of Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* shaped by the four common systems of oppression, namely the oppression of people of colour, women, queer people and disabled people?
2. How does the language used by the characters of Baum's Land of Oz and Rowling's Wizarding World demonstrate the dominant discourses of each respective fantasy world?
3. How do the characters in Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* support or resist the systemic oppression of their respective fantasy worlds?

These questions will be explored through the in-depth analysis of two portal-quest fantasy texts, both drawn from the canon of children's literature, with one historically considered a "classic," and one a popular contemporary example.

1.7 Primary Texts

Following are brief descriptions of the selected primary texts. Selection decisions regarding these texts are explained in more detail in Section 3.2.

1. Baum, L. Frank. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Chicago: G.M. Hill Co., 1900.

Print.

After a twister picks up her house, Dorothy finds herself in the magical Land of Oz. She travels with the Scarecrow, Tin Woodman and Cowardly Lion to the Emerald City to ask the Wonderful Wizard of Oz to take her back home. The Wizard agrees to help her but only if she first kills the Wicked Witch of the West. After many trials the three succeed, but the Wizard's hot air balloon leaves without Dorothy. She then travels to the house of the Good Witch of the South, who tells her that her shoes have the magic to take her home, which Dorothy then uses to do so.

2. Rowling, J. K.. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. London: Bloomsbury, 1997. Print.

On Harry Potter's eleventh birthday he is informed by a half-giant named Hagrid that he is a wizard and that he has been accepted to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. There he becomes friends with Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger. The three of them, along with a boy named Neville Longbottom, accidentally discover a three-headed dog standing atop a trapdoor. After Hagrid accidentally tells them that the dog is guarding something belonging to a Nicholas Flamel, Hermione realizes that the dog is guarding the philosopher's stone, which can make a person immortal. Fearing that Professor Snape, a cruel teacher, is going to try to steal the stone, the three travel down

the trapdoor to stop him. After working through various trials, Harry meets Voldemort, the evil wizard who killed his parents. With the protection of Harry's mother's sacrificial love, Harry momentarily defeats Voldemort and protects the philosopher's stone.

1.8 Chapter Overview

Following this chapter is my Literature Review, which surveys the foundational sources for this research, including Foucault's theories of power, and research in systemic oppression, and fantasy and children's literature. Chapter three outlines my method, beginning with my primary text selection followed by an explanation of how the theories of my literature review shape the analytical lens I use. I also include here an explanation on my choice in terminology. Following this is my findings chapter, which will explore the representation of the four intersecting forms of systemic oppression in my primary texts. My fifth chapter will discuss these findings, synthesizing the texts in comparison to identify how they demonstrate systemic oppression in children's portal-quest fantasy literature in order to answer my research questions. The sixth and final chapter will conclude this thesis by discussing the limitations of my study and suggesting further areas of research.

1.9 Conclusion

This introductory chapter has provided an outline of the motivations for my research with an overview of the field, and the significance of this thesis in investigating new spaces in children's literature scholarship. I will close read two canonical works of children's portal-quest fantasy literature in order to investigate the representations of

systemic oppression in each text, its forms and how it plays a role in discourses and character interactions. The portal-quest fantasy genre works well to present an original Secondary World that is understood through an authoritative lens but is also supposedly designed to empower the reader. This genre is thus especially interesting in the field of children's literature when considering socialization and issues regarding any potential contributions to the internalization of oppressive social ideologies.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This research employs Foucauldian poststructuralism and critical discourse analysis to investigate representations of systemic oppression in two works of children's portal-quest fantasy literature. I will give an overview of Foucault's work on power relations and draw connections with Foucault's theories and key sources on the main forms of systemic oppression. I will then look at research on the relationship between fantasy and children's literature with society, followed by previous research on oppression in children's literature. While scholars of critical discourse analysis and poststructuralism have articulated a need to understand literature outside of a totalizing and "neutral" position, fantasy fiction is still frequently understood as presenting universal truths. As oppression often results in erasure and silencing, so too then can universal truths be based solely in privileged positions. Thus I intend to investigate social constructions of oppression in my primary texts, operationalizing the forms of systemic oppression in my analysis of the primary texts as outlined in this literature review.

2.2 Foucault and Power Relations

An analysis of systemic oppression involves investigating the power relations between the privileged and the oppressed people of a social body. This is based in Michel Foucault's argument that "the analysis of these power relations may, of course, open out onto or initiate something like the overall analysis of a society" ("11 January 1978" 17). In "Truth and Power", Foucault self-identifies as an "anti-structuralist," arguing that in an

analysis, “one’s point of reference should not be to the great model of language (*langue*) and signs, but to that of war and battle” (114). Thus a Foucauldian poststructuralist analysis involves focusing on constructions of power and power relations. In fact, the majority, if not all, of Foucault’s work deals with power relations, making it difficult to determine which texts specifically to focus on. Mark G. E. Kelly solves this issue by outlining Foucault’s major conceptualizations of power in his book *The Political Philosophy of Michel Foucault*. In this book, Kelly outlines Foucault’s theories of power relations over time, and how they evolve and also remain inherently constant. Kelly argues that Foucault identifies five major characteristics of power relations, with three subsequent characteristics of power relations, making a total of eight different characteristics. However, I personally struggled to understand how Kelly identifies the major differences between his points, and in a closer analysis of Foucault’s original works I was only able to identify six total characteristics of power relations, which I have outlined below.

The first characteristic of power that Kelly identifies is that power is not guided by the will of individual subjects. Rather, power functions only when it is part of a chain as “power is exercised through networks, and individuals do not simply circulate in those networks; they are in a position to both submit to and exercise this power. They are never the inert or consenting targets of power; they are always its relays” (Foucault, “14 January 1976” 29). For example, as explained throughout *The Archeology of Knowledge*, individuals do not determine dominant discourses, networks within a social body do, this creates a hierarchy of power that individuals then relay when they use dominant discourses when speaking.

Foucault's second conceptualization of power identified by Kelly is that power is always a case of relations between people. Thus power is co-extensive with the social body (Foucault, "Powers and Strategies" 142). Foucault argues that within every point of a social body there exit power relations which are not identical to the sovereign's power over individuals, but rather function in different forms of domination and resistance ("The History of Sexuality" 187-8). Foucault mentions the domination of men over women, but this can also be applied to the domination of white people over people of colour, heterosexuals over queer people and abled people over disabled people.

Kelly's third and fourth points argue that power is both decentered and multidirectional; however, the works paraphrased to identify Foucault's understanding of power as not focused on a single individual or group, as well as it coming from multiple sources, do not highlight a clear difference between these two conceptualizations. Arguably this is one point said in two different ways. Foucault himself states that power relations "are not univocal; they define innumerable points of confrontation" (*Discipline and Punish* 27). In Foucault's lecture, "14 January 1976" at the Collège de France, Foucault argues against analyzing the power of singularly-centered positions of political power, such as with the monarchy, and instead looking at the power relations within social institutions where it is less judicial (27-8). Furthermore, in *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction* Foucault argues that power is not a "binary of all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled" but instead there is a matrix of power that then shapes institutions (94). Thus, "power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations" and therefore "dominations are the hegemonic effects that are sustained by all these confrontations" (Foucault, *The History*

of Sexuality 94). Throughout these numerous works, then, Foucault is arguing against the existence of absolute power, and argues instead that while power relations involve a domination of one party over another, this domination is not based on a single point of power; in essence, men are not the kings or dictatorial rulers of women. Power thus comes from multiple points and in multiple forms, and arguably these are what should be identified when analyzing power. But power is exercised in an interplay of relations, while nonegalitarian and mobile relations, it is still an interplay, which leads to the importance of resistance.

Foucault makes it abundantly clear throughout several of his works that resistance is an essential component of power. Foucault argues this repeatedly: in *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction* he argues, “where there is power, there is resistance” (95); in “Powers and Strategies” he argues that “there are no relations of power without resistances; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised” (142) and in “The Subject and Power” Foucault states that “it would not be possible for power relations to exist without points of insubordination that, by definition, are means of escape” (347). Foucault makes this even more clear when he argues that absolute power is impossible “as the other still has the option of killing himself [...] or of killing the other person [...] if there were no possibility of resistance [...] there would be no power relations at all” (“The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom” 292). This thus explains why all men are not the kings or dictatorial rulers of all women. Though men have privilege and women are systemically oppressed, within the matrix of power relations women are able to resist men and their power over them. However, these forms of

resistance do not necessarily shift men's dominant positions over them within the social hierarchy. Foucault explains this further:

one cannot say that it was only men who wielded power in the conventional marital structure of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; women had quite a few options: they could deceive their husbands, pilfer money from them, refuse them sex. Yet they were still in a state of domination insofar as these options were ultimately only stratagems that never succeeded in reversing the situation. ("The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom" 292)

Therefore, while individual subjects do not guide power but rather relay it within a network, it is not a binary of oppositions but a matrix within relations between the dominant and dominated. From here it can be understood that power can be used intentionally, both to dominate, and to resist domination.

Kelly lists the intentionality and productivity of power as two separate points, but on further analysis it is clear that power is intentional *because* it is productive and thus is listed here as a single point (though, to be fair, what it produces is not necessarily what is intended.) According to Foucault, "power relations are both intentional and nonsubjective [...] there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives" (*The History of Sexuality* 94-5). As power is exercised, "power relations do indeed 'serve' [...] because they are capable of being utilised in strategies" (Foucault, "Powers and Strategies" 142). This means that power relations are used intentionally in productive strategies to either dominate or resist domination. Therefore, power relations "are the immediate effects of the divisions, inequalities, and disequilibriums which occur [...] they have a directly productive role, wherever they come into play" (Foucault, *The*

History of Sexuality 94). If power is intentionally used to produce inequality, and the analysis of power is an analysis of society, then it is clear that power relations produce social inequality and thus systems of oppression.

The final conceptualization of power is not listed by Kelly, but is rather elaborated on more thoroughly as a framework of understanding how power functions in society. According to Foucault, “power is war, the continuation of war by other means [...] power relations, as they function in a society like ours, are essentially anchored in a certain relationship of force that was established in and through war” (“7 January 1976” 15-16). This is a war that is not necessarily violent but is rather more of a fight for domination within society. Foucault continues by arguing:

while it is true that political power puts an end to war and establishes or attempts to establish the reign of peace in civil society, it certainly does not do so in order to suspend the effects of power or to neutralize the disequilibrium revealed by the last battle of the war. According to this hypothesis, the role of political power is perpetually to use a sort of silent war to reinscribe that relationship of force, and to reinscribe it in institutions, economic inequalities, language, and even the bodies of individuals. (“7 January 1976” 15-16)

Foucault makes it clear that by “political power” he is not referring to the government, as the term is generally understood today, but rather in its broader sixteenth century definition. “‘Government’ did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather, it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed [...] To govern [...] is to structure the possible field of action of others” (Foucault, “The Subject and Power” 341). “Governmentality” is the term Foucault uses to

describe this strategic field of power relations (“17 February 1982: First Hour” 252), and if systemic oppression is understood as a social preference and privileging of certain identities over others, then governmentality is the system that oppresses. In a biopower system that involves both the microscopic discipline (defined throughout *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* as the surveillance of individuals that conducts behaviour) and the macroscopic biopolitics (defined in his lecture on “17 March 1976” as the control of large populations and the human species as a whole) the association of war with governmentality is clearest. Foucault explains by arguing:

killing or the imperative to kill is acceptable only if it results not in a victory over political adversaries, but in the elimination of the biological threat to and the improvement of the species or race. There is a direct connection between the two. In a normalizing society, race or racism is the precondition that makes killing acceptable. When you have a normalizing society, you have a power which is, at least superficially, in the first instance, or in the first line a biopower, and racism is the indispensable precondition that allows someone to be killed, that allows others to be killed. Once the State functions in the biopower mode, racism alone can justify the murderous function of the State [...] When I say ‘killing,’ I obviously do not mean simply murder as such, but also every form of indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or, quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on.

(“17 March 1976” 256)

Literal killing is certainly a consequence of systemic oppression, but social rejection and exclusion are more prominent forms of the indirect murder of people of colour, women,

queer people and disabled people. The government of Western societies has been a war that has led to the domination of certain people by others.

Mark G. E. Kelly's *The Political Philosophy of Michel Foucault* makes clear that Foucault's body of work has outlined six ways power can be understood as a concept. Power is not guided by the will of individual subjects, power is always a case of relations between people, power is multidirectional, power is co-extensive with resistance, power is intentional and productive, and power is war. Governmentality is a war on people of colour, women, queer people and disabled people, and oppression is the direct result of being dominated in a power relation. These concepts must shape Foucauldian poststructural analyses of systemic oppression, and in the case of this thesis, how systemic oppression is represented in the societies of children's fantasy literature.

2.3 Systemic Oppression

In order to analyze Foucault's theories of power relations and governmentality in fiction and understand how systemic oppression is represented, it is important to first consider how systemic oppression is understood in the primary (real) world. In the case of this research, my analysis of systemic oppression considers the Western context only, specifically in regards to The United States and the United Kingdom as these are the countries the texts were written and published and there is not the time or space to investigate the systemic oppression of every country. This section of the literature review is broken into six parts. I will consider how oppression is intersectional before looking at the four different forms of oppression that are the focus of this research, namely the systemic oppression of people of colour, women, queer people and disabled people.

Before this, however, I will look at the opposite of oppression, privilege, and consider how privilege establishes, contributes to and enforces systemic oppression.

2.3.1 Privilege

If there exists in Western society a system of oppression, there invariably must exist then a system of privilege. These systems are intrinsically entwined and are incapable of separation. While one group is systemically oppressed, another group is, in turn, privileged by this same system. Conversely, oppression is a consequence of privilege as one group is favoured over another. This is the very nature of Foucault's theories of power relations. What these positions of power look like, and how they function in society is thus paramount in order to fully understand systemic oppression.

A limitation of this research is the exclusively Western way of understanding systemic oppression. Systems of oppression are, of course, contingent on which social systems they are a part, and therefore systemic oppression and privilege is geographically and spatially situated. The relationship of space to privilege and oppression is the focus of this thesis, as I investigate the systems of oppression in the fictional spaces of my primary texts.

Different societies have different systems of oppression. However, no matter the context, “privilege is synonymous with power. Any mention of privilege means that one group or individual is exerting power over another. The power that flows out of privilege is usually conceptualized in terms of unearned benefits” (Twine and Gardener 8). An example of this power is the murder of Trayvon Martin, an African-American teen who was shot and killed by a white man in Florida in 2012 due to the fact that his non-white

body was perceived as “out of place” (Twine and Gardener 7). As white supremacy becomes inscribed within society over generations in certain spaces (Twine and Gardener 4-6), “out of place” bodies are then threatened with punishments of both literal and metaphorical violence and death (Twine and Gardener 7). This is true for all oppressed positions but never happens to privileged positions, making privilege invisible to those who have it (Twine and Gardener 9). This fits with Foucault’s definition of domination within power relations as “a strategic situation, more or less taken for granted and consolidated, within a long-term confrontation between adversaries” (“The Subject and Power” 348). Those who have privilege have power that they do not need to think about, and their domination over the oppressed can be easily taken for granted. To employ a Foucauldian poststructural analysis of power relationships in a society, then, involves understanding privilege (Twine and Gardener 8).

Privilege is a flexible concept that changes in different spaces, as Twine and Gardener argue, “privilege is by no means a fixed relation, and both privileged subjects and those who are oppressed by privileging processes are struggling against power relationships” (10). Thus privilege must be analyzed in context in order to fully understand the systemic oppression of the analyzed space (Twine and Gardener 10). Privilege is often rendered invisible to those who have it, and therefore it is important to identify what privilege looks like in order to better understand how to analyze how it is represented in fictional texts. When a person contributes to systemic oppression it is often unconscious or unintentional as no one is taught in the early stages of life how to understand and see one’s unfair advantages or disadvantages (McIntosh 128). Furthermore, the experience and knowledge of one form of oppression does not provide

an instinctual understanding of other forms of oppression (McIntosh 125). However, the techniques used to understand one form of oppression can be applied to understanding any parallels in another (McIntosh 126).

Peggy McIntosh defines privilege as unearned assets, a metaphorical white knapsack in which privileged people carry weightless provisions, assurances, tools, maps and the like in their everyday lives that give them unfair advantages (125-6). McIntosh then lists forty-six ways in which the colour of her skin (but very intentionally not her class, religion or geographic location), has given her privileges on a systemic level (129-32). McIntosh argues that systemic privilege allows for ignorance and opportunity, while systemic oppression can affect one's mental and physical health (134-5). Allan G. Johnson's book *Privilege, Power, and Difference* continues McIntosh's research by providing a list of not only the ways white people are more privileged than people of colour, but also the ways men, heterosexuals and nondisabled people are privileged as well. My research will follow Johnson's example and focus on the same four forms of oppression that Johnson investigates, that of people of colour, women, queer people, and disabled people.

Difference is a socially constructed concept. Johnson makes this clear when he argues, "reducing people to a single dimension of who they are separates and excludes them, marks them as 'other,' as different from 'normal' (white, heterosexual, male, nondisabled) people and therefore as inferior" (19). He continues this idea by arguing that, "the truth is, however, that once human beings give something a name – whether it be skin color or disability – that thing acquires a significance it otherwise would not have" (20). Therefore, "being female or of color doesn't determine people's outcomes,

but these characteristics are turned into *liabilities* that make it less likely that people's talent, ability, and aspirations will be recognized and rewarded" (Johnson 22). From here, social systems of privilege can be understood with three key characteristics:

They are *dominated* by privileged groups, *identified* with privileged groups, and *centered* on privileged groups. All three characteristics support the idea that members of privileged groups are superior to those below them and, therefore, deserve their privilege. (90)

As Foucault argues, domination is related to positions of power in society. For example, the relationship between power and hegemonic masculinity (which is not the case for hegemonic femininity) or the unequal racial balance of positions of power in society's major institutions, demonstrate how privilege is characterized by domination (Johnson 91, 94). Identification has a great deal to do with normalcy, or the "universal" standard, like the idea that "American" or "British" automatically mean white (there is otherwise no white equivalent to terms like Black-British or even Native American, "American" and "British" already imply whiteness, despite the multiculturalism of both countries) (Johnson 96). White is the automatic standard, the norm. Finally, "because systems of privilege center on dominant groups, those who aren't included have reason to feel invisible, because in an important social sense, they are" (Johnson 102). Cultural products and ideologies primarily center on privileged and dominant groups, and often silence, misrepresent, or don't include at all (and thus make invisible) oppressed people. From here, systemic oppression can be vaguely defined with an understanding that "[racism and] sexism and ableism and heterosexism are [...] more than personal

expressions of hostility or prejudice but include everything that people do or don't do that promotes those forms of privilege" (Johnson 105).

It is clear that Western society is structured to privilege white people, men, heterosexuals, and nondisabled people over people of colour, women, queer people, and disabled people in ways that often go unnoticed and unchallenged. Systemic oppression involves behaviour, assumptions and social institutions that are generally considered normal and are often even expected. It is important to note that a person can be both privileged and oppressed, and can still contribute to this system of domination. Therefore, it is essential to consider the theory of intersectionality.

2.3.2 Intersectional Oppression

All people have multiple identities. All people have a race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation and varying abilities and or disabilities, and no person should be defined or categorized in ways that exclude the other components of their identity. How these identities are socially constructed determines whether each person is systemically oppressed within their society. However, people are not oppressed on separate occasions for each of their separately oppressed identities, but rather each person is considered as a whole and they, in turn, face intersectional oppression. For example, while an able-bodied black lesbian is oppressed as a person of colour, a woman, and as a queer person, she does not face systemic ableism. This same person cannot be understood as solely a woman, or exclusively within the context of lesbian representation, or within the context of able-bodied privilege. Rather, every part of her identity must be considered, as is the case with every person and fictional character, no matter how they are privileged or

oppressed. This is important to remember as “dominant conceptions of discrimination condition us to think about subordination as disadvantage occurring along a single categorical axis” (Crenshaw 383), which then prohibits successful resistances to oppression. For example, when the specific forms of oppression women of colour face are not considered, this “undermine[s] efforts to broaden feminist and antiracist analyses” and makes ending both racism and patriarchy even more difficult (Crenshaw 383, 387). Therefore, people’s identities are not separate, but rather intersect, and therefore oppression can be understood as intersectional, which Nira Yuval-Davis defines as a “metaphorical term, aimed at evoking images of a road intersection with an indeterminate or contested number of intersecting roads, depending on the various users of the term and how many social divisions are considered” (157). This theory originated with Kimberle Crenshaw’s call for black feminism, and since then the kinds of identities that should be considered part of this intersection have been up for a great deal of debate by scholars. However, Yuval-Davis argues, “the boundaries of intersectional analysis should encompass all members of society and thus intersectionality should be seen as the right theoretical framework for analyzing social stratification” (159). For the sake of space and time, this thesis cannot consider every form of oppression (for example, this thesis does not have the space to consider ageism, classism, religious oppression, and so on) but will only investigate the four forms of oppression outlined by Johnson (the oppression of people of colour, women, queer people and disabled people.)

It is important to note that theories of intersectionality also consider the specifics of different groups and communities. For example, black women face both sexism and racism, often in ways similar to white women or black men respectively. However they

also face combined practices that oppress them based on both their gender and race in ways neither white women nor black men face (Crenshaw 385). Oppressed people can contribute to what is clearly a complex social system of oppression, and the different ways identities intersect can determine the different ways systemic oppression is experienced. An example could include the ableist rhetoric of queer people resisting heterosexist assumptions that queer people are “diseased.” This can often be unintentional, such as when feminists “stand in solidarity” with, say, disabled women, forgetting that there are disabled women who cannot stand themselves (Whitestone). It is my intention to move forward in this literature review by outlining the four different forms of oppression in a way that considers Western society as a whole, a society constructed by the privileged majority. For example, while “men of different classes, races, or ethnic groups have different places in the patriarchy, they also are united in their shared relationship of dominance over their women” (Hartmann 143) and therefore, my outline of the systemic oppression of women will consider how men are privileged as men regardless of race, sexual orientation, or ability. While this is not an intersectional approach and therefore may be considered a major limitation of this research, and while what follows throughout this literature review may certainly appear categorical, my intention is to present the foundational knowledge necessary to understand systemic oppression, and then to consider intersectionality in my primary text analysis.

In my analysis I fully intend to consider all four forms of identity for each character, instead of categorizing any as exclusively one or the other. In order to understand social hierarchies of power, or systems of oppression, the different forms of oppression should be analyzed and compared in a variety of contexts. At the same time,

“an intersectional approach to stratification would require a mode of analysis which [...] would be sensitive to situated contexts, but which would also not fall into the relativist trap that prevents comparative judgment” (Yuval-Davis 166). In the analyzed texts, therefore, it is important to consider how each character is privileged and or oppressed in different ways, and how the different social structures contribute to their intersectional privilege and or oppression. To move forward, then, it is important to consider how the primary texts may present social systems different from those in the West.

2.3.3 The Systemic Oppression of People of Colour

Joe R. Feagin argues that systemic racism is more than individual prejudice and bigotry, but is a material, social and ideological factor in the actions, attitudes, emotions and habits of all major American institutions (2). Systemic racism benefits white European-descended Americans in unjust socioeconomic ways, such as wealth and power (Feagin 4). Feagin articulates his use of the word “systemic” as a sense of an organized and interconnected societal whole within all major social groups, networks and institutions; systemic racism being intentionally established and enforced by white Americans (7-8). Feagin’s analysis is limited by focusing on white-on-black oppression in America, but can certainly be applied to other people of colour in other Western contexts.

Systemic racism has its roots in the historical economic domination and exploitation of imperialism, colonialism and slavery (Feagin 9, 16). This has had a variety of consequences including the loss of time and energy from people of colour as they face damages to their personal, physical and psychological health, while whites

dictate how people of colour should behave and think, and discriminate in other areas such as education, politics, housing, health care, policing and public accommodations (Feagin 20-23). With the cultural domination and imposition of white values on people of colour in North America, Feagin claims that old racist images, understandings, and related emotions become imbedded in white children's conscious and unconscious minds at a young age, making it very difficult to counter later in life (25-27). Thus historical racism still plays a central role in dominant discourses and social systems of oppression.

History leaves its mark on the present, and thus the white supremacy of history is still very much apparent in the social systems of the contemporary West. One way this is apparent is in contemporary xenophobia. Kim and Sundstrom identify xenophobia as a specific form of oppression in which those assumed as alien and other are civically ostracized (21-22). As identities are socially constructed, individualism is necessarily established through institutions and groups therefore, "xenophobia matters because group life does" (Kim and Sundstrom 23). While not all forms of racism can be understood as xenophobic, most forms of xenophobia can be understood as part of a social system of racism as it is typically only encountered by people of colour, regardless of whether or not they are actually immigrants, with few exceptions based in historically-based prejudices. For example, "all the nonwhite racial groups were initially ipso facto marked as civic outsiders" (Kim and Sundstrom 27) and "racialized peoples, say Latinos and Asians, may be admitted into the country up to a certain limit and welcomed on the condition that they assimilate to the cultural norms of the host nation" (Kim and Sundstrom 24). When compared with Feagin, the cultural norms of the host nation would be the white values of America, meaning that when people of colour immigrate to

countries like America or Britain they must conform to white culture in a system of white supremacy and domination. This civic ostracism can thus be understood as a form of racial oppression, as being regarded as less than white people. Kim and Sundstrom identify civic inclusion to involve a sense agency that leads to meaningful opportunities that they are given equal access to as their peers; to be ostracized in this sense, then, is to neither have a certain level of agency nor equal opportunity (24).

This sense of belonging or not belonging is central to Kim and Sundstrom's argument, which ties directly to Twine and Gardener's concept of being "out of place." According to Kim and Sundstrom, "one of the central ways in which xenophobia as civic ostracism is expressed is the attribution of the cultural alienness of a subject" as well as "exclusions, hierarchies, and indignities, based upon ascriptions of a subject not properly belonging to the civic community" (25, 26). Xenophobia "may take the form of thinking that some person or group cannot be authentic participants in a nation's cultural, linguistic, or religious traditions" (Kim and Sundstrom 26). Xenophobia can thus express contempt toward not only a person's skin colour (28) but also toward their cultural ways (30). To summarize, "xenophobia, then, is an idea associated with a distinct set of attitudes and affects, along with beliefs, that are about national inclusion and exclusion" (Kim and Sundstrom 30).

When analyzing systemic racism and the power relations of different races in the primary texts, it will be important to consider social attitudes toward both people of colour as well as the immigrant. As I am analyzing the portal-quest fantasy genre, both of my primary texts feature characters entering new societies that they did not previously belong. While they may not be people of colour, how they are treated as newcomers will

identify the xenophobia (or lack thereof) inherent in the analyzed society and therefore make suggestions about each society's racial and or cultural hierarchies and systems of oppression.

2.3.4 The Systemic Oppression of Women

The systemic oppression of women is based in a complex social hierarchy. Society is like a hierarchy "in that those near or at the top have more power and resources, while those at the bottom have relatively little" (Moane 27). In this hierarchy, "almost all of the major systems of society – politics, economics, religion, education, mass media, art and culture – which are hierarchically organized are male dominated" (Moane 28). While the use of violence is posited as an obvious mechanism to maintain this dominance, Moane notes that a more subtle control of economic, political and symbolic systems not only works effectively, but also convinces the subordinated that their position is normal, natural, and even good for them (35-6). According to Moane, there are "six modes of control which are characteristic of systems of domination [...] violence, political exclusion, economic exploitation, cultural control, control of sexuality, and fragmentation or 'divide and conquer'" (36). This hierarchy of domination is commonly known as patriarchy.

Patriarchy can be defined as "a set of social relations between men, which [...] establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women" (Hartmann 143). This includes, for example, a social acceptance of men as the "head" of the household. The notion that women are inferior to men is taught and enforced throughout society, including how they are respected and represented in

“churches, schools, sports, clubs, unions, armies, factories, offices, health centers, the media” and so on (Hartmann 144). Therefore this hierarchy is seen all throughout society, and the subordination of women is “*integral* to the functioning of our society; that is, these relationships are *systemic*” (Hartmann 146). Patriarchy then, can be understood in a Foucauldian sense as the government of the sexes, and the systemic oppression of women. An analysis of patriarchy in a fantasy society, then, is an analysis of apparent divisions and hierarchies between men and women.

2.3.5 The Systemic Oppression of Queer People

Homophobia is not the most inclusive term to describe the oppression faced by queer people, as it can only be applied to gays and lesbians as homosexuals, but not other queer people, such as bisexuals or transgender people. When actually looking at the systemic oppression of queer people I posit that it is not homophobia, but rather heterosexism and heteronormativity that are the systems that oppress all queer people.

Heterosexism can be defined as “prejudice in favor of heterosexual people and connotes prejudice against” queer people; it “is rooted in a largely cognitive constellation of beliefs about human sexuality” (Jung and Smith 13). This constellation of beliefs can be understood as analogous with “most dimensions of our cultural life. This ‘system’ shapes our legal, economic, political, social, interpersonal, familial, historical, education, and ecclesial institutions” (Jung and Smith 14), thus meaning that heterosexism is the systemic oppression of queer people.

Heterosexuality is central in Western society, making countries like America and Britain heterocentric, which is “the conviction that heterosexuality is *the* normative form

of human sexuality. It is the measure by which all other sexual orientations are judged” and therefore, “all sexual authority, value, and power are centered in heterosexuality” (Jung and Smith 14). Heterosexuality has been historically deemed more natural than homosexuality, which has lead not only to the domination of heterosexuality in society, but also to violent threats made on the lives of queer people.

Jung and Smith identify a scale that shows how different people in society understand queer people. This scale begins with thinking of queer people as unnatural, then diseased, defective, imperfect, and finally to thinking of queer people as completely natural (22-31). Thus while there are many origins and forms of heteronormativity in the systems of Western society, as a whole society deems heterosexuality as superior to any other sexuality, and in turn heterosexual people are dominant in their power relations with queer people.

In this view that heterosexuality is superior is the societal attempt to enforce that all people be heterosexual. This is a system known as heteronormativity. Heteronormativity can be best understood as the use of both violent and silent techniques to assume and ensure that all people meet gendered expectations, which includes gender roles, gender identities as well as sexual orientations (DePalma and Jennett 16). Heterosexuality and the conflation of sex and gender are both parts of hegemonic masculinity and femininity in the West. Therefore, heteronormativity is both an intentional and unintentional social policing against non-normative sexual orientations and gender identities.

For transgender and gender non-conforming people, heteronormativity not only leads to anti-transgender prejudices, but also erases the existence of transgender and

gender non-conforming people from social consciousness. This has led to a variety of ways transgender and gender non-conforming people have faced systemic oppression in their daily lives, from social stigma to violent hate crimes. The systemic oppression of transgender and gender non-conforming people can take several forms, including being misgendered, being exoticized and eroticized, being forgotten and made invisible in almost all social discourse and cultural practice, being assumed pathologically abnormal, being denied bodily privacy, and frequently being under the threat of physical violence (Nadal, et al. 64). As society has historically conflated sex and gender, society's institutions have foundations in gender binaries (Nadal, et al. 71). This has established a social system that oppresses transgender and gender non-conforming people in a multitude of ways, including, for example, the law (such as criminal law and government identification), in regards to proper access to healthcare, and even in accessing public bathrooms (Nadal, et al. 71). All of these forms of systemic oppression can threaten the very lives of transgender and gender non-conforming people.

The assumption that all people are heterosexual, and that all heterosexuals should conform to gender roles and expectations, puts people with normative sexualities and gender identities in positions of social prevalence and privilege. This, in turn, marks people with non-normative sexualities and gender identities as either nonexistent or abnormal. In analyzing the systemic oppression of queer people in fictional worlds, then, I will consider what ways the characters are or are not assumed to have normative sexual orientations and gender identities by others and by institutions, and what spaces there are for this to be contested, and normativity to be resisted.

2.3.6 The Systemic Oppression of Disabled People

In my research I have found that “disabled people” is the preferred term within the social model of disability and the study of ableism, meaning the systemic oppression of disabled people. I will discuss my language use in Section 3.4 of the Method Chapter. Ableism can be understood as “an attitude that devalues or differentiates disability through the valuation of able-bodiedness equated to normalcy” (Campbell 5). This focus on normalcy, and what bodies are defined as “normal” in social thought is central to understanding the systemic oppression of disabled people.

There are two central regimes of ableism irrespective of the type of disability, which include “*the notion of the normative (and normate individual)* and the enforcement of a *constitutional divide* between perfected naturalised humanity and the aberrant, the unthinkable, quasi-human hybrid and therefore non-human” (Campbell 6). This first regime of ableism places the disabled body (including the mind) as inherently abnormal in order to validate the positions of the able-bodied as “normal,” and therefore identities should be understood free from evaluative ranking. In an analysis of ableism in literature, then, I will consider what bodies and abilities are seen as strange, different, and therefore not “normal.” I will also consider how the fantasy world is built to cater to different body types and abilities, such as wheelchair accessibility or even the access to such disability aids as wheelchairs.

This second regime of ableism can be understood within the realm of transhumanism and how the role of technology (such as prostheses and disability aids) in the lives of disabled people can be different than that of able-bodied people. A person’s reliance on technology, such as with a prosthetic, can often be viewed as a hybridization,

and from there the person is considered a cyborg or a monster (Campbell 45). This ties directly with technophobia, or at least a suspicion of technology. The relationship a disabled person has with whatever assistive technology they use can vary, from a tool that may be seen as positive (enabling and enhancing) and or negative (publicly marking the person as disabled and dependent), to a total synthesis with their identity and an essential component of who they are (Campbell 47-51). There is a divide then, in seeing disabled people who use assistive technologies as either deficient or hyper-endowed, as either less human or *too* technological, an “enhanced” or “better” human. This transhumanist position is also divided between those who see it as suspicious and apocalyptically dangerous, and those who see it as an improvement for the species, the next step in evolution (Campbell 63). Ultimately, whether viewed positively or negatively, technology marks a disabled person and changes the way they are understood by others in society. My analysis of ableism in my primary texts will consider any hybridization of the biological and technological, and how this synthesis is viewed in relation to identity as well as by other characters.

2.4 Social Structures in Fantasy and Children’s Literature

Now that the four major forms of systemic oppression have been outlined, I turn to research on how social systems are understood in relation to both fantasy and children’s literature, and then move into examples of how oppression has previously been studied in children’s literature as a field. Scholarship on children’s literature as a medium and fantasy literature as a genre is vast and diverse. Furthermore, according to Nikolajeva, children’s literature scholars have a greater degree of respect for the fantasy

genre than most other scholars, and thus it ostensibly follows that there is a great deal of research in children's fantasy literature specifically (*Reading for Learning* 46). As this thesis is interested in representations of systemic oppression in children's portal-quest fantasy literature, the literature reviewed below will not look just at children's fantasy in general, as this is too broad a field, but rather at historical constructions of social structures in both fantasy worlds and children's literature. This acts as a foreground for scholarship on the representations of oppressed identities. In this respect, the research below focuses a great deal on history, rhetoric, didacticism and socialization, before moving into more poststructural analyses. To make this more comprehensive, this section of the literature review is broken into three parts, the first focusing on fantasy fiction, the second on children's literature's relationship with society and the third on oppression in children's literature.

2.4.1 The Structure of the Fantasy World

The definition of fantasy fiction as a genre has undergone serious debate and change since its inception, (though even the time and roots of the inception of the genre is under debate). Whether the genre be defined in terms of magic, myth, folklore, mimeses (or the lack thereof), or impossibility more broadly, what is clear is that there is no one singular definition that has achieved consensus by academics. What is clear, however, are the areas of fantasy literature that are most commonly studied. Unsurprisingly for high fantasy, or fantasy set in an alternative world, setting is a primary focus in scholarship. The structuring of these fantasy worlds is of primary interest for this research, and is the focus of this section of the literature review.

J.R.R. Tolkien's "On Fairy-Stories" is a foundational source in the study of fantasy literature and alternative worlds. As both an author and scholar, Tolkien approaches the position of the author of Secondary World fantasy fiction as a god-like sub-creator (122). For Tolkien, this sub-creator author creates a world that suspends disbelief and thus presents "truth" (132). Therefore readers of the Secondary World are assumedly meant to believe and accept the fantasy world in full; otherwise the story does not work. Furthermore, Tolkien argues that Fairy-Stories are meant to be desirable, that the reader should want to go to the Secondary World they are reading about (134); which suggests that Secondary World fantasies are meant to be empowering in some fashion, as a world that empowers the reader is a desirable one.

Tolkien describes Fairy-Stories as texts that offer fantasy, recovery, escape and consolation (138-154). Fantasy meaning imagination, a Secondary Belief that can accept the Secondary World and be enchanted by it (Tolkien 138-9, 143). Tolkien argues that fantasy allows for a clearer understanding of truth. I argue that this "truth" can be understood as dominant discourses. Tolkien's explanation of recovery, escape and consolation contributes to this, understanding the Fairy-Story as a way for the reader to find freedom and knowledge, and thus joy, again contributing to the concept that the Secondary World is inherently empowering and positive (145-155).

Fantasy worlds are the most distinguishing trait and most studied aspect of the genre. Timmerman argues, "the world of fantasy matches our world in reality" and that "the reason for creating such a world is to confront more openly and daringly a spiritual reality too often ignored in our world of system and fact" (49). In this way ideologies, values, some form of "spiritual" understanding of the world, perhaps "universal" truths,

can be re-structured in fantasy worlds in order to be better understood within the reader's own world. As Timmerman argues, "if there is such a thing as extrapolation in fantasy, it is from the fantasy world to our own" (51). Thus fantasy is written either to evoke change or to shape (or socialize) a particular worldview.

Timmerman examines the works of Tolkien and the legends of King Arthur as the two key sources that construct how fantasy worlds are written and understood today. He reads Tolkien in order to understand the purpose of fantasy, which he argues is a way for the reader to engage with and understand the world with a renewed perspective (58).

Timmerman argues that the many symbols within Arthuriana create a spiritual meaning as (the Christian) God plays a central role in the legends, such as in Arthur's divine appointment as King. Authoritative leadership is thus paramount for spiritual revision (Timmerman 65), which connects with other research in the field of fantasy literature.

Timmerman also argues that Arthur's city of Camelot is responsible for playing a major role in shaping fantasy societies. The spiritual insights in fantasy fiction come from a specific locus of meaning, which Timmerman argues is the "'sacred city,'" which "represents the unifying force among the people, but also the generative force which invests their lives with direction and meaning" (65). In other words, Camelot's utopic history as an ideological nexus has shaped other fantasy societies to emulate specific values that then dictate the dominant discourses apparent throughout each text.

Timmerman argues that the issue with this is that the "dynamism of the spiritual vision may become merely a codification of rigid laws" for example, "when the vow itself becomes an end, we have merely system and not vision" (67). Thus, if "the purpose of the kingdom is to establish harmony and order in the world at large" (Timmerman 67),

but there is not enough of a consideration of how this purpose is to come about, then there can be established rigid laws (or unconscious and oppressive social norms and expectations) that then lead to a harmful system that gets in the way of the intended vision. Therefore, instead of harmony and order, there is a system of dominance for the privileged protagonists. In other words, systems of oppression in fantasy worlds limit oppressed groups from realizing the same liberating themes that the fantasy text attempts to present because there is a codification of oppressive systems rather than a vision.

This thesis is concerned primarily with the portal-quest fantasy genre specifically. Farah Mendlesohn defines the genre of the portal-quest Fantasy as a quest-based fantasy that involves a portal that takes the protagonist(s) from the primary world into a secondary fantasy world (1). The texts of this genre often feature an alignment between the king's well being with the well being of the land (3). In this way, glorification, nostalgia and imperialism set up a fixed morality within the very structure of the fantasy world (3, 9). Thus the portal-quest genre works well to present an authoritative moral paradigm, making texts in this genre highly didactic (5-7, 11-13).

Mendlesohn explains that a fundamental component to the structure of this genre is that the narrators of these stories are authoritative, uninterrupted and unquestionable, delivering history as unbiased fact and issues as dualistic (5-7, 11-17). With this in mind, Mendlesohn also argues that fantasy is meant to be relatable (19), but that fantasy worlds should stand in contrast with the reader's primary world (21). This idea suggests that the fantasy worlds in the portal-quest genre should be compared to the primary world that the protagonists left, which correlates with my intention to compare social systems of oppression between the primary and secondary worlds. Mendlesohn also argues that the

belief that the reader can interpret the fantasy world is an illusion the genre relies upon (22-23), and thus calls into question the supposed empowering qualities of the fantasy world the protagonist and reader experience in a first reading. By presenting both the reader's own world, and then a fantasy world to compare it to that is described by an authoritarian narrator, there is a clear distinction made in this genre between what is and what should be. In this way, I argue that this genre, out of all fantasy genres, is the most didactic in socializing the reader.

As Mendlesohn, Tolkien and Timmerman make clear, fantasy literature has a complex but clear relationship with the reader's society. Used not only to escape from the rest of the world, fantasy literature is also designed to allow the reader to understand their own world in a more abstract, perhaps even spiritual way. In this way, ideologies and ways of life can be Romanticized or uplifted as recommendations for the reader to emulate. While this can be understood positively in regards to major themes, I am left wondering how this may be harmful in terms of underlying assumptions and prejudices. This is especially of concern in works of children's fantasy that are historically written to socialize the child reader.

2.4.2 Children's Literature and Society

If fantasy literature and fantasy societies are able to allow the reader to reflect on and better understand their own society, then it follows that children's fantasy can be understood as a socialization tool. In fact, Jack Zipes argues, "the concern in literature as socializing agent has been explicit and implicit in most histories and essays dealing with literature for the young since its rise as a type of cultural communication system" (20-

21). Following this, in the study of children's fantasy specifically, Nikolajeva argues that this genre can be used to help children explore complex but important psychological, ethical and existential questions while simultaneously socializing them ("The Development of Children's Fantasy" 61). There is thus a question raised about how children's fantasy literature can contribute to social systems of privilege and oppression through a socialization that enforces dominant discourses. What is evident in previous scholarship is the complex and problematic symbiotic relationship between children's literature and society.

The relationship between children's literature and the structuring of society is explained in Kimberley Reynolds' Introduction to *Children's Literature Studies: A Research Handbook*. Reynolds begins by arguing that much of children's fiction is used to teach prevailing values (1), which I argue includes oppressive and privileging dominant discourses. By studying children's literature one can understand elements and debates about the historical or cultural landscape the text was written (1). Furthermore, because children's literature is presented to people early in their lives, during their most formative years, these texts play a powerful role in shaping how readers think about and understand the world, including on an institutional level (1-2). Therefore children's literature can be understood as a possible root or contributing factor to how societies are conceived, organized and managed. Children's literature has historically had an ethical code concerning what is appropriate for child readers, a code that has changed over time (7). One way that children's literature is slowly changing is that in the past the majority of Western children's literature was written for white, middle-class, heterosexual Christians (9). While this is slowly changing over time, this privileging still exists and is

worth noting in children's literature, including both the contemporary and the classical works still being read today.

This concern with the representation of different identities in children's literature aligns with what I have found in my investigation on previous research in the field. What I have encountered is that traditionally the study of oppression in literature has been concerned with the study of character representation. While certainly the people in a society, whether consciously or unconsciously, create and maintain systems of oppression, the study of the representations of social structures that lead to the intersectional oppression of different groups in children's fantasy literature is an under-considered area of research. Individual bigotry and problematic, negative or completely missing character representations seems to have been the sole focuses of oppression in literature in the past. This being said, it is important to understand how characters in literature, specifically children's literature, are analyzed in order to understand how oppression in literature has been previously studied. Furthermore, as characters perpetuate systems of oppression, it is necessary to continue previous research in this regard for my thesis. To accomplish this, I have looked at Maria Nikolajeva's book *Rhetoric of Character in Children's Literature*.

Nikolajeva's book draws on previous research on character in literature and identifies ways this research is or is not applicable to children's literature specifically. Nikolajeva argues that, "characters in children's fiction are not necessarily less complex, but they must be comprehensible for young readers. More commonly than in the mainstream, they serve as ideological (or rather educational) vehicles" (x). Thus, characters in children's fiction often act as role models for the reader (x). She then

investigates whether characters should be perceived as representative of real people or textual constructions written only for their illustrative and rhetorical function, ultimately arguing that while this is up to each scholar, typically children's literature scholars investigate characters as representative (10). From here, Nikolajeva focuses on the different kinds of characters in works of children's fiction.

Nikolajeva uses countless example characters from the canon of children's literature to illustrate her points, including those from my primary texts. In her analysis, Nikolajeva notes issues in relation to representations of minority groups. For example, Nikolajeva argues that:

in children's fiction, girls are doubly oppressed: as women and as children. This implies that in a children's novel, a female character's development is more universal than in the mainstream, where the femininity is overt and explicit. Not least, girls' fiction is historically a relatively recent genre; therefore, masculine patterns are 'default values' in children's fiction, as in many other fields. (47)

These "masculine patterns" are mentioned earlier when Nikolajeva argues that the classic epic hero is based on heroes such as "Gilgamesh, Hercules, Odysseus, Sigurth, [and] Roland" (31). Here Nikolajeva points out not only how literary characters do not necessarily accurately represent systems of oppression that can be experienced by the reader, but also how history has contributed to current literary constructions that contribute to systemic oppression. In this sense, minority characters in children's fiction may not experience bigotry or may be written in a way that ignores (and thus makes invisible, which contributes to) systemic oppression. Or perhaps minority characters can be written to directly resist and overcome bigotry in ways that the reader could not, again

ignoring the complex systems of oppression that are true to reality. Nikolajeva supports this idea by later arguing, “literary characters are deliberately constructed by the author, which means that elements that are inconsequential in real life are arranged in fiction to support (or occasionally subvert) our understanding of character” (158). When writing minority characters specifically, systemic oppression plays a key role, as Nikolajeva argues, “as to race, it need not be mentioned in a text but will be understood from the plot, setting, and other textual elements [...] if a character’s race is not mentioned, we will judge it by ‘default value,’ which in our Western culture is Caucasian” (155). In relation to fantasy and adventure stories, Nikolajeva remarks how characters do not get sick, and that, “illness is the character’s antagonist rather than a human condition” (220). She continues this with a note on disability, “in classic children’s literature, a little invalid in a wheelchair or permanently in bed was almost a commonplace [...] In contemporary novels, a disabled protagonist may allow us an insight into his or her situation” (220). Thus, it seems that disabled characters are unwelcome in the fantasy genre except to enlighten or inspire the reader. Stella Young argues in her TEDTalk, “I’m Not Your Inspiration, Thank You Very Much,” that when a disabled person’s actions are considered inspiring when those same actions wouldn’t be viewed as such if accomplished by nondisabled people, the disabled person is being objectified and dehumanized. Near the end of the book Nikolajeva argues, “judgments [are seldom seen] in children’s fiction, at least not originating from child characters, apparently because children are not supposed to be able to judge other people” (235). If judgments and such political issues as systemic oppression are invisible in children’s fiction, does this

necessarily make children's literature automatically more inclusive, or does it rather contribute to systems of oppression by making invisible the problems?

The process of understanding is the focus of Maria Nikolajeva's book, *Reading for Learning: Cognitive Approaches to Children's Literature*, which employs cognitive criticism to investigate how children learn through reading based on the narrative techniques of a text. Nikolajeva writes, "let us contemplate what children's fiction tells its readers about society, societal norms, social structures and social behaviour" (32). This is a similar but broader direction than my own research. Before Nikolajeva can accomplish this, however, she articulates the issue of how fiction can simultaneously represent facts about the world equally as verifiably as falsities (24), which can be an issue as, "'novice readers' limited experience of the actual world implies that they potentially more easily accept a wide range of fictional worlds without ascribing any of them a greater degree of truth" (27). Furthermore, while Nikolajeva recognizes that "the purpose of reading fiction is not primarily knowledge acquisition" she argues, "any fictional text contains a substantial amount of information that can potentially be beneficial for our knowledge of the actual world" (22). However, Nikolajeva makes the argument, "a great number of external factors that determine the actual world are deliberately eliminated in fiction. Nothing is random or accidental; everything is part of a design [...] In children's literature the design has a strong educational flavour" (24). Therefore, children are able to learn about the world from literature, but what they learn is based on a representation that is very specifically constructed. Nikolajeva argues that fictional worlds are able to offer more reliable knowledge about the actual world than the real world (27). She continues this by explaining that fictional worlds, "represent various

aspects of society and should therefore be able to transmit social knowledge: a knowledge and understanding of societal structures, mechanisms and practices” (31). This is more characteristic of children’s literature than literature for the adult market as “children’s literature generally is deliberately constructed to offer cognitive engagement (learning something from the text) rather than [an] aesthetic one (enjoying the text as it is)” (32). Thus, as Nikolajeva argues that children can learn about social structures through fiction, I argue that within said social structures is a system of oppression that can also potentially be learned.

Nikolajeva also considers the different types of worlds presented in different genres. She considers how realism can represent society differently than historical fiction, or even fantasy fiction. In fact, she even investigates the portal fantasy genre specifically, explaining how the genre presents two worlds, the fantasy world, and the actual world that acts as a narrative frame (43). She argues that the “alternative worlds, no matter how alien and bizarre, are also representations of the actual world [...] They have social structures that we recognize” (43). With the actual world acting as a narrative frame, Nikolajeva argues that a comparison of the two social structures is likely intended, arguing, “portal fantasy, that takes ordinary children to imaginary magical realms by means of magical agents, draws a more or less clear line between the fictional reality and the other, magical world” (46). It is made clear, then, that fantasy (or, in Nikolajeva’s broader terms, non-mimetic) worlds, are likely more cognitively valuable for children to learn about social structures than mimetic worlds. This is especially true for recognizing fictionality:

Fantasy is an extreme case of fiction since of all literary modes it is farthest away from readers' actual experience. The farther a possible world is from the real world, the more attention and imagination is required from readers, since they are not familiar with the rules; in most cases, they are less familiar with the rules than the inhabitants of the world. (43)

They must then either learn the rules from these inhabitants, as is typical in the portal-quest genre, or, in more immersive fantasies, "they need to put together facts into a coherent whole to understand how this possible world works" which Nikolajeva argues is better for cognitive development (44). Furthermore, Nikolajeva argues:

fiction does not have the transmission of knowledge as its primary goal, but that possible worlds can potentially do so on certain conditions, the most important of which is the understanding of fictionality [...] There are many reasons why fantasy is regarded more highly in children's literature than in the mainstream; one can be exactly that it provides good training in recognizing fictionality. (45, 46)

If children are able to compare fantasy worlds with the actual world, as is intended with the portal-quest genre, and in so doing better understand the difference between fiction and reality, then it follows that the representation of systemic oppression in children's fantasy can work to either reinforce its dominance and normalcy in the actual world, or resist it.

As Maria Nikolajeva and Kimberly Reynolds have demonstrated, children's literature has traditionally functioned as a socialization tool and has historically favoured privileged social positions. While this is not exclusive to children's fantasy, the didactic

nature of children's fantasy literature suggests the genre's greater likelihood for potential influence. This demonstrates the value of understanding both how varying identities are represented in children's literature, as well as how literary societies are constructed.

2.4.3 Children's Literature and Oppression

As already stated, previous research in oppression in children's literature has looked almost exclusively at character representation. While this thesis endeavors to contribute to current scholarship by investigating the social systems said characters travel to or live in, I will still be drawing on foundational insights by previous scholars. For example, while systemic sexism in children's literature may not have been previously studied, the literary construction of gender has. I will therefore investigate examples of previous scholarship on oppression in children's literature to demonstrate both the gap in current research this thesis intends to fill, as well as the approaches to the literary constructions of oppressed identities.

There has been a great deal of previous research in the analysis of racism in children's literature. Scholars have analyzed everything from specific ethnic representations to literary constructions of race overall. One such example of the latter is Maria José Botelho and Masha Kabakow Rudman's book *Critical Multicultural Analysis of Children's Literature: Mirrors, Windows, and Doors*. This book uses critical multicultural analysis as a theoretical approach in explicating children's literature. According to Botelho and Rudman, meaning in children's literature is found both through language and from the institutional practices and power and social relations presented in the texts (101). Thus this book argues for a poststructuralist and cultural studies approach

for understanding multiculturalism in children's literature. In this way, scholars can deconstruct dominant ideologies of Western societies that are privileging and oppressive as they are presented in children's literature, and how they set up power relations in these texts (102).

The book looks at a variety of issues faced by oppressed identities, including Otherness, self-esteem struggles, invisibility and silencing (103-8). From here the book argues that theoretical constructs of discourse, ideology, subjectivity, and power ground critical multicultural analysis and should be used to understand power relations in literature (109-119). This book goes into great detail about the social constructions of race, class and gender, understanding the intersecting qualities of systemic oppression. In one chapter the book looks at certain genres specifically, and a page is dedicated to fantasy fiction. On this page, Maria José Botelho and Masha Kabakow Rudman write, "fantasy often disguises itself as unrelated to fact, lowering the reader's guard and inserting 'information and values' that the reader internalizes" (214). Fantasy also offers "truth" and is relatable; readers can internalize the information and values inherent in a fantasy work. However, Maria José Botelho and Masha Kabakow Rudman's analysis is incredibly brief, only a couple paragraphs, and does not explain this further in relation to the specifics of the genre's conventions. Therefore, further work is needed in this area.

While previous research in gender and sexism in children's literature has used content analysis to investigate sex-role stereotypes, Elizabeth Marshall in "Stripping for the Wolf: Rethinking Representations of Gender in Children's Literature," uses poststructural feminist and literary theories to contribute to liberal feminist frameworks for conceptualizing gender, examining the discursive production of gender in literature

for children. Marshall makes her reasons for this very clear, as content analysis gains predictable results, “boys appear as independent characters with instrumental and active roles, while girls emerge as passive and dependent [...] in terms of children’s literature, the focus centers on how girls’ attributes are similar to or different from those of boys” (259). Instead of comparing boys and girls, Marshall is more interested in “discursive practices that produce certain ways of thinking and speaking about the girl” as these discourses connect “representations of gender in children’s literature to cultural struggles around power and knowledge” (259). In this way, Marshall is able to identify how children’s literature contributes to the systemic oppression of women. She argues that the “representations of gender in children’s literature [...] can be read not so much as a mirror image of the real than as discursive constructions that shape the social categories of ‘boy’ and ‘girl’” (259). Therefore, “literature written for children [...] surface as cultural products tied to a discursive legacy that attempts to regulate and define children’s bodies in terms of gender and sexuality” (259). In this way, Marshall makes clear that sex and gender are conflated as one and the same, and therefore body determines expected behaviour. Thus, “feminist paradigms for analyzing gender in literature for children rely on culturally bound and fixed definitions of femininity” (260). When analyzing children’s literature then, an investigation of systemic gender oppression involves examining how gender is constructed in the text in the first place.

In order to accomplish this, Marshall employs a Foucaudian poststructural analysis to focus less on stereotypical gender roles, and more so on changing and often contradictory discourses of femininity that attempt to control the girl’s body. To exemplify this, Marshall analyzes the different versions of the “Little Red Riding Hood”

fairy-tale. Ultimately, Marshall argues that the stories present conflicting discourses “of femininity that position the girl as both innocent and sexually inviting [which] allow for a representation of the girl as somehow culpable for the wolf’s sexual advances” (266). In this way, the fairy-tale is about gendered violence and sexual violation (266), and Marshall argues the protagonist is presented as practically asking to be raped by being in unauthorized territory, which can be understood in today’s context as victim blaming (268). According to Marshall, “the construction of Little Red as innocent victim echoes familiar discourses, which deny the possibility of the feminine, usually white, middle class body’s sexual agency” (268). Thus Marshall argues that:

The figure of the girl arises as a site of political struggle through which shifting and competing discourses about gender and sexuality circulate. This complexity invites an analysis less concerned with locating *what* stereotypical or non-stereotypical female traits arise in a particular text and more on *how* gender, especially girlhood, is discursively produced. (268)

In this way, Marshall’s Foucauldian poststructural analysis identifies girlhood as socially constructed. In considering how gendered categories are discursively produced, rather than problematically represented, she has outlined how systemic oppression has resulted in problematic and harmful representations of girls in children’s literature historically.

Kenneth Kidd’s article “Queer Theory’s Child and Children’s Literature Studies” calls for a need for a greater consideration of how queer theory can be used to interpret children’s literature. This is the central issue with the study of queerness in children’s literature, as Kidd explains, “if by queer theory we mean the contemporary academic enterprise, the answer to that question—what is it doing with children’s literature?—is, *so*

far, not much" (184). Kidd is quite aware of the fact that "those working in children's literature know how frequent and pressing are assertions of the naturalness, innocence, and self-evidentiality of childhood and its forms" (182), and praises the insurgence of research on the protogay child, and queer theory's positions on children. The problem is, however, that this is not being applied to the study of children's literature. Instead, he finds that "thus far, there seem to be two traditions of child relation in queer theory, one concerned with queering the child, or exposing the child's latent queerness, and the other more interested in underscoring the Child's normative power" (183). The problem for Kidd, however, is that "if children's literature has heteronormative tendencies, which it assuredly does, it also homes all sorts of queerness" (185). Kidd argues that not only is heteronormativity apparent in children's literature, but so too is queerness, and there is a need to investigate both.

Kidd begins the conversation about queerness in children's literature by identifying two major periods in (all) queer fiction, "queer children's literature both emerges with post-Stonewall lesbian- gay-bisexual-transgender political culture and predates it considerably, in the form of homoerotic and homosocial narrative" (185). In his analysis, Kidd identifies that the primary site that queerness can be found in children's books is in character (185). As previous research on the different forms of oppression in children's literature has mostly been focused on character representations, it is not surprising for a new and emerging field to have similar findings. Kidd argues that by "resisting growing up or marriage, some such characters are rehabilitated through heteronormative plots [...] while others manage to hold on to queerness indefinitely" (185). Kidd makes it quite clear that there is a great deal of work needed in the field of

queer theory's application in analyzing children's literature, but what is clear is that both heteronormativity and queerness are very much apparent.

Rubin and Strauss Watson's article, "Disability Bias in Children's Literature" is a succinct look at the stereotypes of physically disabled people in children's literature. They begin by defining disability bias as "the attitudes and practices that lead to unequal and unjust portrayals of people with disabilities in children's literature" (60). Of the different stereotypes of disabled people in children's literature, Rubin and Strauss Watson identify eleven that have appeared frequently throughout the history of the field. These stereotypes include portraying disabled people as: pitiable and pathetic, the object of violence, sinister or evil, flat and in the background, over-achievers, laughable, his or her own worst enemy, a burden, asexual, incapable of fully participating in everyday life, and being isolated from disabled and or non-disabled peers (60-62). They then apply these stereotypes to their readings of different children's stories, showing examples of both positive and negative representations of characters with mobility impairment, developmental disability, visual impairment and hearing impairment within the literature for early, elementary, and junior high aged children.

Rubin and Strauss Watson consider very seriously the role of language, and how it can reflect prejudice. To explain this better, they give an exceptional example:

What do you think of when you hear the words "confined"? A bird in a cage? A prisoner? If this is the case, how can we continue to use the term to describe a person who is a wheelchair user? For a person with a mobility impairment, a wheelchair is anything but confining. Quite the contrary, the wheelchair provides freedom of movement which may otherwise not be possible. (62)

Rubin and Strauss Watson demonstrate here that language is a fundamental way of reflecting embedded oppressive ideologies. Following theories of systemic oppression, a person may say, “confined to a wheelchair” without realizing that their language is oppressive. This, of course, is not an excuse, but in order for this language to be corrected, the position of the person with a mobility impairment must first be considered and respected. The study of disability bias in children’s literature, then, is concerned both with how disabled children are represented, as well as how language and discourses contribute to their oppression.

As there exist not only physical disabilities, but also mental disabilities, I have looked at research discussing both. Ethics and values are central in Claudia Mills’ approach in her article, “The Portrayal of Mental Disability in Children’s Literature: An Ethical Appraisal.” While she recognizes that many children’s literature critics and scholars may resist didacticism, it is also clearly an apparent function in much of children’s literature in order to shape the readers’ moral character (531). Mills makes it clear that she is not calling for censorship, but rather sensitivity and critical awareness of the values an author intends, and doesn’t intend but still manages to present (532-3).

Some of the ways that Mills identifies problematic representations include identifying low intelligence with poor moral character (534), describing characters as burdens to others (536), and dismissing the value of the lives of mentally disabled children and assessing that they are better off dead as their lives are not worth living (537). Mills’ use of both popular contemporary literature and canonical children’s literature gives a wide scope to her research that demonstrates a consistency in negative representations over time. When Mills moves to more positive representations, she finds

that a great deal of recent fiction features a theme of losing a child with a mental disability and gaining joy when they are found again, and that the ethical principle presented is that the child that is mentally disabled has equal value to the nondisabled child (537-8). Another positive representation involves finding a commonality between mentally disabled children and other characters in order to find a unity in humanness (538-9). However, there is a common feature of compensating the low intelligence of a child with a mental disability with something else, like compassion or talent (539). She poses the question, “what if he had no talent out of the ordinary, nothing that made him shine?” (540), illustrating that mentally disabled children should still be considered valuable even when they are not extraordinary. For Mills a better strategy “would be to interrogate head-on the equation of value with ability or achievement” as “value isn’t measured competitively [...] Self-worth is securely grounded only in something noncomparative” (540, 541). Thus all children, regardless of whether or not they are disabled, should be considered valuable as human beings, rather than ranked based on their abilities.

Mills makes an excellent point in her concluding paragraphs by arguing that disability is not the real problem, but rather how society defines and resists normalcy. This directly aligns with Campbell’s aforementioned theories on ableism, and therefore when investigating mental disability in fiction it is clear that not only is the character representation important, but so too is how each character is considered and ranked by the other characters in the text of relevance as well.

These five example texts identify the necessity of considering systemic oppression when analyzing oppression in children’s literature. While this previous

scholarship has focused on character representations, rather than on the social systems in the texts themselves, they do not as a whole ignore the importance of recognizing each character's social context in relation to their oppression. However, in this recognition they relate the significance of their interpretation to the reader's primary world, rather than analyze the representation of systemic oppression in the text. It is my intention to consider identity in a similar fashion as these aforementioned scholars, while applying current research in systemic oppression to fantasy societies in order to understand the representation of alternative world contexts of oppression.

2.6 Conclusion

Traditionally, fantasy literature has been understood as a tool to socialize children, and the portal-quest genre is a highly authoritative and didactic means to do so. Looking at key theories in systemic oppression, specifically the oppression of people of colour, women, queer people, and disabled people, it is clear that dominant discourses have been and continue to be highly exclusionary. The systemic oppression of people of colour and women has been outlined as the cultural domination of subordinated groups by dominant groups within a social hierarchy, while the systemic oppression of queer people and disabled people involves regarding queer and disabled people as abnormal and less natural, usually forgotten in the social hierarchy altogether. According to this research, these hierarchical social systems include a vast array of institutions, including but not limited to education, politics and law, housing, health care, policing, public accommodations, economics, religious and ecclesial institutions, athletics and clubs and other social and interpersonal systems, unions, armies, families and marriages and

representationally within the media. Thus the universal “truths” of children’s fantasy literature written with the intent to socialize children have the potential to contribute to dominant discourses, social hierarchies, normativity and thus systems of oppression. While previous research in children’s literature has looked either at the negative or missing representations of characters, or how systemic oppression has contributed to the writing or analyses of these negative or missing representations in a variety of ways, there has yet to be an analysis of the representations of intersectional systemic oppression in children’s portal-quest fantasy fiction. Therefore, I intend to operationalize the research on these forms of systemic oppression in my critical discourse analysis and Foucauldian poststructuralist close reading of two portal-quest children’s fantasy novels to investigate how intersecting systems of oppression are represented in these socializing texts.

Chapter Three: Method

3.1 Introduction

In order to investigate the representation of various forms of systemic oppression in children's portal-quest fantasy literature, I selected and analyzed my primary texts in very specific ways. Considering the socialization values of my research was key as I selected two canonical texts with roughly one hundred years between each text's publication dates. Following the selection process, I began a close reading of these texts while operationalizing the research in my literature review on the various forms of systemic oppression. Using critical discourse analysis and Foucauldian poststructuralism to answer my research questions involves a multi-step method for my research. This method involves reading both of my primary texts multiple times, investigating a different research question each time, marking relevant scenes and then, following this, close reading each scene. This approach allows me to investigate the representations of four different forms of systemic oppression in my primary texts and answer my research questions.

3.2 Criteria and Rationale for Selection of Primary Texts

The two primary texts were selected in two different ways. Originally, however, it was my intention to analyze four primary texts. I later cut this in half due to time limitations. The first two texts selected were L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) and C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950). In *Rhetorics of Fantasy*, Farah Mendlesohn identifies these texts as key examples of portal-quests, using

them to help define the genre (1). As Mendlesohn was the first to define the portal-quest fantasy genre in her article “Toward a Taxonomy of Fantasy,” these two well-known texts were selected to exemplify the genre for this thesis based on Mendlesohn’s expert identification.

The canonical texts are included in this thesis not only as expertly identified examples of the genre, but also as examples of texts selected by adults for children through the process of canonization. Deborah Stevenson explains this process in her chapter “Classics and Canons,” arguing that the children’s literary canon is decided primarily by professionals and academics, with little consideration given to the opinions of actual children (108-9). In fact, as Stevenson argues, “young people’s influence is heavily mediated and shaped by adults [...] there is an adult control at an early level of selection” (109). While L. Frank Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) and C.S. Lewis’ *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950) are central texts in the field of children’s fantasy literature, contemporary children may not read these texts in their original forms, (but rather, for example, engage with adaptations). Regardless, children will have been introduced to these texts almost exclusively through adult mediation. This suggests that the continued process of socialization through these texts is enforced not just by adult mediators, but also because of the texts’ statuses as canonical. Children today read these texts because they are provided to them, because these texts are supposedly “good for them.” C.S. Lewis’ *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950) was later removed as a primary text due to time limitations, and because L. Frank Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) presented more interesting findings upon my first analytical reading.

Contemporary portal-quest fantasy literature has the potential to have a very different relationship with its readership than classical literature. As Stevenson notes, “children’s literature has become as consciously aware of inclusion as the children’s classics shelves are, like the canons of the past, unconscious of their exclusivity” (116). Therefore, if this research were to exclusively analyze canonical children’s literature from the past, problematic findings would hardly be surprising due to when the books were written and published. As a potential value of this research concerns the role fantasy fiction plays in the socialization of children in regards to imbedding dominant discourses and contributing to systems of oppression, I feel it is important for this research to look not only at the canonical texts from the past, but also at popular contemporary examples as well. This way, this thesis is able to look both at the potential social consequences of not only “good” canonical fiction, but also literature that is assumedly more inclusive as well. Originally, I decided to include two contemporary popular portal-quest fantasy novels for analysis. This number was later cut in half, again for time limitations.

The selection of the contemporary texts was a more lengthy process than the selection of classical texts, however. This began with Internet searches for lists of children’s portal-quest fantasies. When this did not work, Internet searches were made for lists of children’s fantasies, which proved to be too long and unspecific. An attempt was made to find lists of best-selling children’s books, but these lists were also far too long.

Next, Professor Judith Saltman, Chair of the Master of Arts in Children’s Literature Program at the University of British Columbia was approached. She provided a list of portal-quest fantasy literature that she was aware of at my request, and recommended looking at Ruth Nadelman Lynn’s *Fantasy Literature for Children and*

Young Adults: A Comprehensive Guide, Fifth Edition. This book features a chapter titled “High Fantasy: Travel to Other Worlds” that lists books that fit this description by author, title, grade reading level and publication date, providing a short synopsis of each. This was especially helpful in forming a short list of potential primary texts after a criterion was decided.

The eight criteria are as follows:

1. Feature a portal from the contemporary Primary World to a fantasy Secondary World
2. Not supernatural fiction (ie- travelling to spirit realms, hell, etc.)
3. Fantasy world cannot be based on previous works (ie- fairy tales, adaptations), but rather is the author’s own original world
4. Not a sequel or prequel, must be an introduction to this fantasy world
5. Published no earlier than 1995
6. Published in an English-Speaking Western Country
7. No fewer than 30,000 words so as to be considered novel-length
8. Recommended for ages eight through twelve

These criteria led to a list of roughly a dozen contemporary primary texts that are introductions to original fantasy Secondary Worlds, and are Western novels recommended for the same age range as the classic text. However, all but two of the books on this list were either too difficult to get ahold of, or did not meet the criteria as originally thought.

The next step involved going through the books sold at Kidsbooks, a children’s bookstore in Vancouver. After reading the description of every book in the section for the

correct age range, and then researching each book online, another six books were selected for the list of potential primary texts. To allow for time for the protagonist to not only travel to the fantasy world, but also get a sense of its societal structure, unless it was obvious the book did not meet the above criteria at least fifty percent of each book was read before it was removed from the list of potential primary texts.

After reading each book either in part or in entirety, the contemporary primary texts selected were J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997), and Brandon Mull's *Beyonders: A World Without Heroes* (2011). These texts were chosen not only for their clearly constructed fantasy worlds, but also for their popularity and success (both New York Times Bestsellers), and thus both books have evident opportunities to represent systemic oppression while simultaneously socializing a high number of children.

Unlike Oz or Narnia, which are clear Secondary Worlds completely outside the primary world, the Wizarding World of the *Harry Potter* books is a secret and hidden part of the primary world. Theoretically, then, this fantasy novel does not meet the criteria of my text selection. However, Mendlesohn identifies the *Harry Potter* novels as an exception to this rule as the fantasy society is constructed in the same rhetorical fashion as a portal-quest fantasy world due to Harry Potter's total ignorance of the magical world (2). Furthermore, at least in the case of the first novel of the series, Harry Potter does indeed travel through portals in order to access this space (both walls: the wall connecting The Leaky Cauldron with Diagon Alley, and the wall to Platform 9 ¾). Ultimately, due to the fact that Deborah Stevenson argues that Harry Potter is the likeliest of all contemporary texts to achieve canonical status (119), and thus its significance

cannot be ignored, I chose Rowling's work to analyze over Mull's as my second and final primary text.

3.3 Analysis of Primary Texts

This research involves the analysis of two children's portal-quest fantasy novels, Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. In order to answer my research questions, my unit of analysis is scenes in the novels, by which I mean incidents of continuous action. I have operationalized research on the four forms of systemic oppression in order to determine which scenes to analyze through a Foucauldian poststructuralist and critical discourse analysis close reading. My Findings Chapter establishes what these different forms of systemic oppression look like, and how they intersect in the social structures of the fantasy worlds of both primary texts. I then analyzed my findings in my Discussion Chapter using Foucault's theories of power in relation to Gee and Mills' approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis. It is with this approach that I have answered my research questions.

As social systems of oppression are underlying social values and norms it is unlikely that these systems are represented in ways that are recognizable to the typical child. However, this does not mean that there is not the possibility for the texts to encourage the inculcation and internalization of oppressive values in children unconsciously, (though their significance in this socialization will need to be left to an alternative study). Therefore regardless of whether or not children can recognize the representations of these oppressive systems it is still important to identify and analyze them. My interpretation of my primary texts could be considered "radical," though

ideally my (admittedly provocative and tendentious) writing and analysis can be understood to have pedagogical implications for the social justice and critical literacy education of children by adults.

My initial method of interpretation involved reading each primary text several times, each reading focusing on a different research question. During each reading, I used coloured tags to mark each scene that represents systemic oppression in each primary text. I used a different colour for each form of systemic oppression, and thus I had a colour-coded system for my tags. After this, I went to each tagged scene and re-evaluated the scene's value in the text and whether or not the instance was worth investigating further. Value was determined based on how significant a role the scene plays in the construction of the fantasy society, or how it contributes to the dominant discourses of that society. Once the scenes were decided, I began my Foucauldian poststructuralist and critical discourse analysis close readings of both texts. As Farah Mendlesohn argues that the portal-quest Fantasy genre involves a portal that takes the protagonist(s) from the primary world into a secondary fantasy world (1), the primary worlds were analyzed not only in how they are represented in the texts, but also as representations of the reader's real world. Therefore I have made inferences about what is likely about each primary world's systems of oppression based on historical and geographical contexts.

The writing of my Findings Chapter involved operationalizing the research on systemic oppression as found in my literature review in combination with Allan G. Johnson's book *Privilege, Power and Difference*. In Johnson's second chapter, "Privilege, Oppression, and Difference," he outlines the way white people, men, heterosexuals and nondisabled people are privileged. By reversing his statements and

comparing them to the key theories outlined in my literature review, I had a clear way of discerning what instances in my primary texts demonstrate representations of systemic oppression.

For example, a form of nondisabled privilege that Johnson lists includes nondisabled people being able to “choose whether to be conscious of their disability status or to ignore it and regard themselves simply as human beings” and therefore, “nondisabled people don’t have to deal with an endless and exhausting stream of attention to their disability status” (30-31). When this is compared with Campbell’s theories of the regimes of ableism, it is clear that the systemic oppression of disabled people involves nondisabled people having the privilege to consider themselves a part of normative society, while disabled people are markedly othered as non-normative.

Operationalizing this in my reading of the scenes of my primary texts can best be highlighted with an example. When Dorothy and her companions visit the Dainty China Country within the Land of Oz, the Princess of this land is terrified of being broken, and says to Dorothy, “‘there is Mr. Joker, one of our clowns [...] He has broken himself so often that he is mended a hundred places, and doesn’t look at all pretty [...] he is considerably cracked in the head, and that makes him foolish’” (Baum 162-3). When Dorothy looks over at the Clown and notices all of his cracks, he becomes visibly uncomfortable and asks her why she stares at him (163). The Princess then tells him to be quiet, taking away his voice and agency (163). Thus, the Clown is marked as abnormal and foolish because he has previously been broken. As others stare and point out the way his body is different than the norm, he is forced to be conscious of his non-normative body and his disability status. Thus this scene exemplifies one of the forms of

nondisabled privilege on Johnson's list, and the way disabled people are systemically oppressed as outlined by Campbell.

After my initial findings were articulated, I furthered my analysis in my Discussion Chapter using Foucauldian Poststructuralism and critical discourse analysis. Mark Poster best articulates my reason for this approach. In his book *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism: In Search of a Context*, Poster draws parallels between how critical theory questions dominant discourses (3), while poststructuralism regards truth as a multiplicity with diverse meanings (4,7,15). Thus poststructuralism can work well with a critical discourse analysis of scenes representing systemic oppression (3), and both critical theory and poststructuralism are strong approaches for my analysis. As Poster writes, "the problem with Enlightenment, modernist, and Marxist deployments of 'reason' concerns the association of reason with a configuration of the subject as autonomous and implicitly male, as a neutral, contextless 'transcendental ego'" (5). Like many of the aforementioned theories of systemic oppression, Poster is identifying the privileged majority as the neutral or norm and that all other identities must strive toward it in order to understand modernist deployments of 'reason' or 'truth.' Thus Poster's main concern with this book is to define the relationship between theory and context, arguing that poststructuralism can illuminate an understanding of the mechanisms of domination in a contemporary context (7). As both Tolkien and Mendlesohn argue that fantasy fiction teaches universal truths about the world, my analysis will consider how these 'truths' may be understood as totalizing and contextless. A poststructuralist reading of my primary sources should demonstrate what is missing and who is left out of these 'truths.'

To accomplish this, I use Foucault as a lens for my analysis, drawing on his research on power relations and governmentality.

To answer my first research question, (how are the portal-quest fantasy worlds of Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* shaped by the four common systems of oppression, namely the oppression of people of colour, women, queer people and disabled people?) I analyzed my findings of the intersections of systemic oppression in the Land of Oz of Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and the Wizarding World of Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in consideration of Foucault's theories of power and governmentality. My analysis considers how both secondary worlds demonstrate the representations of power as not guided by the will of individual subjects, power as always a case of relations between people, power as multidirectional, power as co-extensive with resistance, power as intentional and productive, and power as war. Combining the various theories of the different forms of systemic oppression with Foucault's theories of power demonstrates how the portal-quest fantasy worlds are shaped by the four common systems of oppression.

My second and third research questions are related to how characters engage in power relations and thus either contribute to or resist social systems of oppression (how does the language used by the characters of Baum's Land of Oz and Rowling's Wizarding World demonstrate the dominant discourses of each respective fantasy world and how do the characters in Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* support or resist the systemic oppression of their respective fantasy worlds?) Kelly argues, "the materiality of power, just like the

materiality of discourse, is mitigated by the fact that neither is truly self-sufficient. Neither can exist without people, nor without a social, institutional framework which supports them” (46). It is therefore important to consider how characters engage in social discourses or act to resist systemic oppression. Foucault speaks to this, arguing:

discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.

(The History of Sexuality 101)

In order to analyze the discourses of Baum’s Land of Oz and Rowling’s Wizarding World, I will employ Mills and Gee’s respective research in discourse analysis.

Sara Mills’ book *Discourse* draws heavily on Foucault as she defines different understandings of discourse as a theory, and outlines a method for discourse analysis. Much of my analysis considers different statements made throughout both texts however I consider Mills’ argument that “statements do not exist in isolation since there is a set of structures which makes those statements make sense and gives them their force” (Mills 45). When statements are put in a larger social context they create a discourse, as Mills argues, “a discourse is not a disembodied collection of statements, but groupings of [...] statements which are enacted within a social context, which are determined by that social context and which contribute to the way that social context continues its existence” (10).

How the statements relate to each other is significant, as Mills argues:

Discourses are sets of sanctioned statements which have some institutionalised force, which means that they have a profound influence on the way that

individuals act and think. What constitutes the boundaries of a discourse is very unclear. However, we can say that discourses are those groupings of statements which have similar force – that is, they are grouped together because of some institutional pressure, because of a similarity of provenance or context, or because they act in a similar way. (55-6)

However, this being said, Mills also recognizes that “the study of discourse is not simply the analysis of utterances and statements; it is also a concern with the structures and rules of discourse” (44). Therefore, an analysis of statements cannot make random claims about the discourses of a society, but must rather consider the practices that produce discourses.

Mills argues that there are various mechanisms that produce a discourse. Not only must statements have some sort of institutional force within the context of the society in order to go into the structuring of a discourse (Mills 55), but there must also be a regulated constraining and circulation of information (Mills 67). Exclusion is used to limit what is said and what can be counted as knowledge (Mills 57-8). For example, it “is assumed that the wishes and views of ‘rational’ people, such as doctors and social workers, carry more weight” than mentally disabled people (Mills 58-9). Who has a voice and who is excluded in fiction, statements and social thought are examples of the constraining of information in order to produce a discourse. The circulation of information, then, involves those statements that are repeated by others are thus “the discourses which we consider to have validity and worth” (Mills 60). Thus, discourses are not only sets of statements, but repeated ideologies within those statements. A critical discourse analysis investigates how the ideologies inherent within the language used by

people demonstrates “the way that people are oppressed within current social structures” (Mills 118), but is “less concerned with content-analysis or thematic analysis and more with questions of the impact of the systematic choices of particular language” (Mills 119). Therefore, instead of counting statements to consider whether they are repeated enough to be considered in circulation, my analysis considers whether statements align with the systemic oppression of that respective society. My discourse analysis will consider circulation in part, while my investigation on how information is structured and constrained to create discourses considers the various functions of language.

A helpful resource in this regard is James Paul Gee’s *Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*, which investigates how language functions in order to support behaviour and social identities (1), and how language can thus represent particular political perspectives (2). Gee argues that language has meaning only in and through social practices and thus if language contributes to social inequality, those using said language are complicit in this oppression (8). By Gee’s account, language can promote certain activities and social identities, and, in turn, social inequality. Throughout this book, Gee deals with the theory of language-in-use in culture and society and, through multiple examples, provides tools of inquiry. These tools include social languages (everyday vernacular), Discourses (identity-based language), Intertextuality (language that cross-references other texts, such as quotes or allusions) and Conversations (diction based on social conversations and concerns about certain topics or themes) (20-22). I use these tools to determine how language is used in my primary texts to represent dominant discourses and contribute to systems of oppression.

Taking Gee's approach to understanding the function of language in order to structure discourses, and combining it with Mills' own theories of the use, constraint and circulation of statements in a social context, I have performed a critical discourse analysis of Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. In order to understand the social context of these discourses, I have first used Foucault's theories of power and governmentality. Using these methods, I have been able to answer my research questions in my Discussion Chapter in order to understand the nature of systemic oppression in portal-quest fantasy children's literature.

3.4 Terminology

The English language is complex and continually evolving. As society becomes more politically conscious, so too then does language likely become more politically correct. This means that a limitation of all research concerning social justice and human rights is its unavoidable potential to use outdated language within a short period of time. I have endeavored to use the most inclusive language I am able, and I hope my choices in terminology, as explained below, will assure future readers of my intentions within the context I am writing.

The term "people of colour" is used to describe all non-white people. It is more inclusive than the term "non-white" as it semantically places an emphasis on who the people *are* rather than who they *are not*, "non-white" inherently defines a person as a part of the out-group. The term "visible minorities" has been avoided so as not to connote or imply subordination or lack of significance in numbers, especially considering there are more people of colour than there are white people. I feel it necessary to emphasize that

this thesis is concerned with issues of race, rather than ethnicity or nationality. Race is typically understood to relate to the colour of one's skin, though this becomes problematic when people are multi-racial. Omi and Winant argue race is more than skin colour and is not a fixed part of a person's identity (68). Rather, as scientists have been unable to link race to biology, race can be understood as a socially constructed concept (60). Race is a collective identity that is constructed and categorized through social, economic and political forces that establish racial meanings within society to include different stereotypes, myths and ideologies (61-3, 67). Therefore, the analysis of the systemic oppression of people of colour in the primary texts will consider how race is socially constructed in each text in order to determine which people are systemically oppressed and which are privileged.

Many may consider "women" the most clear of the terms I am using but it is perhaps the most complex. This complexity lies in the difference between sex and gender. Sex can be understood in regards to genitalia and chromosomes, while gender "signifies the composite of personal appearance and social behaviors, characteristics and roles imputed to all persons at birth on the basis of sex" (Valdes 466). Thus there is a conflation of sex and gender in Western society, despite the differences between the two, which complicates what I mean by "women" and further complicates who is oppressed by systemic sexism. By understanding sex and gender as different components of a person's identity, the term "woman" can be understood to relate to a person's gender, while "female" refers to their sex. However, who is considered a woman, and how this is determined is under considerable debate. Therefore, much of systemic sexism affects people who self-identify or are perceived by others to be women. Transgender and gender

non-conforming people can experience a host of different forms of bigotry, from sexism, to both anti-transgender as well as anti-homosexual prejudices. How they experience systemic sexism can often be related to how they are perceived and understood by others. This can be very problematic, as it often means that the amount of sexism a transgender woman experiences correlates with how much or little she “passes” as a cisgender man or woman. This equates value within the heteronormative assumptions of who has the right to exist in public, which does not include queer people. Furthermore, regardless of how they identify, transgender and gender non-conforming people can face a form of misogyny called “transmisogyny,” which can be understood as a misogyny directed toward trans women and gender non-conforming people on the feminine end of the gender spectrum (Kacere). The systemic oppression of women, then, also has a great deal to do with the systemic oppression of the feminine, regardless of whether the person identifies as a woman or not. For the purposes of this research, the systemic oppression of women can be roughly understood as the systemic oppression of those who are perceived as women by others.

The word “queer” in this thesis is used as an all-encompassing term for the entire lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender community (also known as LGBT) as this community also includes identities such as asexual and intersex people that are often made invisible by the LGBT acronym. While a longer acronym could be used, possibly LGBTQQIPO2SAA, this is quite cumbersome, and is an acronym continuously under debate and change. Though “queer” is historically an offensive term, it has recently been reclaimed by the community, and will be used herein as the most inclusive possible term to describe all people with non-normative sexual orientations and gender identities.

The language used to describe disabled people likely changes the most frequently of all politically correct terminology. The term “disability” is used in its distinction from the term “impairment” made by constructionist theorists of the social model of disability, which is the study of systemic ableism. While impairments are the physical and mental differences themselves that people may have, a disability “occurs when society restricts or impedes the agency of someone with an impairment” by imposing and enforcing strict definitions of normalcy and ability in the social world (Eyler 320). Therefore, a “society’s prioritization of normality, an inherently subjective category, disables people living with impairments [...] impairment precedes disability, but it is the disability that is actually the debilitating force” (Eyler 320). Those who understand disability within a more medical model find this social constructionist approach problematic, arguing that by placing focus on society instead of on the body there is a suspicion in seeking cures and a homogenizing of disabled people that does not consider individual experiences (Shakespeare 30). The social model of understanding disability is less focused on the body than the medical model, and therefore is also less interested in disease and illnesses. While a “disability is not something that a person possesses but something one encounters when dealing with other people or with physical spaces that are inaccessible. Disease, on the other hand, is almost always understood as located in the body itself” (Price Herndl 593). Thus the social model is not about curing illnesses, but is rather about critiquing the various social structures that disable those with different impairments. As my research is concerned with social systems that privilege and oppress different groups of people, rather than a more medical approach to the body itself, I will be taking a social constructionist approach to disability rather than a medical approach. Thus, in my

analysis of systemic ableism I will have to consider how characters who are diseased or impaired are in any way made disabled by social constructions and norms.

Within disability discourse there is considerable debate whether the term “people with disabilities” or “disabled people” is more inclusive, and those who argue one side typically find the alternative term deeply offensive. Those who argue the medical model tend to agree, “the term ‘person with a disability’ is the preferred term of the disability rights movement as it acknowledges the disability as being secondary to the person” (Rubin and Strauss Watson 62). The concern is that the term “disabled people” perpetuates the idea that the disability comes before the person; it is the most important thing about the person and in turn dehumanizes the person. However, those who argue within the field of a social model of disability claim that the term “people with disabilities” reinforces the idea that disabilities dehumanize people as the need to emphasize the term “people” first contributes to the idea that this emphasis is necessary, rather than obvious or redundant (Whitestone). This terminology makes being disabled an inherently bad thing, and that people should be ashamed of being disabled (Whitestone). Therefore “disabled people” can be understood as an empowering, positive term that does not see disability as inherently negative, but rather as an accurate descriptor of one’s identity (Whitestone). I have found several online posts that argue that self-identifying as a “disabled person” is not only empowering, but recognizes that one’s disability is a part of one’s identity (Egan; Zoe). For example, the term “person with autism” suggests that a person can be cured of autism. This suggests that there should also one day be a “person no longer with autism,” which simply is not possible and can be considered dangerous and problematic. Meanwhile the term “autistic person” recognizes that autism is an

inseparable part of an autistic person's identity and way of seeing and interacting with the world (Brown). As my research takes a social constructionist approach to disability in my analysis of systemic ableism, I will use the term "disabled people." I recognize that this term will offend some readers, which is not at all my intention, and I hope my use of the term has been defended sufficiently here.

I have attempted to use the most politically correct language possible for this thesis. While the terms do not make distinctions between the different experiences of a variety of different identities that fit within each term, they are herein used to encompass a diverse range of different peoples that are oppressed in similar ways. Furthermore, I have attempted to make each term distinct from alternative terms in order to be as clear and positive as possible. While this thesis could use terms such as "systemic racism," "patriarchy," "heteronormativity and heterosexism," or "systemic ableism," it is my hope that my choices in language emphasize the issues of oppression, and focus on the people that are oppressed.

3.5 Conclusion

After careful consideration the primary texts selected for this thesis include two canonical children's portal-quest fantasy novels published roughly one hundred years apart. These novels are L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), and J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997). The use of critical discourse analysis and Foucauldian poststructuralism to close read these texts enabled me to answer my research questions in an analysis that employs the most inclusive language available.

Chapter Four: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the primary texts. As *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* are portal-quest fantasies, I will begin each analysis by investigating how the primary world is represented in each text, which will foreground the study of the systemic oppression of the secondary worlds through comparison. After outlining how the four common systems of oppression are represented, I will consider how these forms of oppression intersect in order to demonstrate how each social system is represented as a whole.

4.2 *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

Scholars have studied L. Frank Baum's novel, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) from a variety of different disciplines and perspectives, from historical and political approaches (Rahn 1998; Didhe 2002), to research in disability (Eyler 2013), to gender and queer analyses (Pugh 2011). Previous scholars have considered the historical context in which the Oz books were written, and the potential relationships the texts could have with Baum's biography. While my research is limited in looking exclusively at the first of Baum's fourteen *Oz* stories, this thesis will contribute to existing research through a poststructural analysis and by investigating how the oppressive systems represented are intersectional.

4.2.1 Dorothy's Primary World

The primary world is presented very briefly in this text, represented in no more than twenty-four paragraphs in the very first and last chapters combined. Despite the brevity of this description, the reader can realize a great deal about Dorothy's primary world. When Dorothy is introduced she is not in any way physically described, unlike her Aunt Em and Uncle Henry, who are both as gray as the Kansas farm setting. In these descriptions much is implied about the races, sexes and genders, sexualities, and abilities of these characters, and in turn, the socio-political positions of Dorothy's daily life.

There is little to indicate the race of the characters other than Aunt Em's "sober gray" eyes (Baum 5). The gray descriptions of the characters and land are likely attributed to the decade of frost and drought beginning in the early 1880's. These harsh conditions eventually led thousands of farmers that had travelled to Kansas to seek fortune back East with the words "In God We Trusted In Kansas We Busted" written on their wagons (Rahn 5). Thus, while gray eyes are typically associated with white people, it is possible that this grayness is more metaphorical and symbolic than literal; these characters could be people of colour, or at least read as such by the reader. This is historically possible as Black people owned about twelve million acres of farmland in the United States of America in 1900 (B. Reynolds 4). While there is therefore room to interpret the characters as people of colour, systemic racism makes this unlikely. The lack of description suggests the characters are white, as Nikolajeva argues, "if a character's race is not mentioned, we will judge it by 'default value,' which in our Western culture is Caucasian" (*Rhetoric of Character* 155). This is further established by Denslow's original illustrations, and by the fact that it is very likely that Baum would have

mentioned if the characters were people of colour. However, the representation of race in the primary world does not in any way indicate the social system of race oppression in this world. I am therefore left assuming that the people of colour of Dorothy's primary world are just as systemically oppressed as they were in Kansas in 1900.

Patriarchy, or the systemic oppression of women, is far more evident in the descriptions of the primary world. In fact, it is described in the very first sentence of the book "Dorothy lived in the midst of the great Kansas prairies, with Uncle Henry, who was a farmer, and Aunt Em, who was the farmer's wife" (Baum 5). While Uncle Henry has a career that enables him to be described as an individual, Aunt Em cannot be described as a whole person in her own right, but rather can only be understood in relation to her husband. Uncle Henry has social value as a farmer, but the only value Aunt Em has is in the support of her husband (and family). While a feminist interpretation may argue that Aunt Em may have chosen the role of homemaker herself, the language in this description indicates that she is known as Henry's wife more so than as an independent individual who works as a homemaker. Furthermore, while an instance of "her work" is described as "washing the dishes" in chapter one (7), in the last chapter Aunt Em goes outside "to water the cabbages" (187), suggesting that she contributes to the farm work. A less patriarchal description might identify both Uncle Henry as well as Aunt Em as farmers, or would at least describe Aunt Em in relation to her work in the home instead of in relation to her husband. This contrasts with Baum's championing of women's rights in his Aberdeen newspaper, and the fact that his mother-in-law was the famous suffragist Matilda Joslyn Gage (Rahn 47, 3). While it is possible Baum wrote

with feminist intentions, this description of Aunt Em as wife, rather than Uncle Henry as husband, demonstrates a system of patriarchy in Dorothy's primary world.

As Uncle Henry and Aunt Em are married, they are assumedly both heterosexual. While it is possible that either of them could still be queer, for example, they could be bisexual; there is nothing in the story to indicate this. There is also, however, nothing in the description of the primary world to indicate any social system that oppresses queer people. A historical reading of this story would suggest that there is no room for queer characters whatsoever. However, this does not mean that Baum's book is devoid of heterosexism, heterocentricism, or heteronormativity. In fact, in the description of Dorothy's house it is clear that "Uncle Henry and Aunt Em had a big bed in one corner, and Dorothy a little bed in another corner" (Baum 5). This description demonstrates that heterosexual intimacy is acceptable in Dorothy's home, suggesting that heterosexuality is socially considered normal. While this does not indicate that queer relationships are abnormal, it does demonstrate that sexual relationships and identities exist in this primary world, and heterosexual ones are accepted.

A variety of diagnoses could be made concerning the mental and physical health of Uncle Henry and Aunt Em. The graying of their skin could suggest a deterioration of physical health, even disease, while their economic and environmental depressions are described as having a negative consequence on their mental health. Aunt Em is described as "thin and gaunt, and never smiled, now," while "Uncle Henry never laughed" (Baum 5). Despite this, as Uncle Henry "worked hard from morning till night and did not know what joy was" (5), it is clear that either there is no social system in place to support Aunt Em and Uncle Henry in their mental health, or there is shame involved in pursuing such

support. It can also be assumed that resources for improving physical health are either geographically or economically inaccessible. Thus Dorothy's primary world can be understood as systemically ableist.

In these short descriptions it can be assumed that Dorothy's primary world is a historically accurate representation of Kansas in 1900. While not every form of systemic oppression is represented in the first and last chapters of this novel, an investigation of the descriptions and circumstances of the characters implies a great deal about possible interpretations. With this in mind, the similarities and differences in the social systems of oppression of the Land of Oz can be understood as in comparison with the real world within the text's historical context.

4.2.2 The Systemic Oppression of People of Colour in the Land of Oz

Before investigating the social systems that construct race and racial oppression in the Land of Oz, it is worth mentioning that there are no people of colour, as understood in the reader's primary world, actually represented in this text. While the Guardian of the Gate to the Emerald City is described as having skin that is "a greenish tint" (Baum 81), (note that this is a description provided prior to Dorothy and her companions' wearing of the green glasses) this does not in any way mean that Munchkins, Winkies, Quadlings and the like are representative of the real people of colour of the primary world. They can be understood, instead, as fantastic species that are characteristic of the fantasy genre, and to read them as symbolic people of colour could be considered problematic. While there is no direct correlation between white people and people of colour in the primary world and the different peoples in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, this does not mean that the

Land of Oz is devoid of its own social systems of racial oppression and xenophobia.

Rather, the systemic oppression of people of colour is represented with fictional races, and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* still represents social systems that construct race and racial oppression. It is this social system that is the focus of inquiry for this thesis.

The Land of Oz is divided into five distinct countries. Dorothy first arrives in the blue Munchkin country, then, with her companions, later travels to the green land of the Emerald City, then the yellow Winkie Country, and later the red Quadling country. They do not visit the purple Gillikin Country in the North, but Dorothy does meet the Gillikin ruler, a witch, when she first arrives in the Land of Oz. Within each country Baum presents a different culture, representing homogeneity and social systems that construct cultural divides. For example, when Dorothy first meets the Munchkins, she notices that all of “the men were dressed in blue, of the same shade as their hats, and wore well polished boots with a deep roll of blue at the tops” (Baum 11) and later a Munchkin named Boq explains to her that “blue is the color of the Munchkins” (22). Later, when Dorothy and her companions are in the Quadling Country, they cannot help but notice “the fences and houses and bridges were all painted bright red, just as they had been painted yellow in the country of the Winkies and blue in the country of the Munchkins. The Quadlings themselves [...] were dressed all in red” (175). This conforming to a social norm in relation to colour is so clear that when Dorothy meets some people who are “all dressed in clothing of a lovely emerald green color” Dorothy immediately knows she must be “getting near the Emerald City” (77). Arguably, the different colours demonstrate that each country has a separate, distinct culture, which represents a system of racial formation in the Land of Oz. Races are social constructs formed through a social

process “by which social, economic and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories, and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meanings” (Omi and Winant 61). While there is room to argue that the Munchkins, Quadlings, Winkies, Gillikins or the citizens of the Emerald City are either all different species, different races of the same species, or different cultures within the same race of a particular species, what is clear is that being magical automatically qualifies a person to hold a position of political power in the Land of Oz. Therefore, the Land of Oz socially constructs those who are magical as a more privileged race than those who are not. While there is room to argue that the people of each country in the Land of Oz are of different cultures or ethnicities, but are not necessarily different races, I argue that they can be understood as different races due to their being categorized through a political, cultural and ideological collectivity in relation to social discourses on colour.

Each country in the Land of Oz has a distinct culture due to a social discourse on colour. However, because of this, the individuality of each country’s citizens is made invisible. This issue is included in Johnson’s list of ways white people are privileged when he not only argues that “whites don’t have to deal with an endless and exhausting stream of attention to their race” but also at the same time, “whites aren’t confused with other whites, as if all whites look alike. They’re noticed for their individuality [...] and treated as individuals” (27). What is at issue here for Johnson is a social system that considers all people of the same oppressed race as identical, and no one of that race as an individual. This issue is very clear throughout the Land of Oz, and explains why, other than Boq, the richest of Munchkins, not one other human-like character has a name or individual personality. Other than Boq, of all the people Dorothy and her companions

meet, not one voluntarily introduces themselves. Every single Winkie, Quadling, and every citizen of the Emerald City is interchangeable, even “the green girl” Dorothy interacts with for several days (Baum 86). Therefore, the social system of the Land of Oz is structured in such a way that cultural conformity precedes the value of individuality. This theoretically puts the people of each country in opposition to the people of other countries as they disagree on what is clearly a fundamental principle of their culture. This leads to the assumption that the people of these societies would be inherently xenophobic.

In consideration of the potential systemic xenophobia of the Land of Oz, it is worth noting that the land is segregated, making any interactions with other peoples nearly impossible. This, of course, has to do with two of the four countries being ruled by wicked witches who enslave their respective country’s inhabitants. This would make traveling difficult and unlikely, and would therefore encourage a suspicion of newcomers to any new country. Dorothy and her companions are only able to travel across the Land of Oz because they manage to kill two Wicked Witches, and use flying monkeys to fly over the xenophobic Hammer-Heads of the Quadling Country. Suzanne Rahn argues that Baum’s multiethnic fairyland is what makes it distinctly American (31) however, prior to Dorothy’s arrival in the Land of Oz inter-country travel was likely nearly impossible. The Land of Oz, while a single land, is not a single multi-ethnic country, but is rather made up of separate and segregated countries each with their own culture and racial group. However, when Dorothy asks how to get to Glinda the Witch’s castle, she is instructed by a soldier of the Emerald City, who says, ““the road is straight to the South [...] but it is said to be full of dangers to travellers [...] For this reason none of the Quaddlings ever come to the Emerald City”” (150). This suggests that travel between countries is not

unheard of. When Boq thanks Dorothy for wearing blue when he says, ““it is kind of you to wear that”” (22), it suggests that Dorothy’s wearing of blue proves to the Munchkins that she is friendly (22), implying that those wearing a different colour would not automatically be assumed a friend. There are two possible ways to interpret this. The first is that the Munchkin “people greeted Dorothy kindly, and invited her to supper and to pass the night with them” (20) only because she liberated them from slavery, and because she was wearing their favourite colour. Otherwise, her situation may possibly have been very different and she may have been faced with distrust and xenophobia. The second possible interpretation argues that the relations between the different peoples of the Land of Oz are friendly, but the races are intentionally segregated. The separate races are recognized and there is no hostility for being from a different land. However, because of how relevant colour is in each land, it is unlikely that, for example, a Quadling could wear red and celebrate their Quadling culture while living in the Munchkin Country. Instead, as there is such an intense emphasis on preferred colour in social discourse, they would likely be expected to conform to cultural customs of preferring blue, or treated negatively if they did not. They would also, likely, have a difficult time finding red clothes, housewares, building materials, and so forth while living in Munchkin Country. Therefore, a red-wearing Quadling could visit Munchkin Country without facing much hostility, but could not move there permanently without either conforming to the norms of the dominant culture or facing xenophobia. Thus, visitors are likely treated more kindly than immigrants, though again, the evil rule of the wicked witches still makes this difficult and suspicion would likely precede hospitality. The movement from suspicion to kindness shown to Dorothy and her companions is perhaps evidence of this.

There is a consistent pattern throughout the Land of Oz, beginning with a distrust of strangers and then quickly moving to a willingness to be hospitable and helpful. For example, the Stork who rescues the Scarecrow from the river approaches Dorothy and her companions by rudely asking, ““who are you, and where are you going?”” (63). The Stork is immediately distrustful and demands answers before even saying hello or introducing herself. However, she is easily convinced to save the Scarecrow, saying, ““I always like to help anyone in trouble”” (63). Later the Scarecrow passes quick judgment on the green-wearing people outside the Emerald City, saying, ““the people do not seem to be as friendly as the Munchkins and I’m afraid we shall be unable to find a place to pass the night”” (78). He is later proven wrong when Dorothy and her companions are welcomed into the home of a farming family. However, this family is also initially distrustful. When Dorothy knocks on the door of their house a “woman opened it [the door] just far enough to look out” and, without saying hello or asking for an introduction, rudely demands, ““what do you want, child”” (78). Again, it does not take much to convince the woman to let them in and give them free food, a place to sleep, and instructions to help them with the rest of their journey. This enables them to get to the Emerald City, where the people there, “looked at Dorothy and her strangely assorted company with wondering eyes, and the children all ran away and hid behind their mothers when they saw the Lion; but no one spoke to them” (85). However, despite this, they are each given their own room in the palace to stay and are told to make themselves at home (86-7). Dorothy is treated rather kindly by “the green girl” who provides her a wardrobe full of many green dresses, who offers to bring her anything she needs at the ring of a bell, and who even helps Dorothy dress in the morning (86-7). As previously argued, this pattern of moving from

distrust to kindness is likely related to a social fear of witches, as there are two countries in the land that are known to have been taken over by wicked witches, forcing the people into slavery. As Dorothy is a girl in a white dress, the colour of the witches, this would likely raise suspicion and fear. Therefore, the resistance to this initial fear and the welcoming of Dorothy and her companions is not only a resistance to systemic xenophobia, but also the influence of the ruling race of witches.

If the Land of Oz is systemically xenophobic, there is potentially a message, then, in characters putting aside their distrust in order to be kind and hospitable. This is clear when contrasted with the Wicked Witch of the West, who, upon seeing Dorothy and her companions, without any knowledge of their intentions is immediately “angry to find them in her country” and orders a pack of great wolves to tear them into small pieces (100). As is typical of the portal-quest fantasy genre, the fact that the Wicked Witch of the West is the evil villain of the story is indisputable. Her qualities and behaviour then can be interpreted as the antithesis of the text’s major themes and morals. It is worth noting that the Wicked Witch of the West does not hate and attack Dorothy and her companions because she is acting in self-defense, or in order to avenge the death of the Wicked Witch of the East that Dorothy killed when her house landed on her. Rather, the Wicked Witch of the West is hateful and destructive at the outset, just because Dorothy and her companions have dared to enter her country, which causes nothing but unhappiness in others and ultimately results in her own death. It is not unlikely that had the Wicked Witch of the West been hospitable and kind, she would have told Dorothy how to get back home with the use of her silver shoes, and both characters could have lived long happy lives. However, this is not the case, which leaves room to interpret *The*

Wonderful Wizard of Oz as a story about the harms of xenophobia and racism, not only for the Other but for the bigot as well, and the rewards of working past the initial distrust established by systemic racism. This is further shown by the kindness of the people of the Quadling Country. Cut off from the rest of the world by the Hammer-Heads, the Quadlings would likely be aware of the destructive forces of hatred. Thus, when Dorothy uses the magical flying monkeys to evade the Hammer-Heads and arrive at a Quadling farm, she and her companions are provided a “good dinner, with three kinds of cake and four kinds of cookies, and a bowl of milk for Toto” without the usual rude interrogations and distrust (176). The Hammer-Heads do not allow travel between countries, epitomizing xenophobic racism, and juxtaposed to them are the judgment-free and hospitable Quadlings as exemplars of goodness.

Goodness is the defining trait of the ruling witches of the Gillikin and Quadling Countries, while the overthrown witches of the Munchkin and Winkie Countries are known for their wickedness. Despite these differences, all four play an interesting role in this text in consideration of their positions of power. As only magical people have political authority, the Land of Oz constructs racial privilege in relation to magical ability. Therefore, those without magic are of the oppressed race, and do not have the privilege of power. This likely explains why the Wizard of Oz becomes so afraid that people will be angry with him for not actually being a wizard that he decides to leave the Land of Oz completely (Baum 142). This imbalance of political power fits with Johnson’s definition of racial privilege when he argues, “white representation in government and [other] ruling circles [...] is disproportionately high” (26). Regardless of whether or not the witches and Wizard of Oz have white skin, or that “white is the witch

color”” (Baum 22), it is clear that magical people of the Land of Oz are systemically privileged. As there is a social hierarchy that privileges the magical, this can be understood as just as much a social construction of race is in the reader’s primary world. Therefore, magical people can be understood as a separate and privileged race. This is further demonstrated when Dorothy first arrives in the Munchkin Country and meets the good witch of the Gillikin country. Despite the fact that she is not the ruler of the Munchkin Country, the witch still speaks on behalf of the Munchkins, saying, ““you are most welcome [...] to the land of the Munchkins. We are so grateful to you for having killed the wicked Witch of the East, and for setting our people free from bondage”” (13). The Gillikin witch’s welcoming Dorothy into someone else’s country, and using words like “we” and “our” to speak on behalf of a group of people she is not a member of, demonstrates just how much power she has in her social position, (this will be further explored in Section 4.2.6). Johnson argues, “whites are more likely to control conversations and be allowed to get away with it and to have their ideas and contributions taken seriously” (26), which is an example of race privilege demonstrated here by the Gillikin Witch. What is interesting, then, is that by the end of Baum’s novel, three of the five rulers of the Land of Oz are no longer in power, none of whom are replaced by other magical people, demonstrating a resistance to the governmentality of race power relations and hierarchies.

One of the many ways L. Frank Baum’s book differs from the better-known 1939 film adaptation is the emphasis on the home. In the book, Dorothy’s shoes are silver and she is instructed to ““knock the heels together three times and command the shoes to carry you wherever you wish to go”” (182). In the film, Dorothy’s shoes are red, and she

must knock her heels together and chant, “there’s no place like home” (Fleming 1939). This line has often been quoted and recognized as a major theme of the film despite the fact that Baum’s novel illustrates how illogical this sentiment really is. When Dorothy tells the Scarecrow that “there is no place like home” (Baum 29), the Scarecrow cannot understand this as he is intellectually oriented, and this is not a logical thing for Dorothy to say. The grey and dry Kansas is not, logically, a better place to live than the beautiful Land of Oz with its bountiful farmland. Therefore, in this scene Baum is being ironic, and is suggesting that home is metaphysical (Hearn 125n1); it is not the location of one’s home that matters but rather with whom the home is shared. In this sense, there are many places that can become one’s home, making ties to a certain geographic location illogical. This relates directly to Baum’s own experiences, migrating from Kansas to southern California (Rahn 20). Furthermore, this relates to Baum’s own experiences of race relations, as Hearn argues that the Dainty China Country of Chapter Twenty, with its surrounding wall made of china, could symbolize the Great Wall of China in response to “the growing animosity toward foreigners (which resulted in the Boxer Rebellion in the summer of 1900) [...] If a theme is to be found in the following chapter, it would be tolerance” (Hearn 303n4). Therefore, while Baum presents the Land of Oz as a systemically racist society, with segregation, homogeneity, xenophobia and a racial hierarchy, his story ultimately demonstrates the value of resisting this social system in favour of acceptance and support.

4.2.3 The Systemic Oppression of Women in the Land of Oz

Historically, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* book has been praised for presenting feminist ideologies. Many historical analyses have attributed feminist interpretations to Baum's relationship with his mother-in-law, prominent suffragette Matilda Joslyn Gage, who was "instrumental in drafting the Woman's Bill of Rights, as well as in the first women's rights convention held in New York State" (Hearn 14). Gage's influence on Baum is evident by what he published in his paper the *Pioneer*, which "published her 'manifesto' and urged its readers to vote for equal suffrage in South Dakota" (Hearn 19). Scholars such as Pugh have argued, "certainly, Oz is a utopia for women, where they are largely freed from traditional gender roles" (24). However, not all women in Oz are freed from traditional gender roles in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, and there are interesting differences between those who resist oppressive norms, and those who are silenced by them. Ultimately, as a whole, the Land of Oz is a patriarchal society.

As Aunt Em is the "farmer's wife" in the primary world (5), so too are there women in the Land of Oz that are only identified as the wives of their husbands. The Quadling woman who hosts Dorothy and her friends is known only as a "farmer's wife" despite the fact that no farmer is mentioned (176). She is second to her husband even in his absence. Another example of a woman being second to her husband is the wife of the man with a hurt leg who hosts Dorothy and her companions on their way to the Emerald City. While it is this woman who invites their guests into the home, as soon as her husband begins to make conversation she gets "busy laying the table" and later calls "to them that supper was ready" (78-9). Though her husband has a hurt leg and may not be able to help with the housework, the woman still does not (or cannot) contribute to any

conversation. This meets Johnson's definition of male privilege when he claims, "men are more likely than women to control conversation and be allowed to get away with it" (28). When this scene is compared with the fact that there are no female Munchkins that speak to Dorothy, it becomes clear that women's voices come second to the voices of men in the Land of Oz. (The aforementioned scene in section 4.2.2 when the Gillikin Witch speaks on behalf of the Munchkins complicates this, a point I will address in section 4.2.6 of this thesis.) Overall, men's voices are heard more than women's, giving men positions of authority in society.

When Dorothy and the Scarecrow first meet the Tin Woodman, he speaks of his previous love for a Munchkin girl. The relationship he describes, however, has very typical and oppressive gender roles. The Munchkin girl's values, according to the Tin Woodman, include her beauty, her skills in cooking and housework, and her role in keeping the Woodman company, while the Woodman would provide for her financially and build her a nice home to live in (40-41). The livelihood of this Munchkin girl is expected to be dependent on the hard work and success of her husband. This is also true of the aforementioned farmers' wives. It seems that men are the only ones who work in the Land of Oz, and it is the woman's role to look after the man's house. While it is possible that the women are choosing to work in the home, the lack of variety of women's occupations suggests otherwise. Even in the Emerald City, where there would be more opportunity for work, "the men carried things around in little green carts, which they pushed before them" while the only women who are seen are with their children (85). There is, however, a woman employed in the palace, the unnamed green girl who works with a male soldier. But, like the other women Dorothy and her companions meet

in the Land of Oz, her sole function appears to be to act as caretaker. This character is first introduced when, “the soldier now blew upon a green whistle, and at once a young girl dressed in a pretty green silk gown, entered the room” and, after showing Dorothy to her room, says to Dorothy, ““if you wish for anything ring the bell”” (86). This girl’s job is to come when she is called and serve at the whim of others. When Dorothy and her companions are about to leave the Emerald City, “the green girl, who was very kind to them, filled Dorothy’s basket with good things to eat, and fastened a little bell around Toto’s neck with a green ribbon” (95). While this girl is employed, her work is exactly the same as the farmers’ wives that Dorothy and her companions interact with in other parts of the Land of Oz. While this work can be seen as a worthwhile contribution, other than Glinda’s girl soldiers (176), housework seems to be the only contribution (non-ruling) women can make in the Land of Oz. There is one other girl who does housework, Dorothy. When Dorothy is captured by the Wicked Witch of the West, “the Witch bade her clean the pots and kettles and sweep the floor and keep the fire fed with wood” (104). This is Dorothy’s main tribulation throughout the book, “the household chores that any little girl would rightly loathe” (Hearn 230n9). Dorothy being forced to work like the other women in the Land of Oz is a punishment inflicted by an evil, slave-owning witch. To a Wicked Witch, a woman with a great deal of power, there is no worse punishment than typical gender roles.

Previous feminist research on Baum’s text has looked at a specific subset of characters exclusively. According to Suzanne Rahn, “studies of gender and family in the Oz books also tend to see Baum as subverting or questioning traditional values” as the “females tend to hold the power positions in Oz” (21). While the general population of

the Land of Oz is ignored, the lead women are focused on in feminist analyses. It is in these analyses, however, that it becomes clear that, for certain women in the Land of Oz, femininity has been constructed as an empowering site of resistance to patriarchy. This has been established by the four Witches, but is most evident in how they each affect Dorothy's interactions with others. For example, Dorothy describes herself to Oz as ““the Small and Meek”” (88), and ““weak [...] only a helpless little girl”” (89), likely because she has internalized the sexism of her primary world. This description fits oppressive gender norms, as “masculinity has been defined as strong, dominating, controlling, confident, powerful, and active, whereas femininity has been defined as weak, submissive, vulnerable, emotional, and passive” (Gates 36). However, despite this, “Dorothy [later] finds her female identity a source of great power” in her wearing of the Silver Shoes (Rahn 71). Within a sexist discourse, shoes worn by women are identified as “trivial, superficial, false, [and] feminine” accessories, as decorations of the body (Hollows 125). But this is not the case for Dorothy, for the shoes are, ““just the thing to take a long walk in, for they could not wear out”” (Baum 20). These are shoes that first cause Oz to be interested in meeting Dorothy (Baum 87), they are the envy of the Wicked Witch (107), and they are what eventually take Dorothy home to Kansas (182). Unlike in the primary world, shoes are not considered trivial decoration in their femininity; instead they enable the woman who wears them a great deal of feminine power. Their role is significant, as “Dorothy’s attack on the Witch is no meaningless accident. She seems to realize instinctively that the Witch’s theft of her shoes will rob her of something essential to herself, and her sense of outrage is stronger than her fear of the Witch” (Rahn 62-3). Dorothy’s relationship with these shoes has established the expression of her femininity

as empowering, and in losing this she loses an important aspect of herself. In expressing her femininity with these shoes Dorothy has a great deal of power, the same of which can therefore be said of the Golden Cap, which she chooses to wear solely because she “saw that it was pretty, so she made up her mind to wear it” (Baum 114). This likely explains why Dorothy is thanked by the Winkies for liberating them from slavery with “a beautiful bracelet, studded with diamonds” (114). While, unlike the Silver Shoes or Golden Cap, this bracelet is not magical, it is clear that decorative accessories are not socially considered superficial like in the reader’s primary world. Instead, jewelry and accessories are associated with a positive understanding of femininity as a strength that empowers women. This social construction of femininity as powerful, and its leading to Dorothy’s own empowerment, is all thanks to the women of the Land of Oz who have the position to establish a relationship between the feminine and the magically strong. According to Suzanne Rahn, in accordance with the folktale tradition the four different Witches act as mother figures to Dorothy, both in positive (nurturing) and negative (destructive) ways, as “it is through her mother that a girl comes to know the woman in herself” (70). This comes through the magical aids Dorothy obtains, such as the Wicked Witch of the East’s Silver Shoes, as well as through the motherly, protective kiss from the Gillikin Witch, which Hearn argues symbolizes abstract good (107n25). It is this kiss that intrigues Oz enough to meet Dorothy (Baum 87), as well as protects Dorothy from any physical harm that could be inflicted by the Wicked Witch of the West (104). This motherly kiss therefore represents a great deal of feminine power. Furthermore, while Dorothy finds the Golden Cap among the Wicked Witch of the West’s possessions, it originally comes from Gayelette, the beautiful princess and sorceress in the tale told to Dorothy by the Winged

Monkeys. Gayelette was a wife who chose her own husband, and who had authority over him. Here traditional roles are reversed, the woman has agency and authority, and the man is subservient. Furthermore, her husband is exactly the kind of man she wants him to be because she uses her magic to ensure this (121). It is therefore not only the fact that she is a princess, but also that she has magic that separates her from the rest of society, making her relationships very different than the rest of the population of the Land of Oz. Compared to the current Witch rulers of the Land of Oz, however, she is an exception.

If the Witches are mother-like figures for Dorothy, then it ostensibly follows that Oz is the father-like figure. According to Rahn, he is “a rather feeble father figure who puts on a frightening show of authority” (70). While he may be feeble, he still maintains his authority over the Witches. According to the Gillikin Witch, Oz is the Great Wizard, and “is more powerful than all the rest of us together” (Baum 14). What is interesting about this, of course, is the fact that Oz is later proved to be a fraud. His supposed power is all a trick, which suggests two possibilities. The first is that his tricks are so impressive that he was able to outmatch the real magic of the witches. There is evidence of this as the Wicked Witch of the West used the second of her three uses of the magic Golden Cap to command the Winged Monkeys “when she had fought against the Great Oz himself, and driven him out of the land of the West” (Baum 102). A second possible interpretation is that the Land of Oz is so patriarchal that the people of the land held Oz to a lower standard because he is a man. This is one of the ways Johnson identifies male privilege, arguing, “in most professions [...] men are held to a lower standard than women. [For example] it is easier for a ‘good but not great’ male lawyer to make partner than it is for a comparable woman” (27). A woman must be a great witch to be the ruler of a country,

but a man need only be a crafty magician. It is likely that as the Wicked Witch attacked Dorothy and her companions prior to even meeting them that she also did the same to Oz. Regardless of Oz's interactions with the Witches, what is clear is that he is accepted as the greatest and most powerful of them all, something that obviously was not challenged. Therefore, while the Witches are able to establish their own femininity as a strength in relation to the rest of the people in the Land of Oz, they still are not able to subvert gender power relations within their own racial group. Pugh argues that the female armies in Oz overturn gender roles and "ridicules pretensions of masculine authority in battle" (26-7). While Glinda has her girl soldiers (Baum 176), not only does Oz have male soldiers (Baum 85), but he is also able to maintain his authority as the most powerful ruler in the Land of Oz for a period of time. Therefore, while women may find their femininity empowering, and may have opportunities to subvert gender roles by having opportunities to engage in physical combat and war, they are still unable to overturn male, patriarchal authority on a systemic level.

At the end of Baum's novel, with Oz's departure from the Emerald City, the state of patriarchy's authority is in a position to shift. However, the society as a whole is socially constructed to privilege men as women typically have less of a voice in their subservience to their husbands, the language used in the Land of Oz upholds male authority in its exclusion of women, and women have few career opportunities. Femininity, it appears, is only empowering to women who can use magic, and it is only a point of strength and agency in relation to non-magical people. Otherwise, magical women still come second to magical men, even if those men are only assumedly magical.

While Dorothy acts as a feminist ideal, she does so within a social system that oppresses women.

4.2.4 The Systemic Oppression of Queer People in the Land of Oz

As Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was published in America in 1900, it comes as no surprise that there are no openly queer characters in the text. There are, of course, openly heterosexual characters, such as the aforementioned farmers' wives married to men, as well as Gayelette the princess. However, this does not suggest that if there were queer people in the Land of Oz that how they would be oppressed cannot be analyzed; there are many ways society can reinforce heterosexuality as normative and supreme without explicitly condemning homosexuality or other queer identities. However, while contemporary child readers may confuse Baum's historically-accurate use of the word "queer" to mean "strange," and therefore wrongly jump to the conclusion that the Land of Oz is a homophobic society, my analysis has found little else to support this interpretation. In fact, overall the Land of Oz appears to be neither heterosexist nor heteronormative, and in turn does not systemically oppress queer people.

The Land of Oz has been interpreted primarily as a land without sex or sexuality. Hearn argues Baum did this intentionally, as Baum believed romance and sex are inappropriate topics for children (138-9n8). While Baum may or may not have accomplished this in his other *Oz* books, it is not apparent in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as the farmer with the hurt leg and his wife have two children (78), the Tin Woodman was attracted to his fiancé, at least prior to becoming a man made out of metal (40), and Gayelette used magic to create a husband whose "manly beauty was so great that

Gayelette loved him dearly” (121). These all fit Johnson’s definition of heterosexual privilege, as “heterosexuals are free to reveal and live their intimate relationships openly” (29). Regardless, the Land of Oz has been interpreted as a land populated by asexual people, and, in this way, “asexual oddness bleeds into queer depictions of sexuality” (Pugh 23). An example of this could be seen in the creation of the Scarecrow. While Dorothy and her companions meet at least two farmers with wives in the Land of Oz, there is one farmer presented in the text that, instead of having a female partner, has a male one. A farmer and his friend work together to create the Scarecrow (30), and while there is no evidence to support the interpretation that these two are in a homosexual relationship, they are both the Scarecrow’s “fathers” so to speak. As “the rejection of fertility within much of modern Western society is ideologically linked to the denigration of nonreproductive sexualities” (Pugh 31), queer sexualities would not be rejected or condemned in a society in which “magic facilitates the asexual creation of new life forms” (Pugh 30). While *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* may not have any openly same-sex attracted characters, there are still same-sex parents. Therefore, it is unlikely that the social system of the Land of Oz is heterosexist, favouring heterosexuality over any other sexual orientation or identity, as there are no grounds to establish this supremacy.

While it is clear that the Land of Oz is not a heterosexist society, it is less clear whether or not it is a heteronormative one. There are two conflicting scenes in this text in relation to heteronormativity, one that enforces gendered expectations and one that resists them explicitly. The former scene is when Dorothy and her companions first arrive at the palace in the Emerald City. Dorothy’s room has a wardrobe with “many green dresses” (86), and the next morning, “the green maiden came to fetch Dorothy, and she dressed

her in one of the prettiest gowns" (87). In this scene there is an assumption made that girls conform to gender norms by exclusively wearing dresses. Furthermore, it is assumed that Dorothy is comfortable being changed by another girl, suggesting that there is no possibility for Dorothy to find herself sexually attracted to this other girl and be put in an uncomfortable or awkward position in such an intimate circumstance. Johnson argues that this is a heterosexual privilege, as "heterosexuals can live in the comfort of knowing that other people's assumptions about their sexual orientation are correct" (30). However, my analysis has little to do with Dorothy or her relationship with the green girl, but is rather about the heteronormativity of the social customs of both dressing another person of the same sex, as well as dressing in gender conforming clothing. It is also worth noting that while Dorothy is led to meet Oz by the green girl (87), her three male companions are all escorted by the male soldier (90, 91, 93). This demonstrates a division based on sex, which, in turn, enforces a conflation of gender and sex through social categorization. In these subtle ways a norm is established, which, in turn, oppresses gender non-conforming expression and same-sex attraction. At the exact same time, however, the Great Oz himself resists heteronormativity. Earlier in the text, when Dorothy asks the Gillikin Witch if Oz is a good man, the Witch responds, "'he is a good Wizard. Whether he is a man or not I cannot tell, for I have never seen him'" (16). While it is more likely Baum's playful language is also sexist, using the term "man" to mean "human," this line can also be interpreted to suggest that a person can use the pronouns "he" and "him" without identifying as a man, and therefore gender and sex are not here conflated as one and the same. Later in the story the Scarecrow meets Oz as "a most lovely lady. She was dressed in green silk gauze and wore upon her flowing green locks a crown of jewels"

(90). There are two points to acknowledge about this scene, the first is to acknowledge that Oz is being perceived here as changing from the head of a man into a woman, and has therefore undergone a sex change. The Scarecrow even refers to Oz as ““she”” and therefore appears to accept this change (90). The second point to acknowledge is that Oz later admits that he had not undergone a sex change, but was rather dressing in drag (127). By impersonating a woman, Oz does not conform to gender norms, which arguably suggests that Oz is queer in his gender non-conforming expression. While Oz is shamed and called a ““humbug”” for lying to Dorothy and her companions (127), it is not because he wore a dress, but rather because he lied about being a Wizard. There appears to be absolutely no transmisogyny or condemnation in resisting heteronormativity and expressing a queer identity in this instance. While Johnson argues that “heterosexuals can move about in public without fear of being harassed or physically attacked because of their sexual orientation” and “heterosexuals don’t have to worry that their sexual orientation will be used as a weapon against them, to undermine their achievements or power” (29, 30), neither appear to be privileges queer people do not have in the Land of Oz. Therefore, it is arguably possible that had Dorothy resisted the green girl’s heteronormative assumptions she may also not have been condemned or shamed for it (this idea is complicated in Section 4.2.6 of this thesis). Thus, it is likely that the Land of Oz is without a system of queer oppression.

Regardless of whether or not the Great Oz can be interpreted as a queer character, or the Scarecrow’s creators as same-sex parents, the Land of Oz does not oppress queer people on a systemic level. There appears to be no way to establish heterosexuality as dominant over queer identities in the Land of Oz, making heterosexism impossible.

Furthermore, while there is some evidence to support that there could be a social system of heteronormativity in the Land of Oz, there is also strong evidence that suggests that this can be resisted successfully. Therefore, from the evidence provided in this text, it appears that there is no social system of queer oppression in the Land of Oz.

4.2.5 The Systemic Oppression of Disabled People in the Land of Oz

The social system in the Land of Oz regarding the construction of disability and the oppression of disabled people is perhaps the most clear of the four systems investigated in this thesis. This is due to the fact that this system relates to the overall themes of the text in relation to Dorothy's companions, and how their experiences of the world motivate their intentions and behaviour. The search for brains, a heart and courage can be understood as an emphasized need to meet social norms of mental ability. Meanwhile, the fact that none of the three characters are like Pinocchio, looking to change their bodies to be more human-like, suggests that there are not the same social pressures in regards to one's physical body and ability. Therefore, there is a system of mental disability oppression, but not a system of physical disability oppression in the Land of Oz.

The Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman and the Cowardly Lion are all equally motivated by a personal sense of shame. While there is no one else in the Land of Oz quite like the Scarecrow or the Tin Woodman (at least, not in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*), neither of them feel any need to change their bodies and meet some sort of social norm of what people from the Munchkin Country should look like. Neither are motivated by a need to become typically bodied Munchkins, but are rather motivated to change

aspects of themselves that are interior rather than exterior. This suggests that there is no social discourse surrounding what kinds of bodies are considered normal, and no social system that enforces a normative body standard. In fact, physical differences can be points of pride. For example, when the Scarecrow is selected to be the new ruler of the Emerald City by Oz, “the people were proud of him. ‘For,’ they said, ‘there is not another city in all the world that is ruled by a stuffed man’” (Baum 147). While Glinda comments on how the Scarecrow is unusual, she also says that he will be a ““wonderful ruler”” (181). Therefore, while difference is apparent, it is not stigmatized; having an unusual and different body does not suggest one is unable to be successful. As Johnson argues, “nondisabled people can assume that they will fit in at work [...] without having to worry about being evaluated and judged according to preconceived notions and stereotypes about disabled people” (30). The Scarecrow is not here being evaluated because he has a different body, suggesting that this form of nondisabled person privilege does not exist in the Land of Oz. The same happens to the Tin Woodman. After the Winkies patch up his battered body, which literally involves “several patches on him” (112), the Winkies “had grown so fond of the Tin Woodman that they begged him to stay and rule over them and the Yellow Land of the West” (114). The Tin Woodman is put in a position where he is physically weak and broken, he is patched up, as if covered in scars, and yet, not only is there no shame or sense of loss in this process, but the Tin Woodman is still held up to the highest standard. His physical body does not in any way contribute to the ways the Winkies regard him. Johnson argues that “nondisabled people can succeed without people being surprised because of low expectations of their ability to contribute to society” (31), and “nondisabled people can count on being taken seriously” (32). Here,

the Winkies have high expectations of the Tin Woodman's abilities, and take him and his potential to be a successful ruler very seriously. He is not wanted as king in spite of his body, his body has nothing to do with the decision at all.

Many people with impairments are dependent on other people and or use assistive aids. People with different bodies and different abilities can work together in order to broaden what they are able to accomplish. This relationship can involve one person being wholly dependent on another, or could involve a mutually beneficial co-dependence. This latter relationship is what the Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, Cowardly Lion and Dorothy share with each other. For example, when Dorothy and the Scarecrow are walking through the dark forest, "Dorothy could not see at all [...] the Scarecrow declared he could see as well as by day. So she took hold of his arm, and managed to get along fairly well" (33). Dorothy is helping the Scarecrow by taking him to meet the Great Oz in order to help him get his desired brains, while the Scarecrow is helping Dorothy walk in the dark. Later, "the trees and branches grew so thick over the road that the travellers could not pass. But the Tin Woodman set to work with his axe and chopped so well that soon he cleared a passage for the entire party" (40). In another scene the Cowardly Lion carries his companions one at a time over a ditch by jumping with his great strength (54). After this there are moments in which they work as a team, such as when they are chased by the Kalidahs and the Scarecrow uses his intellect to suggest to the Tin Woodman to build a bridge across a gulf, which he does, while the Lion slows down the Kalidahs by scaring them with a terrible roar (55-57). Co-dependence in the Land of Oz is mutually beneficial and without any sense of personal shame. While Johnson argues, "nondisabled people can ask for help without having to worry that people will assume they need help with

everything” (31), the characters in Baum’s book show no hesitation in expressing their physical needs. For example, the Tin Woodman asks for Dorothy and the Scarecrow’s help oiling his rusted body (38), and then asks Dorothy to carry his oilcan for him in case he gets caught in the rain and he rusts again (40). While, arguably, the Tin Woodman would be so desperate for help that he would ask without hesitation, there appears to be absolutely no shame or embarrassment related to repeatedly needing the help of others or of assistive aids like oilcans throughout the novel. In fact, not only is there no shame in needing an assistive aid, but such aids can be given as the most precious of gifts, suggesting these aids are held in high rather than low esteem in society. For example, because “the Scarecrow often stumbled over the yellow brick” road (29), in order to thank him for saving them from the Wicked Witch of the West, “to the Scarecrow they [the Winkies] gave a gold-headed walking stick, to keep him from stumbling” (114). They also gave the Tin Woodman “a silver oil-can, inlaid with gold and set with precious jewels” to thank him (114). Therefore, in the Land of Oz, dependence on the help of others or of assistive aids because of one’s body is not a point of shame to be stigmatized.

The Wicked Witch of the West has an assistive aid that can be interpreted in a variety of ways. As Baum writes, “the Wicked Witch of the West had but one eye, yet that was as powerful as a telescope” (99-100). This singular eye can be understood as either an assistive aid, or, more likely, as a magically enhanced part of her body. In this second interpretation, it can be understood as a prosthetic eye, a hybrid of biology and technology-like magic. Access to prostheses in the Land of Oz is not limited to those with magic, and there appears to be neither technophobic fear nor transhumanist awe in response to their use. A clear example of this is the Tin Woodman’s tin body. When the

Wicked Witch enchants his axe, it cuts off his leg, and so, according to him, ““I went to a tin-smith and had him make me a new leg out of tin”” (41). It is at this point that the Tin Woodman has a prosthetic leg, albeit crude but otherwise very much in the same way as would be understood in the primary or real world. Eventually the Tin Woodman gets cut by the enchanted axe again, and so he gets another prosthetic leg, then arms, and eventually over time his entire body is made out of tin (41). As the Tin Woodman’s initial choice to be made of tin started when he needed a prosthetic limb as he ““knew a one-legged man could not do very well as a wood-chopper”” (Baum 41), Eyler interprets the Tin Woodman’s “desire to retain his social identity [which] forces him to seek out the tinsmith repeatedly. No doubt he is reacting, though, to his perceptions of able-bodied wood-choppers and the image of what others believe wood-choppers to be” (325). This is very possible, though Eyler’s interpretation is problematic in his interpretation of prostheses as a means of assimilation into normative expectations, rather than recognizing how prostheses often mark disabled people as non-normative. The Tin Woodman is not seeking to fit a perceived definition of what an able-bodied woodchopper looks like more so is he accessing what is available to him that will enable him to continue to be effective at his work. While the Tin Woodman feels he is less of a person without a heart, he is not less of a person for having a non-biological body. Whether it is a prosthetic leg, or a person’s entire body that is made up of prostheses, there is access to and no shame, horror or awe associated with the use of prosthetics in the Land of Oz. The transhuman body, being at least in part non-biological, is often seen as unnatural in the primary or real world. However, in this book, as Hearn points out, Dorothy’s companions “represent the three states of nature – animal, vegetable, and

mineral” (148n2), being the Cowardly Lion, the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman respectively, and therefore, they can be understood as representing a reconsideration of what or who can be considered “natural.” Therefore, a physical impairment or the use of assistive aids or prostheses does not contribute to the systemic oppression of disabled people in the Land of Oz because there is no social construction of what a normative body should be, nor is there any system in place that ranks people based on their abilities. Instead, with access to assistive aids and prostheses without any judgment, society in the Land of Oz allows for all body types and differences.

The physical, exterior body is not nearly as important in the Land of Oz as the interior or mental abilities of each individual. When Dorothy first meets the Scarecrow he says, ““I don’t mind my legs and arms and body being stuffed, because I cannot get hurt [...] But I do not want people to call me a fool, and if my head stays stuffed with straw instead of with brains, as yours is, how am I ever to know anything”” (25). While, arguably, the Scarecrow’s desire for brains can be understood as a desire for something physical, for literal brains, what is truly motivating the Scarecrow is a need to meet a social expectation on what is considered an acceptable level of mental ability. He is not concerned with being without brains so much as being considered a fool. This deep need comes from a conversation with a crow that the Scarecrow is unable to scare. The crow tells him, ““if you only had brains in your head you would be as good a man as any of them. Brains are the only things worth having in this world, no matter whether one is a crow or a man”” (32). According to this crow, meeting a standard of mental ability is more important than anything at all. It makes a person competent and whole, and anyone who does not meet this expectation is less of a person and is in need of repair and or

changing. Hearn relates the Scarecrow's need for brains to how "folktales are often concerned with a quest for the one object that will make the individual whole" (126n4). Therefore, without meeting this social expectation the Scarecrow is not considered a whole person. This causes the Scarecrow to feel very "'anxious'" as "'it is such an uncomfortable feeling to know one is a fool'" (32), which Eyler interprets as:

the sincerity of the Scarecrow's entreaty demonstrates just how seriously his disability has affected him emotionally. He once again resorts to a devalued assessment of himself and his own worth. He wants to become like other people; he cannot see past his own desire for normality to recognize the intelligence he already possesses. (327)

This same issue happens to the Cowardly Lion when he explains, "'I suppose I was born that way. All the other animals in the forest naturally expect me to be brave, for the Lion is everywhere thought to be the King of the Beasts'" (47). The social discourse concerning the normative mental abilities of lions has a terrible effect on the lion's sense of self-worth, and he finds life "'simply unbearable without a bit of courage'" (48). It is because of this that he decides to travel with Dorothy to seek Oz's help in changing him. In these ways, it is very clear that the body is far less of a concern in the Land of Oz than the mind is. For example, the Tin Woodman jokes that a person "'ought to be glad [to have heart disease], for it proves you have a heart. For my part, I have no heart; so I cannot have heart disease'" (48). What is clear here is that there is less concern for the body than there is for mental ability. Baum himself had a heart defect, which greatly impacted his childhood and caused him to be very sheltered (Rahn 3), so it can be assumed that Baum did not write this line lightly. It is likely that the concern here is less

to do with the state of one's body, and has more to do with their character. However, when this is interpreted to include mental ability it is clear that there is a social system of oppression against mentally disabled people in the Land of Oz.

The Tin Woodman's need for a heart may be interpreted as a desire to have a normative body however what becomes clear is that he is far more concerned with his ability to love. The Tin Woodman "can certainly feel emotions; thus his disability comes from his awareness of constructions of normality, constructions into which he believes he no longer fits" (Eyler 325-6). His being mentally disabled is thus entirely a social construction, and his seeking of a heart is not a seeking of a physical organ, but rather a way of escape from this systemic oppression. While, unlike the Scarecrow and the Cowardly Lion, no one tells the Tin Woodman that he is less of a person for not having a heart, his immediately coming to this conclusion suggests that he has likely internalized negative social ideologies regarding mental disabilities. What the Tin Woodman, the Scarecrow and the Cowardly Lion all seek are, in essence, "cures" for their respective mental disabilities (Eyler 327). Instead, Oz attempts to give them prostheses, though, unlike real prostheses, what he gives them are by no means able to actually accomplish what he says they should do (Eyler 328). Oz's gifts to the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman and the Cowardly Lion have been interpreted in a variety of ways. Rahn links Oz's approach with "the popular philosophy of 'mind cure,' which denied the existence of genuine pain and suffering" (20), while Hearn compares Oz's approach to therapy, in which Oz can only provide guidance "but the responsibility of the therapy depends upon the patient" (279n2). Oz's prostheses are by no means helpful solutions to real mental disabilities. Instead, they are placebos to "cure" problems that did not exist in the first

place. As Eyler points out, “neither the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, nor the Lion has actually changed in any way; their prostheses have simply ameliorated the degree to which they feel the weight of society’s disapprobation” (328). Therefore, had the mental abilities of the three not been found non-normative by the rest of society, it is likely none of them would have suffered from systemic oppression based on mental disability.

The Land of Oz has a complex approach to disability. While there is little emphasis on the state of one’s body, and therefore there is no social construction on what kind of body or physical abilities are the norm, there is a great deal of emphasis on the abilities of each individual’s minds. This means, that while there is no systemic oppression of physically disabled people in the Land of Oz, there is a great deal of oppression experienced by those considered mentally disabled. This causes the Scarecrow, Tin Woodman and Cowardly Lion to all pursue the help of the Great Oz so that they may meet social expectations of what is the norm for mental ability. Oz does not do anything for them other than provide placebos, which satirizes social systems that stigmatize mentally disabled people. Instead of seeking cures and methods to make disabled people meet social expectations and norms, instead how disabled people are viewed and treated should be the focus of change. This ultimately suggests that this book argues against social discourses and systems that oppress disabled people.

4.2.6 Intersectional Oppression in the Land of Oz and Conclusion

This analysis has demonstrated that Baum’s Land of Oz can be understood as a forward thinking and progressive society, with fewer forms of systemic oppression than the reader’s primary world, and several notable examples of the systemic oppression that

does exist being resisted. However, in order to understand the systemic oppression of the Land of Oz as part of a whole, single system, it is important to consider how these systems intersect. Like in the reader's primary world, the social system of the Land of Oz does not confine each individual to a single biopolitical identity. Each person is made up of a variety of identities, and as such, systemic privilege and oppression can be experienced in a variety of ways. This is true of the Land of Oz; this section considers how the aforementioned systems of oppression intersect for different people in Baum's text.

The relationship race has with sex and gender is made explicit as soon as Dorothy arrives in the Land of Oz. As discussed above, the Gillikin Witch speaks on behalf of the Munchkins when Dorothy inadvertently liberates the Munchkins from the Wicked Witch of the East. The Munchkins do not even feel they can approach Dorothy on their own, as, according to the Gillikin Witch, “when they saw the Witch of the East was dead the Munchkins sent a swift message to me, and I came at once” (14). Her assumed ability to better represent them than they themselves can would need to be ingrained in social thought in order for the Munchkins to travel all the way to the Gillikin Country to find her and request her representation. Despite the fact that the majority of monarchs are women, it is clear that the Land of Oz is a patriarchal society, and that male authority is clearly established. Nevertheless, it is the race of the Witches that enables them a position of power over the races of the citizens of the Land of Oz regardless of sex or gender. It is because of this that the Witches are able to express their femininity in empowering ways, such as with magical shoes and caps, while the other women of the Land of Oz are still subject to traditional gender roles and are subservient to men. This can be directly linked

to theories of black feminism, and the need for feminism to include the needs of people of colour. If *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is a feminist text, it is a white feminist text exclusively. The ability to be empowered by one's gender, then, is only an option if one is already in a social position of power.

When Oz dresses in drag by impersonating a woman, he is not shamed in any way for expressing femininity or for breaking away from traditional gender norms in his gender expression. From here it can be assumed that there is no transmisogyny in the Land of Oz as there is no hatred shown toward a biologically male person expressing femininity, presenting or identifying as a woman, or not conforming to gender norms. However, if Witches have power because of their race, it can be assumed that Wizards do also. As traditional gender roles and male authority are so evident among the general populace of the Land of Oz, it is very possible that transmisogyny and heteronormativity may also be ingrained in the social system. Racial privilege, then, provides opportunities for gender expression otherwise unavailable to the racially oppressed in the Land of Oz.

When a male character is not racially privileged, an inability to meet a social expectation of gender expression can be a serious threat to one's social position. As mentally disabled people are oppressed in the Land of Oz, this oppression is a threat to the Scarecrow, Tin Woodman and Cowardly Lion's masculinities. For example, when the Scarecrow is first told by the crow that he needs brains to meet a social expectation of mental ability, the crow says, ““if you only had brains in your head you would be as good a man as any of them”” (32). While this could be the crow using sexist diction, this could also be interpreted to literally be exclusive to being as masculine a man, or as good at being a man as other men. The Scarecrow’s brainlessness is thus emasculating (Eyler

324). This play on sexist language is also the case for the Tin Woodman, who identifies as a Woodman rather than a wood-chopper, and therefore associates his role in society with his gender. There is further proof of this in his description of how he once envisioned his relationship with his potential wife, and the roles they would each play. Thus, the Tin Woodman's need to have prosthetic limbs in order to be as capable a wood-chopper as others is related to his gender role, and his need for a heart is associated with the heterosexist position that he needs it to fulfill his role as a man by marrying a woman (Eyler 326). Finally, the Cowardly Lion, in seeking to be the King of the Beasts, also has his masculinity threatened by his mental disability. To seek to be a king is to seek to take a male position of authority, one that he can only gain if he exudes the typical masculine trait of courage (Eyler 326). Therefore, the Land of Oz is socially constructed in such a way that social norms must be met in order to not only be a part of society, but also have one's place in the social hierarchy of domination established.

The intersectional oppression of the Land of Oz is centrally concerned with the privileged positions Witches and Wizards have because of their race. Any satirizing of or resistance to the social systems of patriarchy, heteronormativity and ableism against mentally disabled people is accomplished only through racial privilege. However, there is some resistance to this position of power enacted by the racially oppressed people of the Land of Oz. For example, neither the Munchkins nor Winkies ask Dorothy to be their new ruler, despite the fact that she wears the white of a witch and liberated both groups from their respective Wicked Witches. Instead, the Munchkins claim no new ruler, while the Winkies ask the Tin Woodman, a Munchkin man, to be their king, which ultimately demonstrates an outright refusal to oblige any systemic xenophobia inherent in the Land

of Oz. By the end of the text three of the magical rulers are no longer in power, and non-magical rulers have replaced them. Of course the Scarecrow only has his power because he was appointed ruler of the Emerald City by the Wizard Oz, which in no way subverts Oz's racial power, and the two Good Witches still maintain their power of their own countries. This analysis suggests that *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* represents an intersectional social system with characters that, in beginning their resistance to systemic oppression, are able to open doors for the social justice of everyone who is oppressed within the Land of Oz.

4.3 Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

J.K. Rowling had a difficult time publishing *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* having submitted the manuscript to a dozen different publishers, she was eventually paid the equivalent of \$2,400 (USD) by Bloomsbury, who initially only printed roughly five hundred copies of the book ("Because It's His Birthday: Harry Potter, By the Numbers"). Now, the *Harry Potter* series has sold over four hundred and fifty million copies worldwide, making the *Harry Potter* brand worth more than \$15,000,000,000 (USD) ("Because It's His Birthday: Harry Potter, By the Numbers"). The popularity of Harry Potter initiated a great deal of research on the novels from a wide variety of perspectives, approaches and disciplines. Research has included political critiques (Barratt 2012), literary analyses (Kern 2003), investigations in pedagogical implications (Mayes-Elma 2006) and more. In relation to oppression, the texts have looked at character representations and parallels to issues in the reader's primary world in relation to racism (Westman 2002; Ostry 2003), culture (Lacoss 2002; Heilman and

Gregory 2003), sexism (Heilman 2003), feminism (Berndt 2011; Taylor 2014), and heteronormativity (Pugh and Wallace 2006). While previous research typically engages with every available text published at the time of writing, my research will differ in my sole analysis of the first novel of the series. My analysis will contribute to the field by considering the intersections of systemic oppression in the Wizarding World.

4.3.1 Harry's Primary World

An analysis of Harry's primary world is almost completely restricted to the dynamics of the Dursley family. While this is a highly limited perspective of late-twentieth century England, these scenes establish a clear point to compare with the systemic oppression of the Wizarding World. As the Dursleys are clearly vilified by Rowling, similarities between the two worlds are likely meant to represent social issues in the Wizarding World in need of repairing, while differences show the Wizarding World as a better place. However, this is not always the case and certain similarities further demonstrate how systems of oppression are likely represented unintentionally but are still worth serious consideration and investigation.

The Dursley family is introduced at the outset as a means of drawing a direct comparison between the primary and secondary worlds. The reader, likely knowing they are reading a fantasy text, are introduced to the novel with the opening line, "Mr and Mrs Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much" (7). "Normal" is here understood as non-magical, a connotation that can be inferred by the reader should they be aware of generic convention. Vernon Dursley then proceeds to spend his day inadvertently interacting with people later

revealed to be witches and wizards, and it is in these interactions that his hatred of the “abnormal” comes to light. It is not difficult to distinguish Vernon’s ideologies as xenophobic and racist. For example, on his way to work Vernon sees witches and wizards walking in the streets, “Mr Dursley couldn’t bear people who dressed in funny clothes [...] Mr Dursley was enraged to see that a couple of them weren’t young at all; why that man had to be older than he was, and wearing an emerald-green cloak! The nerve of him” (Rowling 8). Many cultures wear different clothing styles, and thus Vernon’s feelings of anger and uneasiness of people in non-Western attire cannot be strictly attributed to his disliking of magic (Rowling 9), but rather of anyone non-Western, or expressing a cultural heritage that is non-white. Later, when Petunia Dursley reveals to Harry that his mother was a witch, she calls her sister a ““freak”” and describes Harry as ““just the same, just as strange, just as – as – *abnormal*”” (44). Vernon agrees with this sentiment, saying to Harry, ““I accept there’s something strange about you [...] your parents, well, they were weirdos, no denying it, and the world’s better off without them in my opinion”” (46). The language they use to describe magical people is not only harshly unkind, it engages with a social discourse surrounding normality and a hierarchy of racial and cultural value. As Heilman and Gregory argue, “in the eyes of the Dursleys, Harry is a member of an outcast group and this status helps to justify his mistreatment” (250). And, as a wizard, Harry’s Muggle (non-magical) aunt and uncle do indeed mistreat him, to such an extraordinary amount to arguably be deemed child abuse. From excluding him from family activities (22), to refusing him everything from food (26) to his own bedroom (20), Harry’s childhood is miserably rife with mistreatment because of his parentage. The Dursleys hate this component of Harry’s identity to such an extreme that

they not only refuse to tell him the truth of who or what he is, but they try to suppress his true identity. Vernon demands that Harry not attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry as he and Petunia, “‘swore when we took him in we’d put a stop to that rubbish [...] swore we’d stamp it out of him’” (43). There is a cultural erasure that has attempted to take place because of xenophobic fears and hatred. This correlates interestingly with how Muggles and Muggle-descended people are treated and considered in the Wizarding World. Westman makes this comparison, arguing that the apparent racial or cultural tensions of the Wizarding World “echo the fervent tensions between race and class in the ‘real’ contemporary British body politic of the Dursleys’ suburbia and of British readers’ own experience” (307). Thus, the racism or xenophobia enacted by the Dursleys is meant to parallel that of the readers’ actual world so that the systemic racism of the Wizarding World may not be contrasted as different, but rather compared to as the same.

Petunia’s hatred of witches and wizards is evident in her entire worldview, which results in how she and her husband raise their nephew, Harry Potter. As Vernon would not likely know of witches and wizards if he had not married Petunia, there is room to believe that Petunia has a great deal of influence in the family structure of the Dursley home. While “Petunia’s attitude toward her sister helps construct her own identity” and therefore she has personal agency in choosing to be a part of “normal” society (Mayes-Elma 79), it is clear by reviewing her role in the Dursley household that she has little agency and voice over her husband. Vernon’s position as the authoritarian patriarch is indisputable, and the Dursley household represents a system of patriarchal power with typical gender roles and norms. When Petunia makes the argument that Harry will have to come with the family to the zoo, despite Vernon and Dudley’s protest (Rowling 22),

Mayes-Elma argues that this is a moment in which Petunia is establishing herself as a strong woman because she is able to stand up and let “everyone know that she is in charge” (82). However, Mayes-Elma ignores the fact that the argument does not end with Petunia’s suggestion, and eventually the other two concede to let Harry come only because there is no other option and they are out of time. Petunia’s suggestion is smart, but it is not Petunia that makes the decision but rather a lack of alternative possibilities. Petunia speaks up again when Vernon’s determination to get away from the Hogwarts letters becomes unorthodoxly persistent. She suggests to them that they drive home, “but Uncle Vernon didn’t seem to hear her” (Rowling 36). Vernon’s ignoring of Petunia is in “keeping with the dominant discourse that ‘permits’ women to enact their agency to question men but not to go too far [...] The text shows it to be acceptable for men to ignore women, but not the other way around” (Mayes-Elma 102-3). This demonstrates that men have more power in the primary world than women, as men’s right to persist in being heard is more acceptable than women’s. At a point, women must submit to the authority of men. Heilman is correct when she argues that the Dursley family is a typical nuclear family, with a stay-at-home mother and an employed, head-of-the-household father (230). While “Mr Dursley was the director of a firm called Grunnings, which made drills” Petunia Dursley “spent so much of her time craning over garden fences, spying on the neighbours” (Rowling 7). Employment, of course, does not innately establish patriarchal authority. However, Vernon’s power can be seen later when “Uncle Vernon seized Harry around the waist and threw him into the hall” and then to his wife and son, while “pulling great tufts out of his moustache” says he wants them ready to leave in five minutes, as, “‘we’re going away. Just pack some clothes. No arguments!’” Petunia and

Dudley are left in a position where Vernon “looked so dangerous with half his moustache missing that no one dared argue” (Rowling 35). Vernon has so much power in this household that no one dares to question it, and his wife must uproot her family without protest. These roles that Vernon and Petunia take have an impact on their son, Dudley. As Dudley is raised “playing a computer game with his father, being hugged and kissed by his mother” (Rowling 19), there are distinct roles taken by both parents. Vernon often encourages Dudley to be aggressive toward and demanding of Petunia, enforcing the patriarchal rule of man over woman in the home. For example, when Dudley is an infant he “was now having a tantrum and throwing his cereal at the walls. ‘Little tyke,’ chortled Mr Dursley as he left the house” (8). Later, when Dudley is angry he has not received a sufficient number of gifts for his birthday, Vernon, instead of supporting his wife, argues, “‘Little tyke wants his money’s worth, just like his father. Atta boy, Dudley’” (21). In both instances Vernon takes advantage of Petunia as caregiver, first leaving her to clean Dudley’s mess and then later encouraging Dudley’s ingratitude at what has been provided for him (in keeping with traditional gender roles, it is likely the gifts were primarily purchased by Petunia). This parenting encourages Dudley to conform to the violence of traditional masculinity. For example, Dudley’s friend Piers Polkiss “was usually the one who held people’s arms behind their backs while Dudley hit them” (22-23). Dudley has authority at school because he is violent (27), he exclusively has male friends (28), he engages in typically masculine activities such as racing with his bike (20), and he refuses to show weakness in front of his peers (23). Dudley has an extraordinary amount of power in both his home and his school because of his gender and his conforming to typical gender norms, making him a sort of alpha-male. Meanwhile as Harry is Dudley’s

favourite punching bag he has little power (20), putting him in the submissive and weak position typically associated with femininity. This hierarchy of masculine power cannot be contested until it is revealed that Harry has magic, at which point, when Harry just clears “his throat to let them know he was there, [...] Dudley screamed and ran from the room” (67). Dudley’s switch to submission is based in a fear of violence. Masculinity is given power, while femininity and, in turn, women are expected to be submissive to this power. For example, Vernon twice demonstrates an avoidance of Petunia’s emotions when he doesn’t want to worry her about hearing the name Potter (9, 11). Emotions are related to femininity, and therefore they are to be avoided at all costs, even if it means leaving one’s wife in the dark about matters concerning her own family. Vernon gets to make that decision for Petunia, whether she would appreciate such a gesture or not. In these ways, the Dursley family demonstrates the patriarchal power and sexism of the primary world.

Patriarchy is a system in line with heteronormativity in its normative constructions of gender and gender roles. As such, not only are the Dursleys heterosexuals but they are also heteronormative. Pugh and Wallace make the claim that the Dursleys are likely homophobic in their hatred of all things not “normal” (265). While this is not explicit in the books, the very first sentence of the book, “Mr and Mrs Dursley of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much” (Rowling 7) certainly establishes them as heterosexual and glad to be so. Furthermore, when Vernon is hugged by an old man, “Mr Dursley stood rooted to the spot. He had been hugged by a complete stranger” (10), which suggests either that Vernon Dursley is uncomfortable with being touched by strangers (which is fair), or he is

uncomfortable being hugged by another man specifically. Whether Vernon would have been as uncomfortable being hugged by a woman who is a stranger can only be speculated, though he likely would have found it more strange than uncomfortable, suggesting an innate homophobic and heterosexist position that men should never show intimacy toward other men. While the Dursleys allow their son to cry, and frequently, which is a reversal of traditional gender norms, and therefore suggests that Dudley would be accepted if he were to be queer in any sense, his crying is used as a force of domination. His crying is not an act of sensitivity or femininity, but rather a trick of masculine control, specifically over his mother. As the Dursleys appear to hate Harry, how they treat him is irrespective of their heterosexism or homophobia. The general bigotry and emphasis on normativity in the Dursley household establishes Harry's primary world as one that oppresses queer people.

Like heteronormativity, systemic ableism is just as concerned with social constructions of normality and the oppression of those considered "abnormal." As such, the Dursleys can be understood as ableist in their defining concern with being normal. For example, Vernon, commenting on witches and wizards, says, "'these people's minds work in strange ways, Petunia, they're not like you and me'" (34). The mind is considered a point of difference, which also explains both Dudley's and Vernon's ableist language (36, 68). Differences related to the body are also avoided, such as Harry's scar, which Petunia continuously attempts to hide with Harry's hair as she finds it "'horrible'" (23). Furthermore, unlike the aforementioned forms of systemic oppression, systemic ableism can be seen in Harry's primary world outside of the Dursley family. For example, Harry's "Sellotaped glasses" are cause for him to be laughed at by his peers

(23). Hagrid is also the victim of ridicule and systemic ableism in the primary world. As Rowling writes, “passers-by stared a lot at Hagrid as they walked through the little town to the station” (52). Johnson argues, “nondisabled people can generally assume that when they go out in public, they won’t be looked at as odd or out of place or not belonging” (32). Later, Hagrid gets “stuck in the ticket barrier on the Underground and [he] complained loudly that the seats were too small [for him]” (53). Johnson addresses this issue, arguing, “nondisabled people can assume that when they need to travel from one place to another, they will have access to buses, trains, airplanes, and other means of transportation” (32). Clearly, this is not the case for Hagrid as he has a very difficult time traveling in the primary world, while simultaneously being made an objectified spectacle for others. Thus Harry’s primary world is not accessible for all bodies, while people within the society judge others based on their non-normative bodies. Therefore, Harry’s primary world can be understood as a systemically ableist society.

Harry Potter’s primary world is ultimately shaped by his experiences living with the Dursley family. As such, the primary world is shaped by bigotry and prejudice, with explicit xenophobia, patriarchy, heteronormativity and ableism. While a single household cannot account for a society’s total social system, the Dursleys, in their pursuit of normativity, actively reflect the social norms of the primary world. In their antagonistic portrayal the reader is encouraged to hope that the secondary world will be an improvement, and any similarities between the two spaces is a way to present significant flaws in the secondary world for the protagonists to resist. However, despite this, it becomes clear that as the social system that privileges pureblooded witches and wizards

intersects with other systems of oppression, the Wizarding World of Rowling's text is similar to the primary world in many significant ways.

4.3.2 The Systemic Oppression of People of Colour in the Wizarding World

Previous research in the representation of racism and xenophobia in Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels has almost exclusively interpreted the "pureblood," "half-blood" and "Muggle-born" hierarchies as analogous to racial or cultural hierarchies. This former interpretation is flawed as a person in these novels can have white privilege or be oppressed as a person of colour regardless of their "blood status" as a witch or wizard. However the anti-Muggle rhetoric of the text demonstrates a distinct separation of cultures and an ingrained xenophobia inherent in witch and wizard discourse. As such, I will look at how race and culture have problematically been aligned with magical ability in previous research, and how blood-based identities are socially constructed in the Wizarding World. From here I will consider how there is a cultural hierarchy represented in the Wizarding World that privileges certain groups over others.

Whether being a witch or wizard is a part of a person's race or their culture has been debated by a wide variety of scholars with little to no recognition of the opposing arguments. Both sides argue their analogous interpretations, though neither side argues why they interpret magic as a part of one's race or culture and not the other. Bethany Barratt makes the claim, "perhaps the single most important political theme in Rowling's works is the simultaneous power and danger of racial and genetic politics" (59). Meanwhile Ostry argues, "the series enacts a great 'race war,' in which the heroes fight against those wizards who possess a vision of racial purity" (89). The scholars that

interpret magical ability as a racial identity often make comparisons with England, arguing, “the wizarding world struggles to negotiate a very contemporary problem in Britain: the legacy of a racial [...] system that, though not entirely unstable, is still looked upon by a minority of powerful individuals as the means to continued power and control” (Westman 306). This seems to completely contradict scholars that interpret the Wizarding World as a separate culture, rather than its own distinct race. For example, Jann Lacoss argues, “Rowling introduces her readers to a culture that differs markedly from their own [...] This society can be seen as a distinct folk group, with a cultural identity paralleling that of a national group” (67). Here analogy is impossible except through a carnivalesque analysis. Lacoss identifies the Wizarding World as a completely separate folk group in that “their members have certain specific traits in common that identify them with the group as a whole. Outward indicators may include costume, [and] verbal interaction among members” (68), these indicators include the robes worn by witches and wizards (69), and the new terminology and vocabulary Harry learns upon entering the Wizarding World, such as words like “Quidditch” (70). Meanwhile, other scholars do not argue their interpretation as articulately, making bold statements like, “Muggles and wizards are described as members of different cultural groups” (Heilman and Gregory 249). What is clear from this comparison of interpretations is that one side makes a direct correlation to the Muggle-Wizard tensions in Rowling’s text with the racism of England, while the other side would instead make a correlation with the xenophobia in England. However, while in both instances in the primary world white people are privileged and people of colour are oppressed, in the Wizarding World a person’s race does not determine whether or not they are pure-blooded or Muggle-descended. In the Wizarding World, those who

are pureblooded are more systemically privileged than those who are Muggle-descended. In this way, a character can be privileged as a white person but oppressed as a Muggle-descended witch or wizard, or oppressed as a person of colour but privileged as a pure-blooded witch or wizard. This racial analogy, then, ignores intersectionality. Blood-based identity can thus be understood as a social construction that ultimately comes down to cultural heritage. Therefore, I will approach this blood-based hierarchy as a system of xenophobia, acknowledging first the problematic nature of this analysis as only people of colour experience xenophobia in the primary world.

When Harry begins his schooling at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry he is nervous that he will do poorly in his work because he was raised in a different culture. This is a legitimate concern, as the Wizarding World has many cultural differences than that of Harry's primary world. However, Harry's fears are quickly put to ease, as "he wasn't miles behind everyone else. Lots of people had come from Muggle families and, like him, hadn't had any idea that they were witches and wizards. There was so much to learn that even people like Ron didn't have much of a head start" (Rowling 100). Furthermore, Hermione is well known as the brightest of her peers, despite the fact that she is Muggle-born and raised (Rowling 79). She understands and is more skilled at performing magical spells than Ron, who is a pureblooded wizard, which is exemplified when she teaches him how to levitate a feather in class (127). These examples demonstrate that "heredity of course is socially constructed to matter in Harry's world" but there is no legitimacy to this hierarchy (Barratt 13). As blood-status is socially constructed, despite her skills and knowledge, because Hermione's "parents are both Muggles, she has no status in the wizarding world" (Ostry 91). Johnson's argument that

“whites can succeed without other people being surprised” (27), can be directly related to hierarchical notions of who is likely to be successful as a witch or wizard, such as when Draco says to Harry that Muggle-born witches and wizards have “‘never been brought up to know our ways’” and should therefore not be admitted to Hogwarts (61). Hermione repeatedly disproves the idea that she is less likely to be successful, demonstrating that this ideology is illegitimate, though likely others are surprised by her successes. Draco’s opinions, and those of others who favour pureblooded witches and wizards, are based not only in an ideology that favours cultural heritage, but is also based in an anti-Muggle discourse. This discourse can be seen throughout the Wizarding World, and is engaged with even by characters deemed tolerant and good.

Discourses concerning Muggles and Muggle culture in the Wizarding World are almost rarely positive, regardless of who is engaging in said discourses. Barratt argues that as “being Muggle born makes no difference for Wizarding ability, many ‘purebloods’ believe that it makes a great deal of difference to the witch or wizard’s legitimate claim to magical power and privilege” (64), it becomes clear that “the most important targets of intolerance in the magical world are Muggles and Muggle-borns” (65). This can be seen in the attitudes of a variety of characters. The most obvious example of a character that privileges a pureblood heritage is Draco Malfoy. When Harry first meets Draco, he is introduced to the fact that there are witches and wizards who not only privilege pureblooded heritages, but also wish to oppress those of Muggle-descent. When Draco asks Harry about his parents, he says, “‘they were *our* kind, weren’t they?’” (61). When Harry responds that they were witches and wizards, Draco responds, “‘I really don’t think they should let the other sort in, do you? They’re just not the same,

they've never been brought up to know our ways'" (61). Harry is not the "sort" that Draco describes, but he is like them, brought up by Muggles and unaware of Wizard "ways," but the only thing relevant to the xenophobic Draco is what Harry's parents were. Thus it is ironic that Draco should consider Harry part of his insider group because of his parents even though Harry has the same cultural upbringing as Muggle-descended witches and wizards (Ostry 92). It is also ironic that Draco should consider himself superior, even though Harry has the fame and Hermione has the intellect and skill. Because of his "pureblood" Draco feels himself superior, as "young wizards like Draco are raised to assume that they have rights and privileges by dint of who they are [...] He also believes he has inherited exemption from rules" (Barratt 13). This can be seen when Draco gets detention for being out of his dormitory at night, and when he is told his punishment is to go into the Forbidden Forest he outright refuses, saying "'I'm not going in that Forest [...] this is servant stuff, it's not for students to do'" (182). He only agrees after Hagrid gives him no other option. It is important to note that Draco is not the only character to demonstrate xenophobia toward Muggles and Muggle culture, as "wizards universally look down upon Muggles, and being a wizard means joining an elite world" (Ostry 93). This leads to a fascination with Muggle society and culture however, "much of this fascination is based on a subconscious paternalism, and a sense of wonder at how Muggles get along without magic" (Barratt 66). This can be seen when Hagrid, without consideration, begins "pointing at perfectly ordinary things like parking meters and saying loudly, 'See that, Harry? Things these Muggles dream up, eh?'" (52). Later, on a subway (or Underground) train, he says to Harry, "'I don't know how the Muggles manage without magic'" (53). It is clear from these instances that Hagrid regards Muggle

culture as not just different, but strange and less advanced. Barratt argues that Hagrid's "fascination is reminiscent of the exoticism often directed toward subjugated peoples under colonialism [...] colonizers could easily go on to argue that they knew what was better for the natives rather than did the natives themselves" (66). Thus, Hagrid is being condescending in his remarks as he finds Muggle culture to provide a way of life that is worse than the lives of people in the Wizarding World. Thus, when Hagrid is filled with guilt at the end of the novel, he suggests that he "'should be chucked out an' made ter live as a Muggle'" (219). This prejudice appears to be mostly unintentional, for in response to Draco's explicit bigotry, Hagrid tells Harry, "'some o' the best [witches and wizards] I ever saw were the only ones with magic in 'em in a long line o' Muggles – look at your mum! Look what she had fer a sister'" (61). While Hagrid's stance is in support of Muggle-descended witches and wizards, it also reflects his prejudice against Muggles themselves. A witch or wizard is understood to be successful *despite* being Muggle-descended, rather than *regardless* of their parentage. Hagrid is not the only person who accepts and values Muggle-descended witches and wizards but has these views, of course. I agree with Westman when she argues, "Rowling's sharpest critique of racial prejudice and materialist politics appears through Hogwarts student Ron Weasley" (323). Ron's friends include Harry and Hermione, both raised by Muggles. However, Ron's unconscious prejudices become apparent throughout this novel. For example, he twice describes Muggle cultural items (photographs and money specifically) as "'weird'" (77, 147). When Harry first meets him and asks him if every member of his family are wizards, Ron replies, "'I think Mum's got a second cousin who's an accountant, but we never talk about him'" (75). Ron has a family member who is a Muggle, and because of

this the cousin has been so ostracized that they have literally become unmentionable; they have been erased from the family. This is hardly Ron's fault, but his acceptance of this demonstrates his opinion of the matter. Later in the story a clear divide is established at Hogwarts between those from wizarding families and those from Muggle families, and Ron contributes directly to this. As Rowling writes:

Everyone from Wizarding families talked about Quidditch constantly. Ron had already had a big argument with Dean Thomas, who shared their dormitory, about football. Ron couldn't see what was exciting about a game with only one ball where no one was allowed to fly. Harry had caught Ron prodding Dean's poster of West Ham football team, trying to make the players move.

Here there are clear tensions between Wizarding and Muggle cultures, and it can be seen that not only are witches and wizards from Muggle families bullied for their culture's sports, but their own culture's sports do not appear to be played on campus at all. Muggle-descended witches and wizards must conform to a love of Quidditch instead of the sports they grew up supporting in order to belong to sporting culture in the Wizarding World. This is rather ironic as Rowling has said, "I decided that if the wizards had this whole secret society thing going on... I was thinking of things that unified society, and I decided that one thing would have to be a sport" (Loriba). Despite this, it is clear that Quidditch does not act as a way to unify students, but rather to divide them. By encouraging students from Wizarding families to participate in Muggle sports as well, perhaps unification could be accomplished. However, Ron is not the only one to be completely ignorant of Muggle sport. Oliver Wood, the captain of the Gryffindor Quidditch team, doesn't know what basketball is (124), and yet uses "ordinary golf balls"

(126) to help Harry train. This suggests that Oliver Wood has access to Muggle sports, but refuses to educate himself about them. Through these examples it can be understood that an anti-Muggle discourse is the foundation and justification for the xenophobia directed toward Muggle-descended witches and wizards, and in turn validates the privileges that pureblooded witches and wizards gain.

The anti-Muggle discourse throughout Rowling's text demonstrates a system of xenophobia and privilege based on cultural upbringing, which overshadows but does not negate the existence of the systemic racism in the Wizarding World as well. While Westman describes Hogwarts as "multi-ethnic" (307), and Kern argues that "Hogwarts is ethnically and racially diverse" (209), neither are able to list more than three characters that are people of colour. While Dean Thomas is described as black in the Americanized *Sorcerer's Stone* edition, this description is not included in the original edition I am working with; furthermore Angelina Johnson's skin colour is not described until *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. As such, the only potential people of colour that can be identified through description in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* are Lee Jordan, who is described as "a boy with dreadlocks" which implies an African-Caribbean background, (though it is of course not impossible for white people to culturally appropriate with their hair styles), and the Patil twins, who are assumedly Indian based on their last name. Previous scholars have harshly criticized this lack of representation and these descriptions. Heilman and Gregory state, "these minimal descriptions appear as an attempt to be politically correct rather than as an honest attempt to include others" and "the books contain nothing to identify their ethnicity or provide information about them in terms of who they are and how they are culturally different from the main characters"

(255). This is deemed by Ostry as incredibly problematic, arguing, “by not specifying exact cultural groups or doing more than casually mentioning race, she [Rowling] shows a color-blind attitude: race does not matter, so the differences should not be noticed” (94). While these few people of colour demonstrate that the Wizarding World does not seem to segregate people of colour “into communities that isolate them from the best [...] schools” allowing them to have equal “access to quality education” (Johnson 26-7), there are several ways the Wizarding World demonstrates a system of racial oppression. The most obvious example is the complete lack of representation of people of colour in employment at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. As Johnson argues that whites are usually assumed to be success models and are represented in leadership disproportionately higher than people of colour (26), there is room to interpret the Wizarding World as one that makes opportunities for success and economic growth more statistically difficult for people of colour. This, of course, is only an assumption based on representation. What is definite, however, is that while characters express knowledge about Europe, there is a general ignorance concerning other parts of the world like Africa. For example, Ron explains to Harry the careers of his older brothers, saying, “‘Charlie’s in Romania studying dragons and Bill’s in Africa doing something for Gringotts’” (80). Romania is a specific country in Europe, but Africa is an entire continent that is often spoken of as one singular, homogeneous space in racist discourses. The fact that Ron doesn’t know what country in Africa his own brother is living in demonstrates a total disregard for the value and relevance of the distinct and different African countries, and, in turn, African peoples. This is not the only time this happens, either, for Professor Quirrell does the exact same thing when he explains, “his turban [...] had been given to

him by an African prince” (100). Now, while Quirrell may be lying as the turban is in fact being used to cover up Voldemort’s face on the back of his head, what is clear here is that not only does Quirrell, like Ron, not see any significance in being specific about which African country he is referring to, but he is also comfortable engaging in the deeply racist act of cultural appropriation. This is not questioned or problematized by any characters in the novel. While a multitude of questions can be raised about how students from different ethnic backgrounds are able to practice their cultural and religious traditions and customs at Hogwarts (for example: are accommodations made for the Patil twins to celebrate Diwali? Does the burqa violate the school uniform rules? Are Jewish students exempt from attending meals while fasting? Why are only Christian holidays recognized at Hogwarts?), this would be a list of speculations without any available source for answers. As the story is told through the lens of white, British protagonists, these are not concerns brought forward in the text. What is clear, however, is evidence of an ignorance of other cultures and ethnicities, which, in turn, suggests that as white characters would never have to suffer the consequences of this ignorance they are in turn privileged in the Wizarding World.

The systemic oppression of people of colour in the Wizarding World of Rowling’s novel *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* is highly intersectional. Parentage, the culture one was raised in, the culture of one’s ethnic background, and one’s race are all factors that contribute to where a person fits in the racial and cultural hierarchy established in the Wizarding World. What is clear is that at the top of this hierarchy are whites with a pureblooded lineage. Furthermore, there is a general ignorance about cultures outside of British Wizarding culture, including the cultures of

Muggles and other ethnicities, which in turn devalues said cultures and encourages ignorance and xenophobia. However, the conflict between bloodlines in Rowling's texts can be said to represent an overall resistance to such oppression, and it is therefore ironic how few people of colour are represented in the *Harry Potter* novels.

4.3.3 The Systemic Oppression of Women in the Wizarding World

The primary world presented in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* represents a patriarchal household with the masculine men having clearly established positions of authority over the feminine and women. This is repeated in the Wizarding World. While Hermione is an example of a feminist representation of women and the ways she is treated suggests that the Wizarding World is not a sexist society, she is the only woman apparently exempt from the systemic sexism in the Wizarding World. There are several examples of other women conforming to traditional gender norms, and there is clear evidence that wizards are more systemically privileged than witches in the Wizarding World.

While there is some exception, previous feminist research on the *Harry Potter* novels has almost exclusively focused on the representation of Hermione Granger. Scholars have considered how Hermione is disempowered or resistant to typical gender norms in order to determine whether the *Harry Potter* novels are sexist or feminist. However, both approaches have considered Hermione within the same patriarchal society as the reader's primary world, and have typically failed to argue how the Wizarding World's social structure compares. While Mayes-Elma argues that Hermione enacts her own agency by demonstrating her ability to define her own goals, make her own

decisions and influence other people (78-9), Heilman argues that “the *Harry Potter* books feature females in secondary positions of power and authority and replicate some of the most demeaning, yet familiar, cultural stereotypes for both males and females” (222).

Heilman takes particular issue with “the way Hermione cowered in fear when faced with the troll, and [...] had to be rescued by the boys” (Heilman 222). Heilman argues that Hermione is a knowledgeable but incompetent girl who plays the typical role of the girl needing to be saved by a boy. However, she fails to remember that Hermione saves Harry when his broom is bewitched during the Quidditch match (Rowling 140), or when she saves both Harry and Ron from the Devil’s Snare down the trapdoor (Rowling 202).

Heilman ignores the fact that while it takes both Ron and Harry to work together to save Hermione from the troll (and they accomplish this only by using the spell Hermione teaches Ron) (Rowling 130), Hermione is able to save both of them more than once, single-handedly, and without any reliance on luck or the knowledge of others. It is important to note that neither Ron nor Harry are embarrassed or in any way emasculated from being saved and protected by a girl, which suggests that gender is not a factor in relation to either heroism or victimhood in this instance. However, in these situations Mayes-Elma argues Hermione only breaks rules “in order to help or enable the male characters in some way; she is never shown to break rules for her own self-interest” (88).

This argument is problematic for two reasons. The first is that it suggests that Hermione is not an equal part of the trio of friends, and therefore is not equally committed to stopping Voldemort from obtaining the Philosopher’s Stone as Ron and Harry. It suggests that she is only helping them stop Voldemort because Harry and Ron want to stop Voldemort, not because she herself does. Taylor argues that Hermione’s “capacity to

love is coupled with a strong sense of morality that leads her to care for the wizarding world as a whole" (199), while Berndt argues, "Hermione's ambitions [are] individually motivated, but her knowledge is never applied to serve only her own good" (169). Therefore her contributions to their cause helps lead to a successful resistance against evil. It is unlikely that Ron or Harry would ever have been successful resisting Voldemort without Hermione's use of her knowledge (Taylor 115). The second reason Hermione could not break the rules to accomplish her own goals is because her own personal goal is to be successful in her exams. To cheat would negate the purpose. Many scholars take a great deal of issue with the instance in which Hermione tells Harry he is a greater wizard than she is because "there are more important things" than books and cleverness, namely "friendship and bravery" (Rowling 208). While Mayes-Elma argues that this shows that Hermione needs validation from Harry as a man (94), Berndt suggests that instead, "this particular scene neither presents Hermione nor intellectual capacity as in any way inferior but illustrates how self-conscious Hermione still is with regard to her new friends" (167). As Hermione "never once succumbs to such conventionally girlish occupations as competing for popularity" (Berndt 168), and Ron points out that she has no friends (Rowling 127), she is likely new to having friends and is therefore a complex character in her self-consciousness in regards to her ability to make and keep friends combined with her unashamed pride in her own abilities. Hermione "is not at all embarrassed or ashamed of being so studious, instead, she is proud of herself" (Mayes-Elma 81). Hermione is therefore "a bold eleven-year-old who is also an incredibly intelligent overachiever [...] unafeared to pursue knowledge with veracity and pride" (Taylor 115). Furthermore, "Hermione knows and believes that knowledge is power, and she is proud to use it *as its*

own force as frequently as she can and without relying on sex appeal” (116). While some scholars have taken issue with the fact that women in *Harry Potter* can only be competent and or intelligent if they are ugly (Mayes-Elma 93), Berndt argues that the story is told primarily through a third person limited perspective, and therefore the “advantage of the figural narrative situation is its presentation of the main female character outside of the ‘male gaze’, consequently never limiting her to being portrayed as a sexual object” (164). Furthermore, Hermione is only ever described as having, “a bossy sort of voice, lots of bushy brown hair and rather large front teeth” (Rowling 79), which likely only suggests that Harry is not attracted to her, not that she is ugly. She could be, however, hypersensitive. For example, when Ron claims that no one can stand to be friends with Hermione, Hermione cries (Rowling 127). While Heilman argues, “females are emotional and cry readily throughout” the book, and yet “males rarely touch or cry” (227), Heilman forgets that “although she is deeply hurt, she refuses to retreat in silence, instead (deliberately?) making sure that Ron knows she heard him” (Berndt 165) when she knocks into Harry when she passes him (Rowling 127). Berndt argues that this demonstrates that Hermione is human in being hurt, but also defiant and wants Ron to know the consequences of his actions (165). Mayes-Elma agrees with Heilman when she argues that boys “are not shown to be remorseful or ashamed” and that the “woman is supposed to be sorry for what she has done, but the man is not supposed to give it enough thought to be sorry or regretful” (89-90). However, both scholars forget that when Harry contributes to losing Gryffindor House one hundred and fifty house points, he “felt so ashamed of himself that he went to Wood and offered to resign from the Quidditch team” (Rowling 179). While in the primary world emotions are avoided or hidden by men, in

the Wizarding World men can express very clearly what they are feeling. There is no shame in a man expressing typical femininity. Arguably the scene in which “Dumbledore now became very interested in a bird out on the window-sill, which gave Harry time to dry his eyes on the sheet” (Rowling 217) suggests that men are not able to express emotion in the Wizarding World openly with others. Thus in this writing demonstrates that Harry and Hermione are complex characters in a patriarchal society.

While Hermione and her relationships with Ron and Harry exemplify a resistance to patriarchy, the Wizarding World otherwise contains characters that conform to gender norms and roles. Like Petunia Dursley, Molly Weasley is a stay-at-home mother who spends all of her time looking after her home and family (Rowling 76). As she is very busy raising five children (76), and the twins give her a hard time (73), Mayes-Elma argues that she cannot see how Mrs. Weasley could possibly enjoy being a mother when she is so “ineffective” and her sons take “advantage” of her (98). This is a harsh, unfair and unfounded criticism as there is instead evidence that Molly does indeed enjoy being a mother, especially considering she has chosen to have seven children. Furthermore, as the Weasleys are a low-income family, it is unlikely Molly would remain unemployed unless she felt that being a stay-at-home mother was the best thing for herself and her family. Not able to afford Christmas gifts, Molly hand-makes every one of her children a sweater so that they both have a gift and are kept warm in the cold winter months (147). This dedicated time and energy is not the typical behaviour of a woman who hates being a mother. The only other parents of the Wizarding World represented are Harry’s, and only very briefly. Voldemort tells Harry, ““I killed your father first and he put up a courageous fight... but your mother needn’t have died... she was trying to protect you”” (213), and

later Dumbledore explains that Harry is protected by his mother's powerful love (216). This suggests that Harry's father fought Voldemort to protect his wife and child, though it is unclear whether this is because he was more skilled at fighting or because he was a man. What is clear, however, is the strong emphasis placed on Harry's mother's love, rather than Harry's father's love (though he also sacrificed himself for Harry), which suggests that maternal love is given more value than paternal. This is, of course, problematic as it suggests that women are better parents than men, and therefore are better suited to stay at home and look after their children while their husbands work, (this is also heteronormative, which will be discussed further in Section 4.3.4). However, despite this, there are certainly working women in the Wizarding World, which suggests that women are free to work outside of the home and are given equal opportunity to do so. Harry's school books are written by both men and women, such as Bathilda Bagshot and Newt Scamander, which suggests that both men and women can take on scholarly work outside of teaching (Rowling 52-3), and in Diagon Alley Harry meets store owners like Madam Milkins (59) and Ollivander (63). Arguably, Ollivander is typically masculine in his selling of wands, which produce and create, while Madam Milkins, in selling clothes, has a typically feminine career that is considered frivolous and shallow (see Hollows 125). This gendered consideration of careers can also be applied to both the teaching and the non-teaching employees of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Of the non-teaching employees, Argus Filch is the caretaker, Hagrid is the Keeper of Keys and Grounds, Madam Pomfrey is the matron and nurse, and Madam Pince is the librarian. Of the teaching employees, while Professor Snape teaches the hard sciences of potions (similar to chemistry), Professor Sprout teaches herbology (similar to

gardening). Johnson argues that male privilege means, “men don’t find themselves slotted into a narrow range of occupations identified with their gender” such as nursing (28-9). There is therefore a social discourse concerning the relationship of gender roles and careers. While there is an equal number of male and female non-teaching employees at Hogwarts, it is unfortunate that more men than women are hired at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry overall. Though there is an equal division of *living* men and women employed as teachers, with Professor Binns, the ghost who teaches the History of Magic, and Professor Dumbledore as Headmaster, there are more men employed overall. This suggests that men have more opportunity and privilege in the Wizarding World.

Professor McGonagall is a woman with a great deal of power in the Wizarding World. While Mayes-Elma argues that McGonagall needs Dumbledore’s validation and is subservient to him (94), what Mayes-Elma fails to mention is that McGonagall and Dumbledore have different job titles, and for a reason. Dumbledore is the Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and it is clear from his biography on his Chocolate Frog card that he has earned his position (Rowling 77). Meanwhile, McGonagall is the Deputy Headmistress, and is therefore beneath Dumbledore not because of her gender, but because of her position at Hogwarts. The hierarchy is a career-based one, not a gendered one, and therefore McGonagall asking Dumbledore a question is not her asking for validation from a man but rather her asking access to her superior’s wealthier amount of knowledge. Furthermore, as McGonagall is the second person in charge of the school, it means that all other employees working at Hogwarts, including the men, are subservient to her. While a feminist analysis would be disappointed in the fact that Dumbledore and McGonagall’s roles are not reversed in order to represent a

resistance to typical gender hierarchies and roles, the positions of these characters does not highlight the sexism inherent in society of the Wizarding World.

There is a system of patriarchy in the Wizarding World. With maternal love given more relevance, women are likely expected to take a role either in the home with the family or in a gendered career, like sewing. The majority of careers at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and in Diagon Alley demonstrate a gendering of expected roles for men and women. Women like Hermione and Professor McGonagall are able to seek success and obtain authority, Hermione especially is able to resist systemic sexism in her freedom to pursue academic success unimpeded. However, other women in the Wizarding World are not afforded these same opportunities, highlighting the systemic sexism of the Wizarding World.

4.3.4 The Systemic Oppression of Queer People in the Wizarding World

The complete lack of queer characters throughout the *Harry Potter* series is not enough to convict the texts of inherent homophobia in Rowling's contribution to queer erasure. Though the texts are somewhat diverse and the main theme of the novels is to accept differences and variety in people, this does not appear to extend toward queer people. While, in keeping in line with queer erasure, there is no explicit homophobia in the Wizarding World, this does not mean that it is devoid of heteronormativity. In fact, while there are some exceptions, the Wizarding World is constructed in such a way that queer people would be oppressed in a variety of ways.

In Section 4.2.3 I argue that the emphasis on Harry's mother's love suggests a heteronormative emphasis on mothers as better parents than fathers in the Wizarding

World. This could potentially be contradicted if other parents in the text broke from this mold, but as there are so few parents mentioned and the only ones described in any detail are Harry's and Ron's, this is not the case. As Pugh and Wallace point out, there are absolutely no queer parents throughout the series; in fact, there are absolutely no queer characters whatsoever (264). While Rowling has stated publicly that Dumbledore is gay (Siegel), and while rumours have spread online that Rowling initially intended to make Dean Thomas and Seamus Finnigan a couple but decided against it (Razey), as these points are not stated outright in any of the books in the series none of these characters can count as canonically queer characters. Furthermore, Heilman argues, "Professor Flitwick is characterized with words and images that are connotative of crude cultural stereotypes of gay men" (233) however there is little in the text to confirm that Flitwick is indeed queer. The only other way to read queer identity in the text, then, is to do so metaphorically, much like how blood-status has been interpreted to metaphorically concern issues with race. Pugh and Wallace draw parallels between Harry's experiences in the first novel and those of characters in queer fiction. They argue that Harry's coming out of the cupboard under the stairs can be interpreted as a coming out of the closet (264), and that Hagrid taking Harry to Diagon Alley is equivalent to an older queer man introducing a recently out queer person to the queer community (266). Furthermore, if Harry had not attended Hogwarts he would have attended Stonewall High (Rowling 28), which Pugh and Wallace, recognizing Rowling's typical playful use of language, suggest this has to do with the Stonewall Inn, which is "the gay bar in New York City that many historian credit as the foundational site of the modern gay rights movement in America" (265). Pugh and Wallace pose the idea that had Harry not have gone to Hogwarts to live

as a non-normative person as a wizard he might have been a non-normative person with a non-normative sexuality (265). However, despite these parallels, they eventually argue, “wizards are only queer magically; they are never queer sexually. Queer readers can interpret wizardry itself as queer, but the force of heteronormativity in the *Potter* books ultimately truncates the meaning of the queer within the fantastic world of the series” (266-7). While the text contains no explicit homophobia (Pugh and Wallace 261), the Wizarding World of Rowling’s novel is still a very heteronormative social system.

The structure of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is incredibly heteronormative. For example, the dormitories are divided based on sex. As Rowling writes, “Percy directed the girls through one door to their dormitory and the boys through another [...] they found their beds at last: five four-posters [...] they pulled on their pajamas and fell into bed” (96-7). What is clear in this description is that not only are the boys and girls separated, but also these separate spaces are open and there is little privacy. This suggests that the boys and girls fully change in front of one another, which is problematic for a variety of reasons. First, it suggests that no one at Hogwarts is same-sex attracted, as this set up would be wholly inappropriate and would lead to a great deal of discomfort among peers. While this division of the sexes allows the heterosexual characters to be comfortable while simultaneously making heterosexual sex near impossible (in the dormitories at least), it does the exact opposite for the same-sex attracted students. This system therefore does not even consider same-sex attracted people. Furthermore, this division does not allow space for transgender, intersex and gender non-conforming students whatsoever. It is unclear whether students are divided based on sex or gender, though it is likely that sex and gender are here conflated. Either

way, the lack of privacy and strict categorization demonstrates a clear heteronormative system in the Wizarding World that does not consider the existence of queer people. While, as Johnson argues, “heterosexuals can live in the comfort of knowing that other people’s assumptions about the sexual orientation are correct” (30), the opposite is true for queer people in the Wizarding World. This type of segregation is not limited to Hogwarts either, for example, Ron says to Hermione on the train, ““would you mind leaving while we change?”” (82), despite the fact that all they do is take “off their jackets and pulled on their long black robes” (83). Ron is uncomfortable with Hermione watching him trade his jacket for a robe, which suggests that boys and girls are often segregated in such instances in the Wizarding World. This heteronormativity is apparent throughout the Wizarding World in ways that completely exclude queer people. However, it is not altogether impossible to resist, as is demonstrated a couple times in the novel.

While the dormitories in the Gryffindor Common Room demonstrate a heteronormative division, the change rooms at the Quidditch Pitch potentially represent otherwise. For example, when Harry first plays Quidditch, Rowling writes just before Wood begins his motivational talk to the team that, “in the changing rooms, Harry and the rest of the team were changing into their scarlet Quidditch robes” (136). As the team includes three women, is it likely they are all changing into their robes together. While it is possible that they could have changed in separate spaces and then come together for Wood’s speech, this is unlikely as later in the text Rowling writes that, “Harry hardly heard a word of Wood’s pep talk as he pulled on his Quidditch robes” (162). The lack of description allows for a great deal of interpretation, from Wood addressing a group of

men and women changing together, to Wood addressing people as they change behind some sort of divider(s) (for example, curtains or half-walls), to regular robes being exchanged for Quidditch robes without much other changing of clothes at all. This last possibility is the most likely as the putting on of robes is the only description provided, and the complete switch from the inherent heteronormativity of the rest of the text is unlikely. The only other resistance to heteronormativity apparent in the text is when Hagrid self-identifies as his pet dragon's “mummy” (Rowling 172). Hagrid also calls his male dragon beautiful in this scene, a term usually used to describe females (172). Hagrid's reversal of descriptors, both in the physical appearance of Norbert the dragon and in his own role as a parental-like figure, suggests a resistance to heteronormativity. This is not to suggest that Hagrid identifies as a woman, but rather that heteronormative constructions do not prohibit him from identifying as maternal rather than paternal, nor does this system stop him from expressing how he feels about Norbert. While Hagrid's approach to Norbert and his role as pet-owner is not enough to argue that heteronormativity is not an all-encompassing part of the social system of the Wizarding World, it does represent how individuals can resist this system.

The Wizarding World is a sexual society. At Christmas, Hogwarts is festooned with mistletoe (Rowling 144), and the employees express their sexualities in their merriment, such as when “Harry watched Hagrid getting redder and redder in the face as he called for more wine, finally kissing Professor McGonagall on the cheek, who, to Harry’s amazement, giggled and blushed, her top hat lop-sided” (150). Sexuality and gender are clearly apparent throughout the text as important components of characters’ identities, and yet, the Wizarding World’s social structure does not appear to recognize

the existence of queer people. Through social divisions that assume that all people are heterosexual and cisgender, the Wizarding World of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is a social system that oppresses queer people.

4.3.5 The Systemic Oppression of Disabled People in the Wizarding World

While the Wizarding World is written to contrast with the normality of the Dursley family, it is surprisingly still systemically oppressive to those considered “abnormal” or atypically bodied. Despite the fact that being a witch or a wizard makes a person non-normative in the primary world, there is still a system of normativity within the Wizarding World. As such, characters with physical or mental abilities different from the norm are systemically oppressed in a variety of ways, from disrespectful aversion and distrust, to the inaccessibility of spaces and practices, to a lack of aid provided for mentally disabled people and finally to an alarmingly frequent use of ableist language. Overall, the Wizarding World of Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* is an incredibly ableist social system.

Prior to attending Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Harry Potter experiences harassment and bullying at school and from his family. While his scar is one such point of mockery, Rowling writes, “the only thing Harry liked about his own appearance was a very thin scar on his forehead which was shaped like a bolt of lightening” (20). However, when Harry learns of the Wizarding World, he also learns that his scar is no ordinary cut, but rather the mark of being touched by evil (Rowling 45). After this his scar becomes a spectacle by those he meets, including Ollivander (64), and the Weasley family (73-4). Earlier in the book, McGonagall asks Dumbledore to remove

Harry's scar (17), demonstrating the aversion witches and wizards have to different bodies in the Wizarding World. McGonagall further demonstrates this when she expresses her concern with Hagrid being responsible for escorting the infant Harry Potter to Privet Drive (16). Hagrid frequently faces such attacks on his character due to his different body. For example, Filch considers Hagrid an “oaf” (181), and because of his ableist feelings toward Hagrid, he puts his cat, Mrs Norris, up to following Hagrid when Hagrid comes into Hogwarts as a way to police Hagrid's behaviour (105). Meanwhile, Draco Malfoy considers Hagrid a “sort of servant” after hearing that Hagrid is “a sort of *savage*” (60). Draco would have heard both descriptors second-hand, and therefore these opinions are not solely his own. While, as neither Filch nor Draco are kind characters, it is likely that these hateful sentiments directed toward Hagrid are just individual bigotry, this same sentiment is shared by a more caring character, Ron Weasley. When Hagrid visits the library to research dragons (which he does because he has a dragon egg, but which would not otherwise be a surprising thing for him to do considering his passion for magical creatures), Ron is legitimately surprised to find Hagrid at the library and cannot fathom why Hagrid would want a book, regardless of the book's topic or Hagrid's reason for wanting to read it (168-9). The assumption, then, is that Hagrid is unintelligent, an assumption that is not grounded in any evidence. Johnson argues that disabled people are “likely to be singled out based on stereotypes that underestimate their abilities” and that “nondisabled people can assume that they will fit in at work and in other setting without having to worry about being evaluated and judged according to preconceived notions and stereotypes” (30). Hagrid's large body becomes a disability when it is socially constructed as abnormal and unacceptable, which then

results in how he is treated and expected to behave. The body is a central point of concern in the Wizarding World as it has a great deal to do with magical competence. This is most evident when Professor Snape argues that he can teach his students ““the delicate power of liquids that creep through human veins, bewitching the mind, ensnaring the senses... I can teach you how to bottle fame, brew glory, even stopper death”” (102). Magic can be directly related to one’s body, and when combined with one’s body, like drinking a potion, it can be used to gain various successes. The body must meet a standard for magical excellence, and therefore any body that does not meet this standard is not as magically competent and, therefore, as socially valuable. In this way, the Wizarding World does not allow for physical and mental differences, establishing a hierarchy of value that, in turn, enforces a social system of ableism.

As all bodies are meant to meet social norms in the Wizarding World, social spaces and practices exclusively cater to bodies that meet these norms. The goblins at Gringotts bank, having access to high stools to sit on (57) are the only characters who do not have normative bodies but also do not face the inaccessibility of the Wizarding World. For example, Professor Flitwick, while also small like a goblin, does not have access to a desk or chair that is accessible for his size, but rather he must “stand on a pile of books to see over his desk” (99). There are a wide variety of ways that the Wizarding World is inaccessible for disabled people. For example, the cart at Gringotts bank that leads Harry and Hagrid to the vaults makes Hagrid sick, and when he asks for them to slow down he is refused (58-9). The goblins at Gringotts have not considered how different bodies are able to handle their cart system, and thus their carts are either completely inaccessible or highly nauseating for the differently abled trying to access the

bank, an institution that should be accessible for all. Hogwarts, as a school, should also be accessible for all, yet instead it is an incredibly inaccessible building. First year students arrive on small boats (83), which assumes that, should any of the students fall into the water, they will be able to swim. Furthermore, when Harry and his peers arrive at Hogwarts for the first time, they are met by “a magnificent marble staircase facing them [that] led to the upper floors” (85), and the next day, on his way to class, he learns that there “were a hundred and forty-two staircases at Hogwarts: wide, sweeping ones; narrow, rickety ones; some that led somewhere different on Friday; some with a vanishing step halfway up that you had to remember to jump” (98). Stairs are, obviously, inaccessible for people who use wheelchairs or are otherwise mobility impaired. While, arguably, no witches or wizards have trouble walking as they can use magic to help them, as Peeves the poltergeist is seen carrying a “bundle of walking sticks” (96), there must be a reason there are walking sticks at Hogwarts. It can therefore be assumed that there are people at Hogwarts who utilize these walking sticks, and who therefore have a great deal of trouble with the many stairs. Those who cannot walk whatsoever would not be able to access Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. While an argument could be made that people with mobility disabilities could fly to their destinations, they would also struggle with this as Madam Hooch’s instructions for flying include “‘kick[ing] off from the ground, hard’” (109). Magic can therefore sometimes be completely inaccessible to disabled people. Another example of this is the fact that eye contact is necessary in order to cast a jinx (141), which suggests that blind and visually impaired witches and wizards cannot cast jinxes or counter-curses. While Johnson argues, “nondisabled people can choose whether to be conscious of their disability status or to ignore it and regard

themselves as simply human beings” (30), this privilege would not be afforded to disabled people in the Wizarding World. The social structures of the Wizarding World prohibit certain people from accessing spaces and practices because of their disabilities and there are little to no aids provided to resist this exclusionary oppression.

Neville Longbottom and Professor Quirrell are the two characters in this text that are clearly in need of aid and support, either through disability aids or through social support like counseling or therapy. While Neville receives the Remembrall as a sort of disability aid to inform him that he has forgotten something, it fails to tell him what he has forgotten and is thus not truly useful (108). Draco Malfoy later describes this aid as ““that stupid thing”” (110), which suggests that disability aids are not given any credibility or worth in the Wizarding World, (or perhaps Malfoy recognizes the Remembrall’s inefficiency, though either way his language is disrespectful). Neville’s poor memory often causes trouble for him, such as when he is forced to sleep on the floor outside of the common room because he has forgotten the password to access the space (116). This forces Neville into a position in which he is at a greater risk of being disciplined, as students must not be out of their dorms at night. Neville can be understood in magical terms as developmentally delayed, as he did not start to show magical ability until later than is typical (93). Furthermore, Neville struggles physically, needing help climbing into the Gryffindor common room (96), and often getting into accidents (108). His clumsiness could indicate a lack of motor control and coordination, but no magical spell or aid is provided to him, making Hogwarts a difficult place for him. This fact is taken advantage of by bullying peers who use the Leg-Locker Curse to stick his legs together, forcing him to “bunny hop all the way up to Gryffindor Tower” just to have

everyone laugh at him, save Hermione who helps him (159). Neville is known as a boy in need of help, though he rarely receives it. When he hurts himself in potions class, and he “moaned in pain as angry red boils sprang up all over his arms and legs” he is blamed for his own pain and is called an “‘idiot boy’” by Professor Snape (103). Even Professor McGonagall, a far more caring professor than Professor Snape, shows a lack of confidence in Neville’s mental abilities (178). Instead of supporting Neville, however, Professor McGonagall does little more than pity him. Pity, teasing and a universal ignoring of needs are the only responses to disabled people in the Wizarding World.

Professor Quirrell is treated just as poorly as Neville Longbottom. While Hagrid notes that Professor Quirrell is intelligent, he pities (rather than supports) him for developing an apparent form of anxiety after studying in the field (55). However, Hagrid is the only one to pity Quirrell as all others seem to either mock or ignore Quirrell’s disabilities. The Weasley twins spread the rumour that Quirrell’s turban is “stuffed full of garlic” (100), and later they are “punished for bewitching several snowballs so that they followed Quirrell around, bouncing off the back of his turban” (143). Later, when Quirrell faints in front of the entire school (127), or when he “took one look at the troll, let out a faint whimper and sat quickly down on a toilet, clutching his heart” (131), not one single person comes to his aid. His disability and his subsequent needs are outright ignored.

When Harry, Ron and Hermione incorrectly believe Snape is attempting to force Quirrell to help him steal the Philosopher’s Stone, Ron “started telling people off for laughing at Quirrell’s stutter” (167). It is because of this stutter and Quirrell’s apparent anxiety that no one suspects he is competent enough to accomplish the feat of stealing the Philosopher’s Stone, as Quirrell asks, “‘who would suspect p-p-poor st-stuttering P-

Professor Quirrell?”” (209). In asking, Quirrell points out the problem of systemic ableism in the Wizarding World. As Johnson argues, “nondisabled people can count on being taken seriously and not treated as children” (32), and it is clear from Quirrell’s remark that no one took him seriously enough to suspect him of being in league with Voldemort because of his anxiety and stutter. Quirrell relies on the systemic ableism in the Wizarding World, recognizing that while “nondisabled people don’t have to deal with an endless and exhausting stream of attention to their disability status” (Johnson 31), disabled people do, and therefore his own apparent disabilities would be his sole identifier. While this is a great opportunity for the reader to reflect on not judging disabled people, this is not an opportunity taken by any of the characters. Instead, after several uses of ableist terms like ““mad”” throughout the text by a wide variety of characters (50, 56, 92, 157, 158, 167, 196), when Harry reveals Dumbledore’s thoughts and plans, Rowling writes, ““I always said he was off his rocker,’ said Ron, looking quite impressed at how mad his hero was [...] ‘Dumbledore’s barking, all right,’ said Ron proudly” (218-19). Instead of reflecting on how Quirrell had been underestimated because his apparent impairments presumably left him disabled, and how this turned out to not be true, Ron instead continues to engage in ableist diction to glorify a person he does not legitimately feel is mentally disabled. Ron is overwhelmed with how impressed with Dumbledore he is while simultaneously expressing concern over Dumbledore’s method. Unable or unwilling to criticize social discourses, systemic ableism is ultimately reinforced.

The systemic oppression of disabled people in the Wizarding World is apparent throughout the text. From an aversion to the differently bodied, like Hagrid, to the

inaccessibility of essential spaces and practices, to the disregard of the needs of the differently abled, the Wizarding World enforces a set of norms in relation to ability. To uneducated, nondisabled people, these systems would be almost invisible, but to characters like Neville and Quirrell, these systems directly impact their daily lives and opportunities for success. In a story about the abnormal world of witches and wizards, this systemic ableism and its lack of redemption in the Wizarding World is ironic.

4.3.6 Intersectional Oppression in the Wizarding World and Conclusion

While previous scholars have argued that stigmas and prejudices related to blood status in Rowling's *Harry Potter* texts can be understood as analogous to racism, I argue that this blood-based system is more intersectional. One's parentage, culture, ethnicity and race are all intersecting points of oppression in the Wizarding World not only because of systemic racism but also because of the social system that privileges witches and wizards based on whether they are pureblooded. However, this privileging of pureblooded witches and wizards extends beyond race and culture, as the role of parentage also impacts systems of heterosexism and ableism.

Lineage is the primary qualifier for a witch or wizard to be considered pureblooded in the Wizarding World. Some witches and wizards are only able to draw on their parentage in this regard, while others are descended from a long line of pureblooded ancestors. In a primarily white and xenophobic society, it is unlikely that people of colour would have access to this same long history. While, certainly, some people of colour may be pureblooded through one or two generations, as their ancestors would be given less access to freedoms and would certainly be given less respect, pureblooded people of

colour would not have this same long history. Those that did would draw from ancestors from different countries and cultures than white Britain, and would therefore lose privileges based on their cultural heritage, regardless of their blood status. Regardless of ancestry, pureblooded people of colour in the Wizarding World would still face systemic racism and xenophobia, systems that would likely challenge the credibility of their heritage. One's parentage must therefore be comprised of a white witch and wizard.

This lineage from a witch and wizard is significant because it also enforces a system of heterosexism. In a system that privileges a person based on their parentage, each person's mother and father is significant to their own identity. While a person may have two wizards or two witches as parents, as only heterosexual sex can produce a child only a child's biological parentage would be significant in this system. Thus, the surrogate or donor, or an adopted child's biological parents would be given more significance in the Wizarding World than one or both of the child's same-sex parents. This heterosexism would also make same-sex parentage difficult, as queer people in the Wizarding World would be encouraged to reproduce within a heterosexual marriage in order to further the pureblooded line. Therefore, with an expectation to reproduce, queer people in the Wizarding World would face a great deal of heterosexism and homophobia.

The hatred that characters like Hagrid and Neville face, while due to systemic ableism, is also the result of how blood-status intersects with ideologies concerning the normative body. If having a witch and wizard as parents is believed to make a person "better" than others, then those with non-normative bodies would automatically be assumed to either not be pureblooded, or to be a shame on their households. As assumptions are frequently made about Hagrid's incompetence, and his size is often the

site of spectacle, it is likely he is automatically assumed to not be a pureblooded wizard. If he is pureblooded, then he is likely a shame to his family as is given evidence by how Neville's family treats him. As Neville explains, “the family thought I was a Muggle for ages. My great-uncle Algie kept trying to catch me off guard and force some magic out of me – he pushed me off the end of Blackpool pier once, I nearly drowned” (93). It is not until Neville is accidentally dropped out a window, (after being hung by his ankles), and he bounces when he hits the ground, that his family members “were all really pleased. Gran was crying, she was so happy. And you should have seen their faces when I got in here [Hogwarts] – they thought I might not be magic enough to come” (93). Neville's family members are willing to put his life at risk because of his magical developmental delay, and they are only happy with him when he finally meets their standard of normality. Though he is magical, there is a fear that he is not magical enough, and they are proud of him only because their fears do not come to fruition. Had Neville not been accepted into Hogwarts, or had he never developed magical ability, his pureblooded family might never have been proud of him.

The Dursley family, with all of their bigotry and insistence on conforming to normativity, are presented from the outset as characters to contrast with the more ideal Wizarding World. However, despite this, the Wizarding World is, ironically, almost as oppressive on a systemic level as the Dursley household is. Other than women's abilities to resist patriarchal authority, the Wizarding World is just as racist, xenophobic, heterosexist, heteronormative and ableist as Harry's primary world. Anti-Muggle discourses afford privileges to pureblooded witches and wizards, which contributes to these other forms of oppression a great deal, setting a standard of excellence that

excludes other cultures, races, sexualities, families, bodies and abilities. This social system of intersectional oppression backgrounds the major themes of the series, which include both morals surrounding judgments based on assumptions and the overall value of equality. While the intricacies of this are not apparent or reflected on in the novel, by resisting a social system that privileges pureblooded witches and wizards, the characters in turn resist a social system that oppresses non-normative bodies and identities.

4.4 Conclusion

With an understanding of each form of systemic oppression as outlined in the Literature Review of this thesis, drawing specific examples from Johnson, an analysis of Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* demonstrates that systemic oppression can be represented in a variety of ways and does not have to be identical to the systemic oppression of the reader's primary world. Furthermore, it is clear that the time period and location a text is written does not guarantee how the systemic oppression of the secondary world will be represented. When intersectionality is considered, the power relations that shape the secondary worlds become clear. An analysis of oppression in children's portal-quest fantasy literature must therefore consider intersectionality, and each society as a singular and whole system with multiple points of privilege and oppression.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

With the primary texts analyzed and my findings outlined above, this chapter will further the analysis of the primary texts by answering my three research questions. In order to answer my first research question I have applied Foucault's theories of power and governmentality as outlined in the literature review to the primary texts. The second and third research questions involve investigating the relationships between the behaviours of the characters and the discourses they engage in, which I answer using Mills and Gee's approaches to critical discourse analysis. These approaches allow me to explore the next layer of my primary text analysis and, in turn, answer my three research questions and one overarching research question.

5.2 Research Question One

How are the portal-quest fantasy worlds of Baum's The Wonderful Wizard of Oz and Rowling's Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone shaped by the four common systems of oppression, namely the oppression of people of colour, women, queer people and disabled people?

The shape of a society in relation to social systems that privilege and oppress can be understood in a Foucauldian sense as the power relations that govern social hierarchies and norms. In the literature review of this thesis, I use Kelly to outline Foucault's six key theories of power. Returning to Foucault's original work, in order to answer my first research question I will use these six key theories to analyze the representations of social

institutions and their relations to the social bodies of the Land of Oz and the Wizarding World in Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* respectively. This will articulate an understanding of the oppressive social systems of each text within the context of the whole society, rather than in categorized parts.

Systemic privilege can be understood as the domination of certain groups over others within a social hierarchy and set of social norms. However, this can be misleading as it suggests that the members of each privileged group have total control of their power over members of oppressed groups. It suggests, for example, that every white person has total control and absolute power over every person of colour, which obviously is not true in today's Western context. Instead, power can be understood not as that which is guided by the will of individuals, but rather as part of a social chain that works through institutions (Foucault, "14 January 1976" 29). Foucault articulates this idea in *The Archeology of Knowledge*, arguing that while forms of continuity must not be outright rejected, their acceptance without question must be disrupted (28). By continuity, Foucault means the opposite of discontinuity, which is the atypical, those that challenge homogeneity, which in turn brings forth the emergence of generality (and, in turn, the notion of privileged groups as the norm) as well as the need for categorization and discourse (6-10). How continuity, (understood here as discourses which privilege, and discourses which are generally accepted and thus establish hierarchies and norms) are established is through a process of categorization that identifies the discontinuous. For example, Foucault explains this by considering the chain of power within the health care institution. Different people within the health care institution have different levels of

power, and those who have access to the most powerful positions are able to have a great deal of impact in society. This is why there is an emphasis on the need for those within oppressed groups to be represented in the highest positions of authority within every social institution. To gain the status of a person of power within an institution like that of health care, Foucault argues one needs a variety of criteria accomplished in order to attain the right to practice and extend one's knowledge (55-56), limited access to the opportunities needed to accomplish said criteria is therefore another form of systemic oppression. From this position of power a great number of decisions can be made, however, only within the limits of the institution itself. For example, there is a system within the medical field that determines discourses based in hierarchized medical staff, and documents that circulate within the field (56-57). Once discontinuities have been categorized, they must then work in relation to other institutions (46-9). For example, how the institution of health care defines madness must work also within the judicial institution in order to treat citizens within legal frameworks based on mental health and ability (48-9). Therefore, power works first in a chain throughout each institution, and then circularly between institutions. In order to understand power relations within the Land of Oz and the Wizarding World, it is necessary then to consider which social institutions are represented in both texts, and look at how individuals relay power through their relations with social institutions.

In the literature review of this thesis several texts highlight the hierachal social systems included in an unexhausted list of institutions. Of these institutions, policing, unions and armies are the only three not represented in the Wizarding World, while these first two institutions as well as education, athletics and media representation are not

included in the representation of the Land of Oz. As this thesis does not consider class, I have not included economic institutions. In my analysis of power in these two fantasy worlds I consider power co-extensive with the social body (Foucault, “Powers and Strategies” 142), meaning that power can be understood as the multiplicity of force relations (operational, organized systems), or the interaction of institutions that form social hegemonies (*The History of Sexuality* 92-3). Therefore, not only is power between people, but it also comes from multiple directions (*Discipline and Punish* 27). How power works among the various institutions in the Land of Oz and the Wizarding World to privilege and oppress different people is important to understand its multiplicity and its role in the social body of each society.

As I used Foucault’s example of the institution of health care, that is where I will begin for my analysis of power within both of the primary texts. In both Baum and Rowling’s fantasy worlds the health care institutions appear to ignore the needs of the mentally disabled while simultaneously offering access to the support of physical needs. In the Land of Oz the Tin Woodman is able to access prostheses in Munchkin Country and repairs in Winkie Country (Baum 41, 112), the hurt leg of the farmer outside of the Emerald City does not appear to warrant the same hostility and disrespect as mental disabilities do (78), and even the Wicked Witch of the West in Winkie Country is able to use a prosthetic-like eye (99-100). While there are no hospitals apparent in the Land of Oz, there appears to be a social acceptance that, regardless of a person’s sex, gender, race or cultural background, the physical needs of each person must be met whenever possible. The mental needs of people in the Land of Oz are not given the same accessibility to proper health care as given evidence by the fact that Dorothy’s

companions seek the Wizard of Oz's help, rather than that of a physician. At Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry there is a hospital wing. While Harry's physical needs appear to be met (Rowling 219), there is nothing in the text to support the idea that Harry's mental health, after a potentially traumatizing encounter with Voldemort, is given any consideration at all. Tinsmiths act like doctors to the Tin Woodman in both the Munchkin and Winkie Countries (Baum 41, 112), and there are absolutely no women represented in such positions, suggesting the possibility that men dominantly operate the health care institution in the Land of Oz. While Madam Pomfrey attends to Harry at Hogwarts, Professor Dumbledore has more authority over the health of the students than she does, and therefore, Dumbledore, a man, has more authority than Madam Pomfrey, a trained professional in her field (Rowling 219). The health care institutions of both fantasy societies therefore work to contribute to the systemic oppression of both mentally disabled people and women.

The intersections of different forms of systemic oppression are also apparent in the social institution of public accommodation. Public accommodations can be understood as spaces and facilities made available to the public, sometimes in exclusive contexts, such as hotels, bathrooms, or in the case of the primary texts, guest rooms in palaces, dorm rooms in schools, and retail stores. When Dorothy visits the Emerald City, she and her companions are each given their own rooms in the palace (Baum 86). There is a clear division of sexes, as Dorothy is taken care of by a green girl, and a male soldier assists all of her male companions (86-93). In Dorothy's room there is a wardrobe with "many green dresses made of silk and satin and velvet" (86), which suggests that Dorothy was brought to a room designated specifically for girls. This enforces heteronormativity,

conflating Dorothy's sex and gender and enforcing typical gender norms in the wearing of dresses. The division of the sexes and the subsequent heteronormativity of this are also apparent in the dormitories of the Gryffindor common room at Hogwarts (Rowling 96). Furthermore, this common room is also inaccessible to the mobility impaired, as demonstrated by how difficult it is for Neville to get in the hole in the wall that leads to the common room (96). For the mentally disabled that might struggle with the secret password to access the common room, these dormitories are also inaccessible, resulting in students like Neville needing to sleep on the floor in the hallway outside (Rowling 116). The stores in Diagon Alley are another form of public accommodation in the Wizarding World. The fact that shopping is made available only in an alley completely segregated from the Muggle World demonstrates the xenophobia inherent in the Wizarding World (Rowling 56). This might make accessing supplies difficult for families with Muggle members, especially for Muggle-born witches and wizards.

The institution of the family is also highly affected by this xenophobia, though it does not necessarily shape each family structure itself. As one's cultural upbringing and heritage are given social relevance in the Wizarding World due to anti-Muggle discourses, this could also affect choices in marriage partners and, in turn, family structures. While many families choose to resist this social discourse, members of these families likely face social repercussions for this, including being antagonized, and even the validity of their child's right to magic use and membership in the community being questioned. In the Land of Oz, as there is a clear segregation of cultures, there are likely few if any inter-racial families and marriages as cultural background appears to be as relevant in the Land of Oz as it is in the Wizarding World. As the Tin Woodman is

convinced he cannot love without a heart (Baum 41), and Neville's family treats him poorly because he does not meet their magical standards (Rowling 93), there is also evidence to suggest that the institutions of the family and of marriage are arguably ableist. While there is nothing to suggest that the institution of marriage is heteronormative and heterosexist in the Land of Oz, the relevance of blood status in the Wizarding World also places a relevance on procreation, strongly suggesting that the Wizarding World's institution of marriage is heterosexist. While there are no queer families represented, of the families with heterosexual parents represented there is a conforming to typical gender roles (Rowling 76) and there are social discourses that value mothers over fathers (Rowling 216), both of which demonstrate the patriarchy inherent in the institutions of family and marriage in the Wizarding World. Patriarchy is also apparent in the family and marriage institutions of the Land of Oz, given evidence by the Tin Woodman's approach to marriage and gender roles (Baum 41) and how these roles are apparent in marriages throughout the Land of Oz (Baum 79). Therefore, other than the lack of apparent heteronormativity in the Land of Oz, in both fantasy worlds the institutions of the family and of marriage demonstrate all four social systems of oppression, from xenophobia, to ableism, to heteronormativity in the Wizarding World, to patriarchy.

The social institutions of politics, housing and religion are the last three institutions that are represented in both Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as well as Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, and all three share a commonality. In the Land of Oz women have access to political power but are not given as much power and respect as men. However, the primary system of oppression apparent in not only the

politics of both the Land of Oz and the Wizarding World, but also in the institutions of housing and religion of both worlds, are the systems of xenophobia. As outlined in the Findings Chapter, positions of political power are only initially available in the Land of Oz to those who have magic, which I argue constructs witches and wizards as a privileged race over the other people in the Land of Oz. The government in the Wizarding World is not as fully represented in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* as it is in subsequent *Harry Potter* novels. However, it is clear that the Wizarding World is intentionally segregated from the Muggle World, suggesting that there is a system of xenophobia inherent in the political institution of the Wizarding World. This segregation also speaks to the housing in the Wizarding World as it suggests that while witches and wizards live in England just like Muggles, some live segregated from them (thus explaining Oliver Wood and Ron Weasley's total ignorance of Muggle sports (Rowling 107, 124)). As there is a segregation of cultures in the Land of Oz, the distribution and culturally based architectural design of housing is limited to country borders. Therefore, there are only blue houses in Munchkin Country, red in Quadling, and so forth. Finally, religion is represented minimally in both texts. The church in the Dainty China Country is the only reference to a religious institution in any *Oz* book written by Baum (Hearn 321n4). Furthermore, while the celebrations of Halloween, Christmas and Easter at Hogwarts are not represented as religious (Rowling 126-7, 143-50, 167), all three holidays have Christian backgrounds. Meanwhile not one holiday with a non-Christian background appears to be recognized by Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. While Christianity is not related to any one specific race or culture, (Christian privilege is its own category of systemic privilege) as Christianity is dominant in both America and

England, especially among the white populace, this representation of Christian privilege in both fantasy worlds suggests a relation to a xenophobia toward non-Christian cultures. Therefore, the systemic xenophobia of both the Land of Oz and the Wizarding World is inherent in a variety of social institutions, from politics to housing to religion.

In consideration of the exclusive right of Christian holidays to be recognized by Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, it is important to consider the representation of the institution of education in the Wizarding World. This institution is not represented in the Land of Oz in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, which likely accounts for why the Scarecrow seeks brains from a wizard rather than an education from a teacher. Hogwarts is an institution that accepts students of every race, cultural background, sex and gender. However, as is demonstrated by the prevalence of Christian holidays, only white British traditions and customs of the Wizarding World are recognized and practiced at the school. Furthermore, only white and British witches and wizards are hired as professors at Hogwarts. While the only qualification students need to attend Hogwarts is magical ability, the school is structured in such a way that assumes that all students are heterosexual and cisgender, which in turn erases the existence and needs of queer people. While queer students would struggle to find a place to exist freely, comfortably and equally at Hogwarts, physically and mentally disabled students would struggle accessing and being successful at this educational institution. With physical barriers that would limit those with mobility disabilities and with teaching methods that do not consider varying physical or mental abilities, this educational institution is inherently ableist. For example, flying lessons involve using one's feet to push off from the ground (Rowling 109), and therefore the lesson does not consider those students who

may have mobility disabilities, such as those who lack motor control and coordination. I previously argued that Neville could possibly lack motor control and coordination, and therefore his getting hurt in his first flying lesson could be attributed to a combination of this with a severe anxiety, neither of which are given consideration by the flying teacher, Madam Hooch (Rowling 109). As athletics solely involve flying on brooms at Hogwarts and in the Wizarding World, athletics is as ableist an institution as education. While both men and women of all races can play Quidditch, the lack of Muggle sports celebrated and played in the Wizarding World suggests that both Hogwarts as an educational institution and the athletics institution of both the school and the society as a whole are xenophobic in their sole focus on a singular culture's sport. These institutions are therefore represented to work together in enforcing both systemic ableism and xenophobia.

The social institutions of the Wizarding World and of the Land of Oz work together within each society to establish a circular social system of oppression within each land. Media representation in the Wizarding World and armies in the Land of Oz are the last two institutions to be analyzed. In the Wizarding World, the institution of media representation is demonstrated through the chocolate frog Famous Witches and Wizards Cards (Rowling 78) and the Daily Prophet newspaper (105). In the Land of Oz there is the male soldier in the Emerald City (Baum 85) and Glinda's girl soldiers of Quadling Country (176). These two institutions are less clear in their representation of systemic oppression. In the Wizarding World the language of the chocolate frog cards puts women first, while the language of the newspaper puts men first. In the Land of Oz both men and women can be in armies, but this is limited by space, meaning that men can be in the army of a male ruler while women can be in the army of a female ruler. As the Great Oz

is the most powerful political leader in the country, it is clear that the armies of women are not considered more threatening or powerful than the armies of the men. Other institutions in both fantasy worlds demonstrate the systems of patriarchy more clearly, and therefore when an interpretation does not yield clear results, a comparison can be made with the rest of the society. For example, in the Wizarding World patriarchy can be found as part of the institutions of health care, families and marriage. In the Land of Oz, patriarchy is apparent not only in families and marriage as well, but also in the institution of politics. The institution of politics is inherently xenophobic in the Wizarding World, just as are the institutions of public accommodation, family, marriage, housing, religion, education and athletics. In the Land of Oz the systemic oppression of people of colour can be identified in the social institutions of politics, family, marriage, housing and religion. Queer people face systemic oppression through the institution of public accommodation in both fantasy worlds, and the institutions of family, marriage and education in the Wizarding World. Systemic ableism in regards to mental disability is apparent in the health care institutions of both fantasy worlds, while the institution of the family is represented as being ableist in both worlds as well. Furthermore, public accommodations, education and athletics are all institutions that support systemic ableism in the Wizarding World. Through these examples it is clear that power, in relation to systemic privilege and oppression, is a multidirectional component of the social body of both fantasy worlds.

The power of institutions in establishing and contributing to social norms and hierarchies is clear in both fantasy worlds. Power is relayed in the relations between people (“The History of Sexuality” 187-8), and therefore there is power both in

supporting social institutions that establish hierarchies and norms, as well as in resisting them (*The History of Sexuality* 95). (How power is used to support and resist social systems of oppression is explored further in the answer of my third research question in Section 5.4.) While it is important to consider how systemic oppression, and in turn positions of privilege and domination, are resisted, it is equally important to note that resistance does not necessarily indicate a successful overturning of power dynamics, social hierarchies, or norms (“The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom” 292). Therefore, instead of considering power as that which is possessed, it is rather more important to consider how it is exercised in productive strategies (*Discipline and Punish* 27). These strategies can be seen in the institutions of each fantasy world. For example, the institution of housing in the Land of Oz employs a strategy that segregates cultures, thus contributing to a social system of xenophobia. In the Wizarding World institutions such as athletics, education and politics all contribute to a xenophobia directed at non-Wizarding cultures, which in turn privileges those members of this fantasy society that have a Wizarding cultural background. Institutional practices therefore are productive in their privileging of certain groups over others. This strategic field of power relations can be understood as a war on people within oppressed groups (“17 February 1982: First Hour” 252). Foucault identifies power as war (“7 January 1976” 15-16), as governmentality is a system that conducts people to what opportunities they are able to access within their society, it is the control of actions and possibilities (“The Subject and Power” 341). Those with privilege have access to possibilities that enable them to dominate the oppressed on a social level. For example, heterosexual and cisgender students at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry have access to the

possibility of comfortable spaces that recognize their existence, unlike their queer peers. This privilege can work in many ways, from greater access to political power in the Land of Oz, to social discourses that do not equate one's mental ability with their value in the Wizarding World (social discourses are the focus of the next section of this thesis, Section 5.3, the answering of my second research question.) This is the nature of the metaphorical killing that Foucault is referring to when he critiques the forms of oppression that include things like “political death, [and political and social] expulsion, rejection, and so on” (“17 March 1976” 256). Thus, institutions employ productive strategies in order to privilege certain groups in a social war on oppressed groups.

The portal-quest fantasy worlds analyzed in this research are shaped by the four major forms of oppression in the same way as the reader's own primary world is, through the chain and circulation of power employed strategically by social institutions. The social systems of oppression and the social institutions of a portal-quest fantasy world do not have to be identical to the reader's own primary world. For example, families do not have to be represented as heterosexist or patriarchal, nor does housing need to be culturally segregated. Regardless, how social systems represent opportunities for differing groups of people based on race, gender, sex, sexuality, and physical and mental ability will inevitably shape the portal-quest fantasy world as a whole. The very nature of a portal-quest fantasy world is thus dependent on the consideration and representation of its social institutions, and, in turn, the representation of systemic oppression.

5.3 Research Question Two

How does the language used by the characters of Baum's Land of Oz and Rowling's Wizarding World demonstrate the dominant discourses of each respective fantasy world?

As social institutions play a key role in shaping the power relations of a society, so too do they establish the driving force behind the ideologies of language. Language can be used, then, in a Foucauldian sense, as a mechanism for determining who is included in dominant discourses through institutional support, and who is not (Mills 17). Those who are not included are put in the literal and metaphorical margins of society, oppressed by these power relations (Mills 17). Foucault argues that discourses are not random groups of utterances, but are regulated utterances and statements with internal rules (Mills 43). Therefore, the language that must be considered when investigating dominant discourses (meaning the language that privileges some and in turn oppresses others), must have institutional force, must exclude certain people and experiences, and must be circulated within its social context (Mills 67). To do this, I will consider one form of systemic oppression at a time, considering Gee's categories of language use and all three of Mills' qualifications for language to be a part of a dominant discourse.

The systemic racism of both the Land of Oz as well as the Wizarding World of Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* respectively, have a great deal to do with cultural segregation. When Dorothy is in the Munchkin Country, the richest of the Munchkins, Boq, says to her that “blue is the color of the Munchkins” (22). This speaks to the culture of the Munchkins, and the social relevance of blue in their society. This language used by Boq, which Gee would identify as conversational due to its relation to social concerns, therefore has institutional

force in politics, housing and even families because it works to identify Munchkins as separate and, in turn, segregated from the colours of other cultures in the Land of Oz. Therefore, when the Munchkin farmers say that ““blue paint is just the color for eyes”” (Baum 30), they are engaging in a social discourse that not only argues that blue is the preferred colour of their culture, but they are also excluding other colours, and, in turn, other cultural ideologies. Thus, the circulation of this conversational language not only has institutional force, but it is also exclusionary in its privileging of one culture over any other. This same kind of xenophobic language is even more explicit in Rowling’s Wizarding World when used by wizards speaking about Muggles and Muggle culture. As I have argued above in the Findings Chapter, there is an inherent anti-Muggle discourse in the Wizarding World that contributes to a system of xenophobia. For example, when Harry first hears the word “Muggle” it is used by Hagrid in a very derogatory manner. When Vernon Dursley refuses to allow Harry to go to Hogwarts, Hagrid responds, ““I’d like ter see a great Muggle like you stop him”” (Rowling 43). By this Hagrid’s conversational language suggests that there is nothing an adult Muggle can do to stop a child witch or wizard from doing what she or he wants. Witch and wizard children are considered more powerful than adult Muggles. As such, as Lacoss argues, “adult Muggles are, to a certain extent, equated with children: wizards deem that they don’t need to know certain things” (79). One thing Muggles “don’t need to know” is the very existence of the Wizarding World, which Hagrid justifies by arguing, ““everyone’d be wantin’ magic solutions to their problems. Nah, we’re best left alone”” (51). Here, Hagrid is arguing in favour of segregation for no reason other than not wanting to contribute to Muggle society, or to engage in any kind of trade. Furthermore, Muggle society is

deemed to not have anything to offer the Wizarding World in return. As argued in my Findings Chapter, Ron and Draco also use this kind of language, circulating xenophobia within their social context and excluding Muggle people and culture in their ideologies and ways of understanding the world. As there is also a lack of conversation and knowledge about non-white cultures and peoples, it is clear that the xenophobia in the Wizarding World is not solely based in an anti-Muggle discourse, but demonstrates that white, British Wizarding culture is exclusively represented in Wizarding World dominant discourses.

There are many examples of sexist diction being used by the people of the Land of Oz, the majority of which is used by Dorothy's companions. For example, the Scarecrow says, ““I felt very proud, for I thought I was just as good a man as anyone”” (Baum 30). This social language can be interpreted to mean that the Scarecrow felt he was just as good a person as anyone, or just as much of a man as any other man. Either way his diction excludes women. The Scarecrow repeats this later when he says, ““I am going to Oz to get my brains at last. When I return I shall be as other men are”” (135). The Cowardly Lion also utilizes this constraining social language when he speaks with Oz, saying, ““I come to you to beg that you give me courage, so that in reality I may become the King of Beasts, as men call me”” (93). Interestingly, the Cowardly Lion, while excluding women with his language, also (likely inadvertently) points out the authority men have in relation to language and social discourse. Later, when the Lion receives his faux courage from Oz, he claims, “he was afraid of nothing on earth, and would gladly face an army of men or a dozen of the fierce Kalidahs” (141). The use of “men” in this instance is interesting as the Lion is either universalizing the word “men”

again, or is stating that he would not be willing to face an army with women soldiers. As Glinda the Witch of the Quadling Country has girl soldiers (176), it is possible that the Lion could very well have meant this, which also means that he does not feel that women are as strong or threatening as men, but rather that they are lesser opponents in battle. As the Lion values physical strength and one's ability to fight, this interpretation therefore argues that the Lion would overall value men as better than women. Finally, the Tin Woodman is also guilty of using sexist language by the very fact that he identifies as a "woodman" instead of a more gender-neutral term like "wood-chopper," a term he does in fact use in other instances, such as when he says, "'when I grew up I too became a wood-chopper'" (40). The Tin Woodman's sexist assumptions are clear throughout the novel. For example, after the Scarecrow meets Oz as a "lovely lady" and tells his friends that "'she needs a heart as much as the Tin Woodman'" (90), the Tin Woodman still believes, "'all ladies are themselves said to be kindly hearted'" (91). Despite what he has been told, the Tin Woodman still engages in a social discourse about women in order to make gendered assumptions about Oz, and how he believes Oz, as a woman, should behave. The circulation of these sexist discourses is given force by the institution of politics, which deems men as greater leaders than women in the Land of Oz, as well as the institutions of family and marriage, which put women in subservient gender roles to men.

Sexist diction is also apparent in the Wizarding World. Before Harry's first Quidditch match, Oliver Wood, the captain of the Gryffindor team, addresses his team. Looking at three men and three women, he begins, "'Ok, men'" (Rowling 136). This is an interesting way for Wood to start as half of the people he is addressing are women and

therefore it is likely that he is engaging in a social language that is oppressive as an exclusionary discourse about who is included within the institution of athletics. However, Angelina quickly corrects him, and without hesitation or argument Wood agrees with her (136). While it is positive that Angelina can resist this sexist discourse unrestrained, the fact that this takes place at all demonstrates the systemic sexism of the Wizarding World. During the game, commentator Lee Jordan says, ““the Quaffle is taken immediately by Angelina Johnson of Gryffindor – what an excellent Chaser that girl is, and rather attractive too”” (137). While Professor McGonagall chastises Jordan, and he immediately apologizes, this sexualizing of a player degrades Angelina to an object more than a valid player, something that would not likely happen to a male athlete. This kind of objectification is not completely uncommon at Hogwarts, as the Weasley twins catcall some girls during the Sorting Hat Ceremony (89), which is given force by the institutions of family and marriage. What is interesting, however, is that in both of the Quidditch-related situations described above, the men are corrected, and instead of getting defensive or standing their ground, they agree that their actions are wrong. Social discourses and diction concerning gender are interesting in Rowling’s novel as they do not exclusively favour men over women. For example, while it is the Wizarding World, a name which emphasizes the authority of men, the school of Hogwarts is the School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, which places the magic of women before the magic of men. This happens repeatedly throughout the novel. For example, the cards that accompany the Chocolate Frogs are called “Famous Witches and Wizards cards” (78), and later McGonagall, in her explanation of the four Hogwarts Houses, says that each ““house has its own noble history and each has produced outstanding witches and wizards”” (85). Witches seem to

consistently come before wizards in the everyday vernacular of social languages, intertextually and in conversations that express social concerns. There is only one exception to this rule, when the Daily Prophet newspaper writes, “Investigations continue into the break-in at Gringotts on 31 July, widely believed to be the work of dark wizards or witches unknown” (105). This is the only time men come before women in the diction of the Wizarding World. There are, however, a few instances in which women are excluded entirely in people’s social language. For example, other than Ron and Oliver Wood, the only other character to use sexist diction is Dumbledore, who explains to Harry how the Mirror of Erised works by saying, ““the happiest man on earth would be able to use the Mirror of Erised like a normal mirror, that is, he would look into it and see himself exactly as he is”” (156). This explanation does not include women, though Dumbledore easily could have rephrased this sentence to be more gender inclusive.

While there are examples of characters excluding women with language, there is also an example of a woman excluding men. When Hermione first meets Harry and Ron she says to them that Hogwarts is ““the very best school of witchcraft there is, I’ve heard – I’ve learnt all our set books off by heart”” (79). As Hermione has memorized her books, she is likely quoting one when she says that Hogwarts is the best school of witchcraft in the world, which suggests that either her book, or Hermione herself, chose not to include wizardry in this description. Perhaps witchcraft and wizardry are distinct enough that a different school is the best school of wizardry there is, or perhaps this is an instance in which men have been excluded by diction. This exclusion of men, and the usual placing of women first in language, can therefore be understood as a resistance to patriarchal authority, refusing to accept the constraining effects of discourses, and circulating

knowledge that includes a role for women in social discourses and language at Hogwarts. However, this resistance does not demonstrate a successful overturning of gender power hierarchies in the Wizarding World, as I will outline further in Section 5.4.

The way language works to divide genders can often be used to simultaneously enforce heteronormative dominant discourses. While I was unable to find representation of this language in Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, the way language works in the Wizarding World to divide genders does not allow for gender non-conforming people. In the Wizarding World a person is either a witch or a wizard and they practice witchcraft or wizardry, there are no terms that recognize the existence of gender non-conforming people or the magic used by them. Hogwarts is run either by a Headmaster or a Headmistress, rather than a more gender-neutral term like Head of School or even Principal, and exceptional students can obtain Head Boy or Head Girl status, rather than the more inclusive title of Head Prefect. Institutions of family, marriage, public accommodation and education all contribute to Discourses and social languages that not only circulate the exclusion of queer people, but also erase their existence entirely in the Wizarding World. This erasure has resulted in few examples to draw upon from the text, but does not in any way negate the significance of said examples.

The use of language to demonstrate the privilege of able-bodied people in the dominant discourses of the Land of Oz has to do with a social standard of mental ability that people are expected to meet. For example, all of the animals in the forest “naturally expect” the Cowardly Lion to be brave (Baum 47), while the Scarecrow is motivated by how anxious and uncomfortable he is knowing that others in society regard him as a fool (25, 32). These social concerns in the conversational language reiterated by these

characters are given force by the institutions of health care and the family, but is used outside of both contexts. As such, it is clear from these examples that while discourses are given force from institutions, their circulation within society is not limited to specific institutional contexts. In the Wizarding World, these same two institutions contribute to systemic ableism, as well as public accommodations, education and athletics. These institutions work together to establish a social ideology concerning the appearance and abilities of the normative mind and body. Thus, Hagrid is considered an oaf (Rowling 181) and a savage (60), while Neville is associated with stupidity (110) and idiocy (103). The term “mad” is frequently used throughout the text in a derogatory manner. For example, when Hagrid introduces Harry to Gringotts bank he says, ““yeh’d be mad ter try an’ rob it”” (50), in this way Hagrid’s social language equates mental disability with foolishness, stupidity or an inability to think critically. Thus social languages in the Wizarding World treat mental disability as inherently negative, from foolish to stupid. While this is likely not intentional, it is still an inherent quality of the social language of the Wizarding World, given force by several social institutions, circulated frequently in a way that privileges nondisabled people and excludes disabled people in a system of normativity.

Language is powerful. The power relations circulated by social institutions shape language, and, as such, language has the power to contribute to systemic oppression. Like in the reader’s primary world, the language used in different portal-quest fantasy worlds is used as a mechanism that continues the privileging of certain groups over others in the society’s dominant discourses. Characters in the fantasy worlds of Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* use

language to demonstrate the dominant discourses of their respective worlds in a variety of ways. From language that enforces cultural divides and heteronormative gender divisions, to language that excludes women and marks disability as inherently negative, language has the power to place certain identities in social positions above other identities, and in turn privilege certain people over others.

5.4 Research Question Three

*How do the characters in Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* support or resist the systemic oppression of their respective fantasy worlds?*

Using language that enforces dominant discourses is a clear example of someone supporting social systems of oppression. It is worth noting, then, that supporting systemic oppression can often be done unintentionally both by the privileged and the oppressed themselves. Regardless of one's intentions or personal beliefs, both language and behaviour can support systemic oppression in ways one may not realize. Thus consequences are more relevant than intentions, an idea that supports the necessity of conscious consideration in both writing and daily practice. Characters in Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* frequently support the social systems of oppression within their respective fantasy worlds. However, at the same time, forms of resistance are also evident.

The support of systemic oppression is inherent in a wide variety of practices, from language use, to architectural design, to classroom curriculum. To answer this research question, then, I have narrowed my focus. Instead of arguing the theoretical behaviour

that establishes and supports social institutions, I have instead investigated specific examples of instances of character behaviour. This behaviour can be active or passive, intentional or unintentional. For example, when Dorothy and her companions first arrive in the Emerald City and everyone stares at them and does not speak to them (Baum 85), this is an example of people's behaviour supporting the systemic xenophobia of the Land of Oz. Another example could be the lack of critical knowledge about Africa in the Wizarding World, and the passive acceptance of understanding a whole continent as a single space (Rowling 80, 100). While these examples are passive and likely unintentional, the consequences are an alienation of other people due to distrust based in xenophobia and systemic racism. There are also examples of more active, perhaps even intentional contributions to systemic oppression. For example, when the Gillikin Witch speaks on behalf of the Munchkins (Baum 11-15), she is actively asserting her position of domination over the Munchkin people, silencing them by acting as their voice. Another example is the many times Hagrid and Ron point out how weird Muggle culture is, often resulting in condescending fascination and even Ron's rude treatment of Dean's Muggle poster (Rowling 66, 77, 147, 107). In these instances Hagrid and Ron are both actively pointing out Muggle culture, and in turn Muggle and Muggle-descended people, as less than themselves and their own Wizarding culture. While they may not be intentionally hateful, their actions still support systemic xenophobia. Other characters, like Draco Malfoy, the Wicked Witch of the West, and the Hammer-Heads, are all represented as bigoted and intentionally hateful. Thus, systemic oppression can be supported in a variety of ways, regardless of intention.

Characters who are oppressed can also contribute to their own oppression. For example, the Munchkins ask the Gillikin Witch for help, and she speaks for them at their own request (Baum 13-14). This does not mean that the Gillikin Witch is not responsible for agreeing to their request as she could have instead encouraged them to find empowerment in using their own voices. Responsibility is an interesting issue here as it suggests that people within oppressed groups are to blame for their own oppression when they contribute to systemic oppression. Instead, these instances can be understood as examples of the negative consequences of internalization. Internalization is the process in which people within oppressed groups, when victimized, develop ideas, beliefs and behaviours that support their own oppression due to the fact that systems of oppression actively discourage oppressed people from resisting oppression, and in turn undermines any of their attempts to gain power (Bivens 44). For example, the Tin Woodman's sexist ideologies (40-41) are given power and force by the institutions of family and marriage. This type of behaviour victimizes women, inculcating in them sexist stereotypes, values, ideologies and images that lead to feelings of self-doubt, disgust and or disrespect for themselves and even for other women (Pyke 553). Thus, when the farmer's wife and the green girl both meet the expectations of gender norms, in turn supporting the systemic oppression of women, it can be attributed to internalized sexism (Baum 78-9, 95). It is difficult to resist this oppression when (powerful) men like the soldier of the Emerald City encourages this gender division of roles (86). This can also be seen in the Wizarding World. For example, Dumbledore is a man with a great deal of power and influence, and his use of sexist diction (Rowling 156), and his actions that arguably shame men for expressing emotion, deemed the typically feminine (217), contributes to systemic sexism

in a way that has institutional force. As such, the typical gender roles of the Weasley and Potter households (76, 216) can be understood either as men enforcing gender roles in their homes, and or women being disempowered due to the internalization of sexism. Therefore, when people within oppressed groups support systemic oppression, it is not because they have the power to do so, but rather because they are disempowered by the system itself. This makes it nearly impossible for them to successfully overturn gender power hierarchies in the Wizarding World.

The internalization of oppression can often lead to a great deal of harm, making it incredibly difficult for people who are oppressed to find empowerment. For example, when the crow uses ableist discourses to undermine the Scarecrow's abilities (Baum 32), this affects the Scarecrow so deeply that he feels the need to travel across the land in order to change himself, motivated by how uncomfortable and anxious he is with himself for being considered a fool (25, 32). The Scarecrow has internalized these values, and his behaviour demonstrates this. He and Dorothy's other companions never come to a point of accepting themselves for the way they are, even after the Wizard of Oz encourages them to, instead they opt to change themselves (131). In the Wizarding World, Neville is a character who often faces ableism and who also does not (or cannot) do anything to stand up for himself. Neville is raised in a family that constantly puts him at risk because of his magical delay (Rowling 93), just to leave home and go to a school where his disabilities are highlighted with cruel bullying (159). Neville often accepts this ableist treatment, doing little to make his situation better. While Neville appears to do little to be able to resist the systemic ableism he faces, Professor Quirrell takes advantage of his

oppression. Quirrell often faces harassment from students who are actively ableist (100, 143, 167), which he uses to manipulate power relations for his own goals.

Professor Quirrell uses systemic ableism in order to avert anyone's suspicion of him being in league with Voldemort. When Harry discovers this, Quirrell asks, “‘who would suspect p-p-poor st-stuttering P-Professor Quirrell?’” (Rowling 209). Here, Quirrell is able to manipulate the power that would ordinarily oppress a disabled person in order to negotiate a way to accomplish a greater goal. His facing of oppression is thus a temporary necessity in order to achieve later resistance. The witches of the Land of Oz take a similar route to resistance. These witches bestow magic in the typically feminine, such as clothing, accessories and motherly kisses (Baum 16, 20, 87, 104, 107, 114, 182). In doing this, the witches accept what would typically oppress them, and negotiate these power relation in order to subvert power dynamics. While this does not overthrow the patriarchy of the Land of Oz, it does enable the witches of the Land of Oz to find empowerment in their femininity. The Wizard of Oz subverts power in this way as well when he dresses as a lady in order to confuse Dorothy and her companions (Baum 90, 127). Having concealed his true identity by presenting as a giant head (88), a beast (91) and a ball of fire (93), all three of which involving props rather than costumes, it is clear that Oz elects to present himself as a woman even though he could have chosen a different disguise. While there is little evidence to support that there is a system of heteronormativity in the Land of Oz, if there is then this is an instance in which Oz resists this social system through a queer expression that enables him to accomplish what he wants. Hagrid in Rowling's text also expresses typical femininity to in order to resist heteronormativity. By identifying as his pet dragon Norbert's “‘mummy’” (Rowling

172), Hagrid does not align his sex with his approach to parenting. Hagrid could have easily identified as a daddy, but opts not to, inadvertently separating the often-conflated identities of sex and gender by freely expressing his own gender without being constrained by social norms. Just as Hagrid uses femininity to resist heteronormativity, so too are there women in the Wizarding World who express typical masculinity in order to resist patriarchy, namely the several women involved in athletics. While there is evidence to suggest that the institution of athletics does not enforce patriarchy at Hogwarts, arguably it still does so in the greater Wizarding World, which is given evidence by the exclusivity of boys' fascination with flying brooms in Diagon Alley (56). Thus, the fact that Madam Hooch coaches Quidditch (94), and that there are three women on the Gryffindor Quidditch team (136-7), potentially suggests that Hogwarts is an institution that encourages women to resist patriarchy within the institution of athletics. Hermione is another woman at Hogwarts able to frequently subvert power dynamics. When she rescues Harry on his bewitched broomstick (Rowling 140), and when she saves both Harry and Ron from the Devil's Snare (202), she subverts typical gender roles, being a woman who saves men, rather than the other way around. Furthermore, Hermione resists systemic ableism in her friendship with Neville, being the only one to support him and use a counter curse to free him from the Leg-Locker Curse that everyone else laughs at at Neville's expense (159). Hermione also resists the xenophobic idea that there is any relevance to one's bloodline as she proves her competence and intelligence regardless of her blood status (79, 197). Resistance to this xenophobia is enacted by many throughout the Wizarding World at the very beginning of the novel when witches and wizards break from segregation to celebrate the demise of Voldemort in the streets of Muggle society

(8-11). What is apparent then is that the absence of fear enables an absence of the necessity for scapegoating; liberation encourages peace and unity. This can be seen in the Land of Oz in the social resistance against the power the witch's have in their use of fear over the general populace. The Stork's willingness to help the Scarecrow (Baum 63), and the hospitality of the farming family (78-9) and the hospitality within the Emerald City's palace (86-7), all demonstrate a resistance to systemic xenophobia. There is a fear of strangers and a clear segregation of cultures within the Land of Oz, likely instilled by the rule of the witches, and yet hospitality and kindness are used to resist this oppression. When the Tin Woodman is asked to be king of the Winkies (114), and when the people of the Emerald City rejoice in having the Scarecrow as a king (143), there is a shift from magical people in control of society to non-magical people. Thus the systemic racism that enables magical people to hold the privilege of political power is resisted through the celebration of non-normative political leaders. Systemic oppression can therefore be resisted in a variety of ways, but in every way it is done to re-negotiate the power of privilege and subvert social hierarchies and norms, but in none of these ways doe these forms of resistance successfully overturn power hierarchies and exclusionary norms.

Characters in Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* support and resist the systemic oppression of their respective fantasy worlds through a variety of techniques. Behaviours that support systemic oppression can be unintentional, passive, active, and can be intentional in ways that range from conforming to normativity to actively being bigoted. The internalization of oppressive values can cause oppressed people to support oppression, making it difficult to resist oppression. Those characters who can resist oppression do so through a

renegotiation of power dynamics that are to one's advantage, accepting some forms of oppression as a compromise in order to lead to greater goals and resistances later. Resistance can also be found in atypical expression and both the passive and active subversion of power dynamics. This subversion appears to be most effective when given force by empowerment and liberation.

5.5 Conclusion

The overarching research question for this thesis asks what the nature of the systems of oppression in portal-quest fantasy literature for children is as represented in Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. The answer can be found in an understanding of the chain and circulation of power employed strategically by social institutions in order to privilege differing groups based on race, gender, sex, sexuality and physical and mental ability. One such strategy involves the use of language in order to enforce the dominant discourses that divide, exclude and privilege. Institutions create a social system of oppression that is supported intentionally and unintentionally, as well as actively and passively by both the privileged and those oppressed who have internalized oppressive ideologies. To resist this system there must be a renegotiation of institutional power, an acceptance of the atypical and a subversion of social hierarchies and norms. Ultimately, the nature of the systems of oppression in the portal-quest fantasy worlds of children's fantasy literature can be understood as all encompassing, as ingrained throughout each fantasy society.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

Previous research has made important claims about the value of both children's literature as well as fantasy literature. While Nikolajeva argues that fictional worlds empower the reader through identification with the questing character(s) ("The Development of Children's Fantasy" 58-60), Tolkien argues that Secondary Worlds are desirable places readers typically want to escape to (134). Nikolajeva also argues that fictional worlds "represent various aspects of society and should therefore be able to transmit social knowledge: a knowledge and understanding of societal structures, mechanisms and practices" (*Reading for Learning* 31). Timmerman argues that fantasy literature socializes readers through extrapolation (51), which Mendlesohn explains by arguing that fantasy, specifically portal-quest fantasy, can present inarguable and authoritative moral paradigms (5-7, 11-17). Meanwhile Zipes argues that children's literature socializes readers (20-21), by, according to Reynolds, teaching prevailing values and shaping how readers understand the world (1-2). Therefore, it is clear that top scholars in both the fields of children's literature as well as fantasy literature would agree that children's fantasy literature is likely able to play a key role in socializing children. It is of paramount importance then to consider what kind of societies children are being presented with in fantasy literature, and how these societies are structured to encourage different ideologies and behaviours.

Tolkien argues that fantasy literature presents truth in a way that is outside the scope of realism (132). The reader extrapolates these universal truths from fantasy literature (Timmerman 51), raising the question of what universal truths are presented in

my primary texts. In Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* Dorothy and her companions each have what they are looking for all along, and do not need the Great Wizard's help after all. There is a message here in believing in oneself despite what others may say. This idea suggests that all people have equal opportunities for success, and all are able to resist negativity or oppression if they only believe in their own abilities. While valuable for children in privileged positions, this "truth" is not in any way universal as it ignores how systemic oppression limits opportunities as well as possibilities for resistance for oppressed children. While oppressed children may be able to temporarily resist oppression, they cannot wholly subvert power dynamics and social systems of oppression. For example, a child may be able to be brave despite being called a coward, but a woman of colour cannot gain a position of leadership if only white men are given such opportunities. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* emphasizes the importance of not unfairly judging those who are different, and not valuing normality for its own sake. This can be seen in the antagonistic representation of the Dursleys as "normal," as well as Harry, Ron and Hermione's inaccurate judgments of Snape and Quirrell, finally culminating with Neville's bravery awarding Gryffindor the House Cup. However, there is still a social hierarchy and system of norms in the Wizarding World that results in xenophobia, heteronormativity and ableism. Thus, this non-judgmental ideology is relevant only within the in-group and only concerning personality. For example, the text argues for white people not judging other white people just because they are awkward, weird, mean, et cetera. Those deemed non-normative due to their race, sexual orientation or differing abilities are not a part of this "universal truth" because

their differences run deeper than their personalities, and thus they are too different to be included in the conversation altogether.

In my analysis of Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, I have found that systemic oppression is represented through the power relations employed by social institutions. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that despite the fact that Baum's book was published almost a century earlier than Rowling's, the Land of Oz appears to be the less oppressive and problematic of the two fantasy worlds. However, regardless of either author's intentions, differing races, cultures, sexes, genders, sexual orientations, and physical and mental abilities are either privileged or, if not, invariably oppressed, by such social institutions as the family, marriage, education, public accommodation, housing, politics, and the like. This establishes a social hierarchy in relation to race and gender, and social norms in relation to sexuality and ability, which are then reinforced by dominant discourses. Thus, children's fantasy literature represents fantasy worlds that privilege and oppress. If literature can be understood as a part of the institution of media representation, then it ostensibly follows that in the representation of systemic oppression in texts considered tools for socialization, children's fantasy literature is able to contribute to or be used in the resistance of the systemic oppression of the reader's own primary world.

6.2 Implications and Further Research

If children's fantasy literature can be understood as part of the institution of media representation in the Western context, then it follows that how children's fantasy literature, as a socialization tool, represents varying identities and social positions will

invariably have institutional force and, in turn, contribute to systems of power that privilege and oppress. As such, children's fantasy literature can potentially be harmful if not critically mediated, as there is an implication of its use to contribute, whether intentionally or not, to systemic oppression. While many have argued that fantasy worlds are desirable, empowering spaces, perhaps this is a privileged position that does not consider how these same spaces can disempower certain children by encouraging an internalization of oppressive ideologies. Therefore, the implications for this research come down to the role of mediators.

Children's fantasy literature can be used to understand society in abstract, metaphorical ways. As such, it allows for mediators to have discussions with children about social constructions that oppress and privilege. Therefore, critical literacy educators would highly benefit from this research, finding clear examples of ways social institutions produce power relations in two popular children's fantasy novels. Social justice educators could also use this research to highlight their points.

Other mediators of children's fantasy literature could also benefit from this research. Writers themselves who want to write progressive, empowering, and or utopic children's fantasy literature may want to consider not just how they represent their characters, but also how they structure their fantasy societies. For those who mediate the distribution of children's fantasy literature, namely publishers, teachers, librarians, booksellers and parents, there may also be an interest in this research when purchasing or recommending progressive and or empowering fantasy fiction for children.

Professional critics and academics also play a role in the dissemination of children's fantasy literature, and therefore may also find this research of use. Academics

could also use this research in order to further the field. Further research could include analyzing other societies in children's literature, such as the alternative spaces of science fiction or alternate universe stories. This research could also be applied to the analysis of societies in literature for "adults." An analysis of how systems of oppression intersect, and how they are given power by social institutions could be of relevance to a great number of different approaches to the study of literature. It is my hope to further this research with a PhD that employs both Foucauldian poststructuralism and cognitive criticism to investigate how children are encouraged or discouraged to read fantasy literature in ways that enable the child to understand systemic oppression, thus questioning how children's fantasy literature can be used in social justice education.

This research can also be furthered outside of the field of literary criticism. Scholars of education can investigate the implications for critical literacy and social justice education. Sociologists can consider how intersectional systemic oppression is represented in media in order to further understandings of how social systems of oppression are understood, accepted, critiqued and resisted within Western contexts. Historians can use this research to further an understanding of how power relations and systems of oppression have changed and been socially constructed over time. Librarians and archivists can analyze how literature has been categorized and understood as progressive within differing contexts. Scholars of film studies can apply this same method to representations in film, rather than literature, just as scholars in the field of cultural studies can do the same for other media representations, like advertisements or graphic novels. Meanwhile, scholars in the fields of race studies, queer studies, women's studies and disability studies can further this research by adding more critical

understandings of each form of oppression. This, as well as my other limitations for this research, can all be expanded on by the further research of other scholars.

6.3 Limitations

There were several limitations to this research that, if improved upon, could lead to further study. Time and space were both limitations. As I did not have the time or space, I feel a major limitation of this research is that my understanding of systemic oppression is relatively basic. Unable to be an expert in all four fields of race studies, women's studies, queer studies and disability studies, my analysis of each form of oppression is less nuanced and complex than if I had a background in each of these fields. Furthermore, my understanding of systemic oppression is still highly categorical, as is given evidence by the structure of this work. A more intersectional approach is something I endeavor to improve on in future work. Also, my understanding of systemic oppression has been limited to a Western context; the consideration of other contexts is something that could broaden this research by others or myself. Finally, as a white, Anglo-Saxon, cisgender, able-bodied, upper-middle class, educated, Canadian, Christian man, I do not and never will have the experiences to fully understand every single form of systemic oppression, and thus there are likely areas of oppression that I do not yet understand, or are not capable of knowing, because of my privilege. A person who has faced a greater amount of systemic oppression than I have could add a great deal to this research.

6.4 Concluding Thoughts

This research inevitably leads to the question of responsibility. Is it the responsibility of parents or teachers to explain oppression to children? Are mediators of children's literature responsible for what they recommend? Is a writer responsible for how they unconsciously and unintentionally construct their fantasy world, or can the sake of art be used as a justifiable excuse? The placement of responsibility is a never-ending stream of questions that results in scapegoating, blaming, and shifting focus away from the very children who are potentially oppressed by literature as a social institution. Instead, perhaps a better question to ask is how does literature use its power as a social institution to promote systemic oppression, and what is being done about it?

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