Annie *off* My Mind: Heterosexist Censorship of Adolescent Literature in Intermediate/Senior Language Arts Curricula

by

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Abstract

This qualitative study analyzes the censorship of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) literature in intermediate and senior schools. This research identifies implicit heteronormativity in language arts curricula and analyzes the discursive contexts within which LGBTQ literature is censored. A focus on such contexts facilitated the proposal of recommendations to enhance LGBTQ representation in schools. Critical Discourse Analysis was conducted on a selection of eight controversial novels and news reports that were subjected to censorship based on LGBTQ content. The eight novels incorporated into this analysis are Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999), Timothy Findley's *The Wars* (1977), Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947), Nancy Garden's *Annie on My Mind* (1982), Bette Greene's *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* (1991), Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003), J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982).

In my analysis, I first analyze the content of the novels and then move to the news articles reporting on their censorship. My analysis of the eight novels indicates an overwhelmingly positive representation in lesbian relationships while depictions of gay males are often negative, and almost always associated with failure or tragedy. The analysis of the news reports and censorship examples reveals tendencies on the part of the censors to misrepresent LGBTQ content as pornographic and to misinterpret the LGBTQ novels as promoting a "gay lifestyle" (a term that is often used but never explained in the reports). The findings support the assertion that heterosexist censorship patterns must be arrested and policies for LGBTQ-inclusion in curriculum need to be adopted to foster school environments that are welcoming of LGBTQ students.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview

Censorship is an issue faced by most school boards. It is usually the result of a parent or administrator objecting to an assigned work on the grounds that it is offensive to their political, social or religious beliefs (Karolides, 2011; Reichman, 2001; Sova, 2011). A prominent Canadian case is the high-profile banning in 1997 of three books for children featuring same-sex parents: R. Elwin and M. Paulse's *Asha's Mums* (1990), L. Newman's *Belinda's Boutique* (1989), and J. Valentine's *One Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dads, Blue Dads* (2004) (Meyer, 2010). This ban by the Surrey School Board incited teacher James Chamberlain to appeal their decision to the British Columbia Court of Appeal, the case eventually reaching the Supreme Court of Canada where the ban was struck down as unreasonable on December 20th, 2002 (Oberg, 2003).

Schmitt (2010), following Reichman (2001), categorizes censorship in schools into three forms: challenge, selection, and removal. Challenges are issued by a person, usually a parent, who complains about certain material and argues for its restriction or removal (Reichman, 2001; Schmitt, 2010). Selection refers to the process performed by teachers to choose certain texts for assignment and independent reading over others books believed to be too controversial or morally repugnant (Reichman, 2001). Removal refers to the successful extraction of a book from a school library, often following a challenge (American Library Association, n.d.; Reichman, 2001). Essentially, teacher selection excludes certain materials from the curriculum, often on an informal basis, while removals exclude materials from a library.

Censorship is particularly prevalent in language arts classrooms (Carefoote, 2007; Karolides, 2011; Sova, 2011). Many classic works that educators consider to be staples of English literature, such as *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *The Great Gatsby,* were at one time censored (Sova, 2011). While some scholars argue that censorship of literature is based on

capricious motives and a lack of understanding on the part of censors (such as Donelson, 2001; Downey-Howerton, 2007; Viex, 1975), others argue that these censorship patterns are ideologically motivated (such as Karolides, 2011; Kidd, 2009; MacLeod, 1983; Sova, 2011). Court cases such as *Virgil v. School Board of Columbia County* (1989) and *Farrel v. Hall* (1988) point to the presence of an ideological struggle in censorship since both revolved around the reported personal and ideological beliefs of the censor, beliefs they felt were threatened by the literature in question. *Virgil v. School Board of Columbia County* was based on a challenge to *Lysistrata* and *The Canterbury Tales* for promoting "women's lib" (Sova, 2011), and *Farrel v. Hall* (1988) raised the accusation that Superintendent Leonard Hall censored books based on his own political and religious beliefs (Karolides, 2011).

Highlighting these cases provides a background for my thesis research which explores the patterns and implications of censorship in intermediate secondary language arts classrooms, particularly regarding young adult (YA) novels that have Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer[1] (LGBTQ) themes. The thesis begins by exploring censorship patterns related to LGBTQ-themed novels taught in secondary schools and rationales often used by the censors. From these rationales, I explore the meanings of these censorship practices to communicate how secondary students and curricula are viewed by the censors and their supporters. After analyzing the larger-scale messages and implications of censorship patterns of LGBTQ literature, it is argued that such heterosexist-motivated censorship has the potential to create an unwelcome learning environment for LGBTQ students through the perpetuation of heteronormativity. The potential consequences to both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ students are presented, followed by recommendations for arresting these patterns and possibly reversing the resulting consequences.

[1] The term "queer" in this context is used not as a slur but refers to people who do not fit (or actively reject) standard ideas of gender and sexual orientation (see Hawkes & Scott, 2005), namely gender normative and heteronormative.

My topic emerges from the absence of connections between censorship and the hidden curriculum in the existing scholarship on school censorship. Many censorship scholars take a descriptive approach, chronicling cases and examples of censorship, or condemn censorship in any form (such as Karolides, 2011; Sova, 2011; Karolides, Bald, & Sova, 2005; Donelson, 2001; Viex, 1975). I have found in my research on the scholarship of censorship that there is little examining the heterosexist censorship patterns in language arts curricula and pedagogy, or exploring the social justice implications of such patterns. Scholarship on censorship often lists and lumps LGBTQ themes (or "homosexuality") together with other censored elements, such as violence, profanity, and explicit sexuality, instead of analyzing patterns of heterosexist censorship by themselves. Analyzing censorship along such a broad scale of patterns and examples misses the opportunity to draw upon the existing scholarship on heterosexism. Heterosexism refers to the belief that straight people are inherently superior to LGBTQ people and heteronormativity - a systematic institutionalization of heterosexuality - as the only legitimate form of sexual relations in schools and other social institutions (Ferber, Holcomb, & Wentling, 2013).

My interest in pursuing research on heterosexism and heteronormativity stems from my secondary education experience. After I learned about heterosexism much later on in my post-secondary education, I began to recognize very disturbing heteronormative trends in my high school experience that, in retrospect, sent unwelcome messages to LGBTQ faculty, students, and staff. These trends also resulted in heteronormative assumptions in my own way of looking at the world (one being a presumption that everyone I met was heterosexual). One example of heterosexist censorship I experienced in my Catholic high school was in a creative writing class. The class was given an assignment that asked us to describe an uncomfortable moment with a

member of the opposite sex (being rejected for a date, for instance). The teacher informed us that he had wanted to include an explanatory note of 'same-sex included' for the assignment, but that he was prohibited from doing so by the principal. In this instance, my classmates and I were given a rare glimpse into the heterosexist enforcement of a heteronormative school environment. Both need to be interrogated and eventually reversed. This experience was the first time that I fully became aware of my own privilege, as a heterosexual male, in schools. As a licensed teacher with a language arts qualification, I would also like to be able to read and teach about LGBTQ themes in novels in the curriculum to engage all students regardless of their gender and sexuality identities, and family compositions.

I have chosen the title Annie *off* My Mind in tribute to Nancy Garden's (1982) *Annie on My Mind*, an LGBTQ YA novel with a history of being censored (Cart, 2010; Sova, 2011). The replacement of the word "on" with "off" is meant to communicate how the censorship of LGBTQ material at times defers discussion of LGBTQ issues in schools place. Hence, the removal or suppression of LGBTQ literature contributes to LGBTQ issues, families, and people being off the minds of students, teachers, and school officials (at least figuratively). In other words, out of sight, out of mind. The thesis title also acts as a summary of much of the heterosexist censorship since many of the censors claimed they did not want to discuss or even encourage thoughts about LGBTQ people (seen in Chandler, 2010a; Chandler, 2010b; Saylor, 1993).

My purpose in writing this thesis is to achieve two goals. First, to identify the heteronormative-hidden curriculum in language arts curricula that is enforced by heterosexist censorship patterns. The second goal is to explore and analyze the manner by which heterosexist censorship examples are reported in news media outlets such as newspapers and online articles

acquired through search engines and archives. It is important to analyze these news reports because of their wide circulation, allowing them to affect other school boards in their decisions to include or exclude LGBTQ-related texts. Such potential influence is crucial since a school board's decisions on text selection of LGBTQ literature are relevant to the ability of schools to establish equitable curricula. After I identify and discuss the many examples of a hidden curriculum that fosters heteronormativity, I analyze related censorship examples to ascertain the discursive contexts in which such curricula are maintained and enforced. Highlighting these contexts speaks volumes about how much - or how rarely - LGBTQ representation is tolerated in a school environment.

Apart from my substantive topic, my thesis is also intended to contribute to social justice in education. Specifically, I draw from critical pedagogy and curriculum theory as well as LGBTQ resources. This thesis is relevant to critical pedagogy because it is written on ideas of heteronormativity and heterosexism as functions of social power and how, and in what contexts, these elements manifest themselves in school curricula and pedagogy. My utilization of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a methodology is another reason why my work is relevant to social justice: one premise of CDA is the rejection of the idea of neutrality in language and this idea is used to analyze the distribution of power and ideology present in texts and other forms of communication (Fairclough, 1995).

I approach my research topic from the perspective of critical theory based on the social justice implications of this thesis. In order for my research to be in keeping with the principles of critical theory, I focus on the classroom teachers acting as reproducers of social, political, and cultural values, and as agents of social conformity in the face of conflict (Apple, 1975; Giroux, 2011). Theories regarding the hidden curriculum, an unofficial curriculum meant to establish

obedience and boundaries of legitimacy (Apple, 1975; Eisner, 2002) are relevant to my research topic because censorship is a way of controlling how society and, specifically, students, think (Carefoote, 2007; MacLeod, 1983). I employ critical theory as a framework to show the suppression of LGBTQ literature in schools as a specific example of what critical pedagogy theorists describe as social reproduction and social conformity in education.

Censorship Background

To provide a context for my research, I begin with a study by Cart (2010), who statistically examines known censorship examples from 2000 to 2008, and estimates that, out of a total of 3376 reported cases, books depicting sexually explicit material (of any orientation) make up 1,225 of those cases, and depictions of homosexuality make up 269. Such patterns take on even greater educational and social implications when considering that novels that are prominently used and present in schools are often much older than the censored texts, making it difficult for teachers to access and include material more relevant to the students' lives (Donelson, 2001; Lewis & Petrone, 2010). These older texts are likewise not typically taught to students in ways accessible to LGBTQ students (Blackburn & Buckley, 2005).

The history of censorship, as chronicled by Sova (2011) and MacLeod (1983), reveals that censors' attitudes changed in North America over the past several decades, along with a shift in children's literature and in how children are viewed by adults. MacLeod mentions that, during and after the social revolution in the United States and Canada in the 1960s, authors of children's literature began to incorporate more controversial themes, LGBTQ ones among them. MacLeod attributes the emergence of such themes into public discourse to the Civil Rights movement, the women's movement, and the public backlash of the Vietnam War. Another cause mentioned was the removal of homosexuality as a mental disease from the American Psychological Association

in 1973 (Sanders & Mathis, 2013). In Canada, much of the movement for sexual liberation and equality can be attributed to the amendment to the Canadian Criminal Code, proposed by then Justice Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, leading to the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1969 ("Timeline: Same Sex Rights in Canada," 2012). This law contributed to the release in 1971 of Everett Klippert, the last person in Canada imprisoned for homosexuality ("Timeline: Same Sex Rights in Canada," 2012). Another series of social movement events in Canada for LGBTQ rights was the police raids of Toronto bathhouses on February 5th, 1981, leading to the arrest of 300 men for "indecent acts" (para. 14), despite no evidence of illegal activity (Thomas, 2011). In reaction to these raids, and the verbal and physical harassment of the arresting officers, riots broke out the next night in Queen's Park. However, in the spring of that year, Toronto held the first Gay Pride Parade in Canada (Thomas, 2011).

The historical emergence of LGBTQ themes in YA literature was a slow progress. In the context of the United States, Cart (2010) gives examples of books with plots specifically based on same-sex relations. One of the first recognized LGBTQ YA novels published in the English language was *I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth the Trip* by John Donovan in 1969. The story depicts same sex desire as unnatural and a choice that would lead to despairing consequences (Crisp, 2007). *Annie on My Mind* by Nancy Garden was published in 1982 and is considered by many curriculum scholars to be the first YA novel to depict same-sex relations based on love, rather than only sexual attraction; the story centers on the relationship of two female high school students who are also mentored by an older lesbian couple (Cart, 2010; Garden, 1982; Meyer, 1996). M. E. Kerr's *Night Kites* was published in 1986 and was the first LGBTQ novel dealing with AIDS (Cart, 2010). Bette Greene's *The Drowning of Stephan Jones*, a novel about the harassment of a gay couple in Rachetville, Arkansas, was published in 1991. This book would

later be criticized for promoting negative stereotypes about gay men, such as cowardice and physical weakness, as well as for the book's depiction of the principle gay character, Stephan Jones, as a victim (Crisp, 2007; Finnessy, 1998; Sova, 2011). The first published LGBTQ character of colour is an African-American named Ruby, the title character of Rosa Guy's 1976 novel. The second non-white LGBTQ character would not appear until Jacqueline Woodson's 1990 novel *The Dear One* (Cart, 2010). I assume the reason Cart does not include Celie, a black and lesbian protagonist in Alice Walker's 1982 book *The Color Purple*, is because the novel is not intended for or marketed to young adults (Labrise, 2012; Walker, 1982).

The emergence of LGBTQ literature in Canada is different from the United States since most of the literature was not intended for or marketed to young adults. Nonetheless, some books, such as Timothy Findley's (1977) *The Wars*, would be taught in secondary classrooms (Carefoote, 2007). Carefoote (2007) provides some insight into heterosexist censorship in Canada using the example of *The Wars*. The book faced challenges not only from students accusing the book of "promoting homosexuality," but also from Findley's fellow Canadian author Margaret Laurence, who objected directly to a passage depicting homosexual rape (Carefoote, 2007). Findley was an openly gay Canadian author (Henry, 2011), a fact that could have contributed to some of the censorship of his works (Cohen, 2001).

Other Canadian examples of LGBTQ literature include *Desert of the Heart*, an adult novel written by Canadian author Jane Rule, published in 1964. The book depicts a recently divorced woman falling in love with a younger woman in Nevada (Fox, 2007). The novel is considered a landmark in lesbian fiction, both in and out of Canada because it preceded the Stonewall Uprising by five years, which was a riot against unlawful and provocative police raids of gay bars in New York City (Fox, 2007; Franke-Ruta, 2013). Six years after *Desert of the*

Heart, Rule would publish *This Is Not For You*, a novel about a young closeted lesbian woman who struggles to protect the woman she loves from her own sexual desires (Schuster, 2005). In 1965, Canadian E.A. Lacey's *The Forms of Loss* would be published as the first collection of homosexual-related poems ("Victories and Defeats," 1997). In 1967, John Herbert's *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, a one act play about homosexuality in the Canadian prison system, and Scott Symon's *Place d'Armes*, a novel about the marginalized gay community in Canada at the time, were both published. Both works received commercial success due to the controversy they inspired (Chambers, 2005; Szklarski, 2009; "Victories and Defeats," 1997).

Before the change in the content of children's literature, the censorship of literature was mostly meant to "protect the innocence of childhood" (MacLeod, p. 36, 1983). In reaction to YA novels that broke from the assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and that criticized religion and respect for authority, parents and other censors began to make claims that such material needed to be excluded on the grounds of the good of society, meaning for the sake of social stability and presumably shared social values. Conservative censors assert that the books in question have the potential to "destroy the family [and] decent social standards" (MacLeod, p. 37).

MacLeod defines two censorship forms, namely, liberal and conservative censorship. Liberal censorship is described as a pressure on writers and librarians to expose modern realities and retire material deemed sexist and racist (MacLeod, 1983). This type of censorship led to challenges and temporary removals of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in Rockford, Illinois in 1988, and Mesa, Arizona during 1991, for the book's repeated use of the word "nigger" (Karolides, Bald, & Sova, 2005). On the other hand, conservative censorship is a pressure on writers and librarians to remove any content that could disrupt traditional values, particularly

regarding family, religion, and government (MacLeod, 1983). Cormier's *I Am the Cheese* – a story about a young boy visiting his father and discovering his family is in the witness protection program (Karolides, 2011) – was removed by conservative censors in 1985 from the Panama City, Florida school board for its alleged advocacy of humanism and behaviouralism (Karolides, 2011).

MacLeod claims that what unites the two politically-motivated censorship patterns (liberal and conservative) is the value of "social morality" (p. 37); that is, novels assigned or accessible in schools should be compelled to represent or advocate shared ideas of morality in a society. Elaborating on the implications of justification for "social morality," these censorship patterns are also in reaction to concerns of how such texts may influence a student's thinking and values, such as, for example, embracing humanism over her or his family's religious beliefs. I make this claim based on the burning of Jane Yolen's *Briar Rose* by the Christian Act Now Coalition. The book was burned on the steps of the Kansas City Board of Education Building in Missouri on September 15th, 1994 (Boyd & Bailey, 2009). The group cited the book's inclusion of a gay character, who is victimized by Nazis (Perry, 2003), as being "dangerous and potentially mind polluting" (Bailey & Boyd, 2009). The argument of "mind pollution" points to a concern that these texts and how they are taught model behaviour and values seen as counter to the values of the censors and respectable society, as defined by the censors.

The shift in censors' attitudes is a separate development from the radical changes in children's literature since older works were also challenged on the grounds of the good of society. Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, an anthology of poems depicting a pilgrimage (Sova, 2011), alongside Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, a play about a group of women who plan to end a war by refusing coitus to their men (Carefoote, 2007), were simultaneously

met with a challenge in Columbia County High School in 1986 (Sears, 1992; Sova, 2011). This censorship case is fascinating since both works were taught for an indefinite amount of time at the school (Sears, 1992) and both works are centuries old: *The Canterbury Tales* dates back to 14th Century England and *Lysistrata* to ancient Greece (Carefoote, 2007; Sova, 2011). The challenge came from a fundamentalist Christian minister who accused the texts of sexual explicitness, vulgarity, and promoting "women's lib" (Sova, p. 98). All of these accusations, he felt, justified the books' removal (Sova, 2011). Again, censorship is not just promoted by ideas of "good taste" (referring to the vulgarity accusation), but also a fear of the social values children may learn, such as the equality of women. This case, later called *Virgil v. School Board of Columbia County* (1989), does depict societal sensibilities as a source for censorship since it eventually led to the removal of both texts on the grounds that the "sexuality of the selections was violative [SIC] of the socially and philosophically conservative mores, principles and values of most of the Columbia County Populace" (Whitson, 1992, p. 60). This case also demonstrates the attitudes of censors who seek to have works removed as they see them as antagonistic to their shared societal views. Beyond the censors' attitude, *Virgil v. School Board of Columbia County* demonstrates the power of censors to override school curriculum.

The Canterbury Tales has also been censored by the editing out of controversial passages. Sova (2011) mentions abridged editions of controversial texts cycled in schools with terms in the text related to anatomy or bodily functions altered if not deleted entirely. Some such editions included changing "He caught her by the queynte" to "He slipped his hand intimately between her legs" (p. 97). Following a case in the Eureka, Illinois School Board, based on similar complaints, the full version of *The Canterbury Tales* was removed and then replaced with an expurgated edition described as "annotated" (Sova, 2011). Other books that have been edited for

sexuality are Anne Frank's (1947) *The Diary of a Young Girl* and William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (Sova, 2011; DelFattore, 1992). In each of these texts, passages alluding to sexuality and any perceivable challenge to a status quo, such as the criticism of religious authority in *Romeo and Juliet* or the homoeroticism in *The Diary of a Young Girl* (Delfattore, 1992; Karolides, Bald, & Sova, 2005), have been removed or altered. This censorship, by way of teacher-selection, gives light to deeper issues of heterosexism in the classroom since what teachers include and choose to exclude communicates to students what is important and what is not (Eisner, 2002).

The type of censorship that has been practiced in Canada has been concerned primarily with obscenity, specifically to "undue exploitation of sex, or of sex" (Carefoote, p. 106). Much of the censorship in Canada has been enacted by Canada Customs (now called the Canada Border Services Agency) (Carefoote, 2007). This agency controls literature as it enters the country from foreign sources through a tariff used to prohibit "books, printed matter, drawings, paintings, photographs, or any representation of any kind of a treasonable or seditious nature, or of any immoral or indecent character" (Memorandum D9-1-1: Canada Border Services Agency's Policy on the Classification of Obscene Material, 2012).

That the Canada Revenue Agency has a decidedly heterosexist take on the definition of obscenity is highlighted by the *Little Sisters Book and Art Emporium v. Canada* (2007) case. Littler Sisters is a store that caters specifically to LGBTQ customers. Since 1986, this store has had reading material seized at the border because such material was deemed, by Customs Canada, to be obscene (*Little Sisters Book and Art Emporium v. Canada*, 2007; Memorandum D9-1-1: Canada Border Services Agency's Policy on the Classification of Obscene Material, 2012). The owners of Little Sisters made the case that such a declaration of obscenity violated

their right to freedom of expression (*Little Sisters Book and Art Emporium v. Canada*, 2007). The definition of obscenity used in this trial was based on subsection 163(8) of the Canadian Criminal Code (1985), stating that any publication, with a dominant characteristic of undue, exploitative of sex, will be deemed obscene (*Little Sisters Book and Art Emporium v. Canada*, 2007). Although the Supreme Court of Canada dismissed Little Sisters's claim that the tariff discriminated against them, the Court conceded that the tariff was improperly enforced by the Customs officials since 70% of the imports detained were LGBTQ materials (*Little Sisters Book and Art Emporium v. Canada*, 2007). The judge agreed that the tariff, and its definition of obscenity, infringed upon freedom of expression. However, such infringement was deemed justified for "protecting society from harm" (*Little Sisters Book and Art Emporium v. Canada*, 2007, para. 20). The justice's statement of "protecting society from harm" is a very clear example of the typical "good of society" (MacLeod, p. 36) argument of censors, as identified by MacLeod (1983).

Significance of my Research

My research highlights heterosexism as a form of discrimination and, thus, that heterosexist censorship patterns enable discrimination to take place in schools. An obvious example of heterosexist censorship involved a vice-principal in San Ramon, California who removed Anne Frank's (1947) *The Diary of a Young Girl* in 1992 because of its inclusion of a sexual fantasy Frank had for another girl (Karolides, Bald, & Sova, 2005). The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) scrutinized the removal and stated, "a school district cannot exclude the topic of homosexuality from a school library" (p. 405). The deletions from and removals of *The Diary of a Young Girl*, because of the same-sex fantasy, reinforce the implicit message that LGBTQ people and issues are not topics appropriate for a classroom. An obvious question is

whether *The Diary of a Young Girl* would have been censored if the passage depicted a heterosexual fantasy instead. Interestingly, after the recorded same-sex fantasy, Frank records a heterosexual fantasy in the very next entry (literally the next day) about a boy named Peter who she refers to as her "one true love" (Frank, 1947, p. 161). In this passage, Frank describes Peter as "tall, good-looking and slender" and that he had "dark hair, beautiful brown eyes, ruddy cheeks and a nicely pointed nose" (p. 162). The details of Peter's physical appearance point to a rather vivid heterosexual desire on Anne Frank's part, thus providing a counterbalance with her fantasy for her female friend. In my reading of scholarship and news reports, this passage was not identified as reason for *The Diary of a Young Girl* to be censored (Chandler, 2010a; Chandler, 2010b; Karolides, Bald, & Sova, 2005; Sova, 2011). The ACLU's action against the vice principal in San Ramon demonstrates that others see the exclusion of LGBTQ texts as an important issue that must be interrogated. This thesis is intended to do exactly that.

One of the reasons why I believe it is important to identify and critique heterosexist censorship patterns is because they create unequal learning opportunities. Hoelscher (2012) reports that, despite the relevance of LGBTQ people in life science and health classes, only 1% of students surveyed in the 2009 National School Climate Survey reported learning about LGBTQ issues and families. Hoelscher's findings highlight the prevalence of heterosexism in school curricula and practices. Smith, Foley, and Chaney (2008) implore teachers to read texts for their oppressive control and perpetuation of LGBTQ stereotypes to combat heterosexism that exists, and even flourishes - often unchecked - in institutions. Suppression of LGBTQ themes in schools and school texts are present in the annotations of *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947), since most of these deletions were of Anne Frank's sexual curiosity toward her female friend

(Sova, 2011). The absence of LGBTQ content from discussions in subjects relevant to sexual orientation demonstrates perpetuation of a heteronormative environment.

It is also crucial to consider the problem of heterosexism as an indirect, though prevalent, danger to LGBTQ students' social wellbeing and safety in schools. LGBTQ youth are estimated to be 3.4 times more likely to attempt suicide, are three times more likely than heterosexual children to be harassed, and make up 28% of teenage suicides (Luhthanen, 2007). Taylor and Peter (2011) found that, in their sample from Canada, 70% of all students heard homophobic and transphobic slurs in schools and 10% reported hearing homophobic comments from their teachers on a daily or weekly basis. They also found that 23% of transgender students, 15% of minority sexual-orientation (gay, bisexual, queer-identified) male students, and 12% of minority sexual-orientation female students reported hearing transphobic language from their teachers, also on a weekly or daily basis.

On the issue of student safety, the National School Climate Survey of 2009, an American study, sampled students from the age of 13 to high school graduation and found that 68.2% of the sampled students claimed to have frequently heard homophobic slurs from other students. Also, 23.4% of students claimed they were verbally harassed for their sexual orientation and 74.5% did not report to a school administrator after being harassed or assaulted (Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz, & Bartkiewicz, 2010). One of the main reasons for not reporting the harassment was fear of the faculty's reactions to learning the student's orientation: some predicted reactions would be apathy and inaction or that the situation would worsen as a direct result (Kosciw et al., 2010). Taylor and Peter (2011) found that LGBTQ students were more likely to say that their school was supportive of LGBTQ people through the inclusion of a Gay-Straight Alliance group. They also reported that an estimated 64% of children with LGBTQ parents feel unsafe at their

schools. Ignoring these issues and excluding conversations about LGBTQ topics can contribute to an environment of isolation for LGBTQ students. Challenging heterosexism in schools, then, is necessary for bringing awareness to these problems and for helping to end them. My research helps to bring such awareness by advocating for the inclusion of LGBTQ literature in schools and by interrogating actions that work to exclude such learning materials. Censorship is the most obvious form of LGBTQ exclusion in schools. By understanding the mechanics of such exclusion and exposing its inconsistencies and inequalities, teachers and school officials can begin to improve the uncomfortable environments LGBTQ students often inhabit.

Such research provides clear and distinct reasons why a proactive approach to creating an inclusive and equitable school environment for LGBTQ students is necessary. Part of doing so is through curriculum. By allowing LGBTQ learning materials in school and reconsidering heterosexist reasons for exclusions, teachers can provide a different perspective for non-LGBTQ students that could help to lessen the amount of homophobic bullying and taunting. The instances of censorship cited in this and the previous section point to the importance of my research topic because, fundamentally, censorship is based on ideological and social conflict, including in the contexts of schools. This thesis contributes to the scholarship on school censorship by focusing on these patterns of heterosexist censorship in high school language arts curriculum and pedagogy. The central way that my research adds to Cart's (2010) earlier research is by exposing the heterosexism that underlies the rationale for censorship and the absence of LGBTQ literature in high school classrooms. I do so by analyzing instances of censorship and how they were reported, in addition to analyzing the content of the LGBTQ novels that were challenged and/or removed. Exploring the issues that censors and news reporters bring to bear on LGBTQ content in schools establishes how ingrained heterosexism is

in society and schools. By uncovering the depth of heterosexism, I hope to contribute to remedying it.

Rationale

The scholarship identified above details the marginalization of LGBTQ students and the censorship of curriculum and literature that validates them. Adding to this body of scholarship, my research on censorship patterns in North American schools challenges the heteronormative-hidden curriculum. My analysis argues the case that school officials and teachers need to acknowledge and eliminate curriculum that validates some students ("straight" students) and renders invisible or stigmatizes others (LGBTQ students). The implications are not limited to curricular choices. Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz and Bartkiewicz (2010), for instance, report that LGBTQ children are estimated to skip school 14.5% less often when enrolled in a school with LGBTQ inclusive education (for example, having a policy against homophobia or having a Gay-Straight Alliance present) compared with LGBTQ students enrolled in a non-inclusive curriculum. Taylor and Peter (2011) found that an estimated 80% of LGBTQ students reported never having experienced homophobic bullying in schools with anti-homophobic policies, which is 13% higher than students sampled from schools without such policies. These statistics demonstrate, quite clearly, that the consequences of allowing these censorship trends to occur without reproach are unacceptable.

One of the typical motivations for school officials to censor or comply with demands to censor is to avoid public backlash (Carefoote, 2007). According to Carefoote, the censoring of *Heather Has Two Mommies* is the most obvious example of schools trying to appease "the community." This so-called community is typically a small group of parents and others who oppose LGBTQ representation in curriculum on the grounds that it offends their religious beliefs

(explained by Carefoote, 2007 and seen in Chandler, 2010a; Saylor, 1993). Carefoote (2007) points out that such censorship is dangerous because it empowers some to exclude material that they feel offends their values, at the expense of others.

It is important that school officials do not act merely to calm outcry from "the community" since these heterosexist demands to censor are at the expense of students. Editing or removing *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947) is a clear example of heterosexism in schools since Anne Frank is typically presented as heterosexual (Sova, 2011). It is significant to note also that, while explicit heterosexual acts are censored in some cases (such as Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners*, as chronicled by Carefoote, 2007), Ann Frank's same-sex thoughts were met with criticism while her heterosexual relationships and fantasies do not receive any degree of attention from the censors (Chandler, 2010a; Chandler, 2010b; Frank, 1947; Sova, 2011). This assumption of heterosexuality and the resentment of that assumption being disrupted communicate an intolerant message to LGBTQ students. Making the homoerotic passage in the book available to students would allow LGBTQ students to interpret her, as a character, in ways that they may find engaging and supportive. As Lewis and Petrone (2010) point out, censoring literature for the sake of avoiding criticism from "the community" not only prevents LGBTQ students from having supportive school experiences, but also diminishes the education of non-LGBTQ students who will miss opportunities to learn valuable lessons of respect, tolerance, and acceptance.

Research Question

I have made the argument that censorship patterns in English-speaking North American schools foster a heterosexist-hidden curriculum in the classroom and thus a heteronormative school environment. To interrogate such patterns, the research question this thesis explores is: *What are the discursive contexts in which heteronormative environments are enforced through*

these censorship and selection patterns? Specifically, my research aims to uncover the following:

- the censors' rationales for not providing LGBTQ content in language arts curricula;
- the deciding factors for removing such material;
- how explicit or overt the depictions of LGBTQ content have to be for the content to be deemed inappropriate for use by students;
- and how these challenges and removals are performed.

To answer this series of questions, I analyzed news articles that report on LGBTQ themed books that have been challenged and/or removed, while also analyzing the material in question – the books themselves – in order to gain a broader context. I chose to analyze news articles because they provide rich details of censorship cases and they demonstrate, through language choices in the reports, how heterosexism is perceived by the general public and the assumed biases of the target readers of these articles. My research also examines the typically censored LGBTQ-themed texts as a source of contrast to the censors' arguments, as presented in the news reports. The content of the novels themselves is helpful and informative since challenges and removals are not always based on a thorough reading of the material in question (Booth, 1992; Shariff, 2007). The challenges that are based on a thorough reading of the text tend to hyperbolize the nature of the LGBTQ content and demonstrate an obvious bias against LGBTQ people (evident in articles such as Arnold, 2007; "The Color Purple," 1985; "Crusade on to ban controversial 'Wallflower' at Rockland school," 2011; Wagner, 2003).

Structure of the Thesis

In the next chapter, I review the literature on key concepts used in this research, including school censorship, the hidden curriculum, and heterosexism and heteronormativity. In this review, I discuss relevant theories about these concepts for situating my research and demonstrating my thesis' contribution to these fields. The third chapter discusses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the methodology that I employ to undertake the research, and steps taken to analyze news documents for instances of censorship. The description of methods relates mostly to how I approach the articles and books through a CDA approach (such as what questions I will use and how these texts will be selected). In Chapter Four, I provide an analysis of the news reports, instances of censorship, and novels, followed by a discussion of why this topic matters and what can be done about the marginalization of LGBTQ students through censorship. The last chapter discusses the significance of this research and provides recommendations for how teachers and school officials should appropriately respond to heterosexist censorship.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

My thesis explores the question, *What are the discursive contexts in which heteronormative environments are enforced through these censorship and selection patterns?* To set up a platform to investigate this question, this chapter explores the three main concepts of this research and how they are connected: censorship, hidden curriculum, and heteronormativity and heterosexism. I chose these three concepts because each one addresses my topic significantly. For example, it is pertinent to observe the topic of censorship from a historical and critical point of view to make the case for why censorship matters, why heterosexist censorship needs to stop, and how teachers and school officials can work to lessen the heteronormative environment created by heterosexist censorship patterns.

Scholarship on censorship tracks and focuses on particular censorship patterns, particularly the social and political aspects of these patterns. Scholarship on heterosexism, particularly in relation to its presence in education and social media, demonstrates not only the counterproductive implications of promoting heteronormativity, but also the potential benefits of interrupting heterosexist and heteronormative patterns in schools. Some such benefits are an understanding of what Ferber, Holcomb, and Wentling (2013) call the arbitrary and purely social reasons why homosexuality is seen as a problem. Finally, exploring the hidden curriculum provides an important point of entry for analyzing the existence of heteronormative environments in schools, which are ubiquitous and, thus, usually not identified. The idea that students are unofficially taught a heteronormative curriculum, other than what is explicitly assigned, fits the definition of a hidden curriculum. The power of a hidden curriculum, as Eisner (2002) and Giroux (2011) claim, is to foster compliant behaviour and reproduce dominant cultural values. This thesis focuses on the specific issue of heterosexism and heteronormativity.

Expanding upon the idea of the hidden curriculum and scholarship on critical pedagogy and social justice highlights the existence and significance of heterosexism in classrooms.

Censorship

Reichman (2001) defines censorship as the removal, suppression, or restricted circulation of literary, artistic, or educational materials on the grounds that they are morally or otherwise objectionable in light of standards applied by a censor or censors. Reichman's definition simplifies the fact that different censors' standards are often based upon very different political and social ideals (Kidd, 2009; MacLeod, 1983).

The justification for censorship and how it should be viewed has changed over time. Concerns shifted from wanting to protect juveniles from potential trauma and disturbance to preventing them from learning, and perhaps adopting, objectionable ideas and behavior, as depicted in the novels. MacLeod (1983) chronicles how, in the social and political upheaval of the 1960s, children's book authors began to discuss previously taboo topics such as teenage sexuality, including homosexuality. Before this, complaints about curriculum content by parents were seldom made; those that did occur were motivated by the perceived need to protect children from disturbing realities and ideas such as violence or explicit, even transgressive sexuality. After this change in the 1960s, according to MacLeod, suggestions to remove material from the classrooms were justified for "the good of society" (p. 36). Carefoote (2007) echoes this pattern of censorship for the good of society when he proposes that many cases of censorship seem motivated by a fear of literature that challenges society and its image of itself. Similarly, DelFattore's (1992) work assesses how passages that criticize religion are omitted in the abridged version of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Through research on the literature of censorship, I discovered that many censors use the "good of society" argument to support their challenges and removals (MacLeod, 1983; Whitson, 1992). This argument presents two reasons why a piece of literature must be suppressed: one is for the sake of "good taste" or desirable culture, and the other to argue against books or passages believed to model unwanted behaviour or values. The concern that impressionable students will mimic what is modeled in the material brings to light the desire of censors to protect the perceived values of their community and that the continued perpetuation of those values, by their children, is not disturbed by any ideas expressed in the controversial novels. Another example of censorship for the sake of society is the *Virgil v. School Board of Columbia County*, resulting in the removal of both *The Canterbury Tales* and *Lysistrata* for sexual themes that were deemed too controversial for the citizens of Columbia County (Whitson, 1992).

The court case of *Virgil v. School Board of Columbia County Florida* (1989) deals with a challenge to both Chaucer's *The Miller's Tale* and Aristophanes's *Lysistrata* for their depiction of sexuality and gender roles (Carefoote, 2007; Sova, 2011; Whitson, 1992). Despite the fact that both of the works are considered classics and had been part of the curriculum for a very long time, the school board chose to remove them entirely on the grounds that the ideas depicted were deemed inflammatory to the Columbia County community (Sova, 2011; Whitson, 1992).

Patterns of selection also reveal a dislike for sexual material, leading not only to books being excluded but passages from books being deleted. Anne Frank's (1947) *The Diary of a Young Girl* was challenged and then edited to omit the descriptions of Frank's genitalia and her sexual curiosity toward her female friends as she matured into a woman (Sova, 2011). As mentioned before, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* was also edited and annotated for sexually explicit passages (Sova, 2011).

Censorship usually occurs, with some exceptions, at the behest of more socially conservative groups (Carefoote, 2007; Sova, 2011; Winkler, 2005). This is apparent since typical reasons for censoring books include the presence of profanity, non-Christian culture and homosexual themes and/or authors (Winkler, 2005). Cart (2010) mentions that out of the 3,376 challenges reported from 2000 through 2008, 269 were for homosexual issues or themes. The general pattern of many censorship scholars has been to chronicle censorship cases and then make recommendations either to teachers wanting to evade controversy or to advise potential censors (as seen in Blair, 1996; Reichman, 2001; Viex, 1975).

Shariff (2007) indicates further socio-political mechanics at play in such examples by describing how group politics play into censorship, challenges, and selection patterns. Shariff explains that scholars try to understand these censorship patterns by examining how these acts change "relationships of power through the legitimization and de-legitimization of different groups" (p. 12). One such example is the censorship case of *Farrel v. Hall* (1988), which took place in an Illinois school (Delfattore, 1992). In this case, the superintendent Leonard Hall was accused of using his religious and political beliefs to reject works that had been taught for decades, including Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper*, Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, and Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, totaling sixty-four books. Arguably, Hall worked to legitimize his own religious and political beliefs and de-legitimize any works or opinions that contradicted them. For instance, he removed *I Am the Cheese* for its negative depiction of the United States government. Karolides (2011) reports that in 1985, Hall ordered a Mowat principal in Bay County District to ban the book after a grandmother had complained of the novel's "vulgar language and advocacy of humanism and behaviourism" (p.

254). The focus on humanism in this case highlights how censorship is not only informed by sensibilities ("good taste") but also a perceived challenge to conservative values, in this case, more conservative Judeo-Christian values.

Anticensorship sentiments are found in much of the scholarship on censorship. These sentiments typically do not look into or acknowledge social or political agendas that motivate censors. For example, according to Shariff (2007), censorship has been identified by many scholars as "largely the result of ignorance" (p. 96) perpetuated by teachers' selection habits. Kidd (2009) describes anticensorship writings, such as Donelson (2001), Downey-Howerton (2007), and Viex (1975), as characterizing the censor as a person who acts without a logical or comprehensible justification for challenging the books. Often, these strictly anti-censorship comments are accompanied by accusations of the censors not reading the book in question thoroughly, if at all (Kidd, 2009). Kidd argues that such assessment of censorship overlooks both the system of cultural values informing the censors' decision as well as how censorship has caused many books to be labeled as classics. Adding to Kidd's argument, these characterizations not only diminish validity on the part of the censor to object to curricula, but also allow no opportunity to understand and analyze patterns of censorship.

Another common criticism is that censorship is inconsistent. Donelson, for instance, bluntly states that, "censorship is capricious and arbitrary" (p. 189). The view that censorship emerges solely from ignorance and is always out of context is challenged by Kidd who claims that censorship is part of "a complex set of exchanges and leverages within the cultural field" and not an "isolated action" (p. 199). In my view, censorship is a combination of misperception on the part of the censor and an outcome of a socio-political context. Although the justification provided by the censors may seem out of context to the book in question, these justifications are

ideological in nature. To explain the latter point, the censorship of literature often displays a conflict of ideologies (for instance, conservative-Christian values struggling against the perceived threat of LGBTQ people). This ideological threat is most obviously depicted in the selection practices of Superintendent Hall who barred books through a blanket approach based on his religious and political values (Karolides, 2011).

To the credit of Donelson (2001) and Viex (1975), many complaints that have led to removals have not only been subjective, but poorly justified. For instance, members of the Alabama Textbook Commission wanted to reject *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947) from school curricula because they felt it was "a real downer" (Sova, p. 36). Booth (1992) relays a story of a group of parents challenging a piece of short fiction for encouraging students to cheat in school, even though the story is focused on a boy's guilt for cheating on his test. This example displays a lack of understanding of the book's meaning, both the author's intention and the standard interpretation, on the part of the censors. Nonetheless, it is important to consider further implications at play when actions of such social and political significance occur. Arguing that censorship is always based on misinformation would mean that only the book is excluded. Groups whose views are made absent because of certain censorship patterns are not considered if all examples of censorship are brushed off as inconsistent and out of context.

Contemporary scholarship, such as DelFattore (1992), and Karolides, Bald, and Sova (2005), and older texts on censorship, such as MacLeod (1983), analyze the social and political issues in challenges and removals. However, they do not draw from curriculum theory, specifically critical pedagogy and the hidden curriculum, to better understand the significance of such patterns. Applying concepts of critical pedagogy, such as the hidden curriculum, would help to explicate how these social and political motivations affect student learning. Most scholars who

discuss specific examples of censorship rely on legal cases defining obscenity as the only secondary sources to make their analysis. For instance, Karolides et al. (2005) list 120 commonly banned books that they separate into three categories of suppression: on political grounds, on sexual grounds, and on social grounds. They also cite the historical development of the word "obscene" to explain how some pieces of literature were once labeled as such. Karolides et al. (2005) assert that cases of censorship on social grounds provide a fascinating view of socially motivated censorship. My thesis pursues this view of socially motivated censorship to the social justice end of improving school environments for LGBTQ students.

Censorship scholars, such as Blackburn and Buckley (2005) and Curwood, Schliesman, and Horning (2009), draw on their own personal experiences to connect censorship with LGBTQ novels in schools. The heterosexist censorship patterns they identify from their own lives are significant because the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom estimates that 70-80 percent of censorship cases go unreported (Cart, 2010). Buckley describes an experience he had as a high school student when he tried to interpret a character and plot point in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*: Buckley interpreted the character Jake Barnes's apprehension to enter a heterosexual relation with a woman was due to a "conflicted sexuality" (p. 203) rather than a war wound (the standard interpretation). His teacher refused to entertain the possibility of Buckley's assertion. This example is common since discussing the LGBTQ subtexts in traditional literature is often considered taboo, despite the advantages of doing so to facilitate inclusion and understanding of LGBTQ people and experiences (Sanders & Mathis, 2013).

Curwood et al. (2009) describe the decision of an unnamed principal in a Wisconsin school to exclude Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* because of the book's

potential to cause uproar in the community. The principal pointed specifically to the potential uproar of parents, presumably against the book's inclusion of a sympathetic gay male character (Chbosky, 1999). Curwood et al. (2009) probe deeper into the school's maintenance of heteronormativity by examining a request to include Khaled Hosseini's (2003) *The Kite Runner*, which was rejected because of the book's same-sex rape scene. The exact reasoning for why the principal did not select the novel is not mentioned so whether this was an example of liberal censorship (not wanting a depiction of gay men as rapists) or conservative censorship (not wanting anything even vaguely related to same-sex interaction) cannot be determined. The authors, however, conclude that such a rejection was based on heterosexism, since Laurie Halse Anderson's novel *Speak* served as a core part of the school's curriculum despite depicting a heterosexual rape of a woman. Curwood et al. argue that this claim is valid since the representation of rape in *Speak* is proportional to the depiction in *The Kite Runner* (both are significant to the plots of the novels). Curwood et al. use these contradictory text selections as examples of an often unchallenged "institutionalized homophobia" (p. 38). What is missing from Curwood et al. and Blackburn and Buckley (2005) is a connection of this institutionalized homophobia to the scholarship on heterosexism and heteronormativity and theories of hidden curriculum and critical pedagogy (each is ideal for interrogating examples of heterosexist censorship in schools).

Sanders and Mathis (2013) draw upon scholarship on heteronormativity as well as the hidden curriculum in their discussion of the absence of LGBTQ themes in language arts classes. However, the absence of these texts or the discussion of LGBTQ themes is only extended to teacher-selection rather than the reported challenges or removals of the texts. Sanders and Mathis also use the LGBTQ YA novels and children's books as their source of analysis, rather than also

drawing from the actual censorship of those novels. What needs to be examined, along with the assigned novels themselves, to fully understand the pattern of heteronormativity in language arts curriculum choices, are the actions that prevent LGBTQ themes from being incorporated in the curriculum. By analyzing news reports on examples of heterosexist censorship, my research provides some insight into these actions.

Hidden Curriculum

Eisner (2002) describes the hidden curriculum as what is implicitly taught to students outside of the explicit curriculum. He qualifies that the hidden curriculum creates incentive beyond learning goals for students to learn the material, and that mastering the hidden curriculum does not necessarily display mastery of the actual curriculum. Two such examples of behaviour needed to master the hidden curriculum, as Eisner expresses, are compliant behaviour and competitiveness. For compliant behaviour, he describes how students are groomed for future jobs that are based on routine, have extrinsic goals and tasks set by employers, and may not have any interest to the students other than steady payment. Competiveness, which Eisner describes as pitting one student against another, is fostered through the grading system, given that only a small percentage of a class can gain the top marks. Eisner suggests that this separation of skills is problematic since some teachers require their students to understand the hidden curriculum to access the explicit curriculum. Apple (1975) and Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, and Taubman (1995) articulate other ideas, such as the hidden curriculum being intentional or unintentional and the existence of unstated political and class-related elements in curriculum.

Eisner (2002) states that the hidden curriculum fosters “compliant behaviour” (p. 89) and encourages students to take set positions without critical process. Eisner’s ideas of compliant behaviour parallel the cultural compromise and conflict-evasion Apple (1975) sees in the hidden

curriculum: Apple suggests that the hidden curriculum works to create boundaries of legitimacy and to maintain order in schools. Eisner's insight on the workings of the hidden curriculum is widely applicable because he describes how schools influence students to conform to goals and rules with no academic or social meaning (compliance and competitiveness).

Eisner also introduces what he calls the "null curriculum," which is what is not taught to the students such as law, economics, anthropology, psychology, and dance (these are Eisner's examples). Eisner describes the null curriculum rather briefly and seems to only rely upon certain forms of teaching and evaluation that are in the null curriculum rather than certain content (such as texts or topics). The null curriculum, in my view, could also be applied to the exclusion of content based on social values and what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable for students to learn based on socially and politically informed moral grounds. In my research, the scholarship on censorship for language arts classes is used as a window into the null curriculum. The null curriculum is an essential concept to excavate LGBTQ-related ideas that have been deemed unworthy of a classroom, or perhaps challenging to the hidden curriculum.

Yuksel (2005) identifies two main approaches to conceptualizing the hidden curriculum: functionalism and neo-Marxism. Functionalists argue that the hidden curriculum works to carry out social order and teaches students a set of values deemed appropriate and necessary for proper social interaction in the current society (such as being polite). Neo-Marxists look into how the hierarchy of the class system infiltrates schools via the hidden curriculum and covert messages. Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, and Taubman (1995) allude to the vertical line of authority from administrators, down to teachers, down to students. This line of authority teaches students, as Eisner (2002) alludes, to accept a hierarchical organization and to be complacent with purposes that are "set by another" (p. 91). Pinar et al. (1995) also mention the scenario of grading as

reward and the predetermined nature of the assigned work as examples of reconstructing class systems. One possible question to be explored in the neo-Marxist approach is whether or not this reproduction of the class-economic structure isolates certain groups of students, and, if so, which students and why. From there, it is important to ask whether or not such a hidden curriculum would allow books with LGBTQ themes to be incorporated, or if such books would interrupt that system. While traditional Marxism deals primarily with materialism and patriarchy (Heinrich, 2012), this vertical line of authority could also be relevant to how ideas of sexuality are conveyed to students, via the hidden curriculum. For instance, by treating LGBTQ themes and issues as controversial or inappropriate for students to learn, school officials and censors create a vertical line of authority that treats LGBTQ students and same-sex families as a second priority (if that) to the heterosexual students and families.

The way that censorship works to maintain a dominant point of view might explain why so few teachers support social justice causes for LGBTQ people (Cart, 2010; Chandler, 2010a; Chandler, 2010b; Pinar et al., 1995). If the dominant view is interpreted as the rarely challenged Judeo-Christian view on sexuality, then much of the heteronormativity found in current curricula can be attributed to teachers who are unwilling to challenge a status quo that only accepts heterosexuality as normal. These trends would need to be analyzed and examined as a hidden curriculum that impacts LGBTQ students and teachers.

Giroux and Penna (1979) argue that the structural-functionalism approach fails to fully convey the social implications of schooling beyond what is explicitly taught in the classrooms because the approach does not link the school as an institution to economic and political entities. They assert that both the formal and tacit messages in school must be examined within the context of the larger culture to understand the link between "school knowledge and social

control" (p. 21). Beyond this, the authors advocate that students not only should understand the social processes around them but also how they can challenge and "overcome" (p. 21) such processes. Giroux's and Penna's arguments demonstrate the thoroughness of the neo-Marxist approach to the hidden curriculum. This lends itself not only to critical pedagogy but also to the pursuit of social justice by identifying and challenging oppressive mechanics in the classroom and resources. Martin (1976), a skeptic of neo-Marxist theories of the hidden curriculum, also mentions that making students aware of oppressive social functions in school does not necessarily guarantee freedom from unwanted "learning states" (p. 150), which refers to opportunities for students to unintentionally learn possibly undesirable behaviour or values. Further research is needed regarding the ways educators may be able to better challenge and overcome the detrimental effects of the hidden curriculum or the social order being put in place. I would add that more specific classroom practices that go beyond theorizing, like heterosexist text selection, are required to better conceptualize how to overcome that hurdle beyond raising consciousness in the students.

Jackson (1968) interprets the hidden curriculum through an examination of discipline and classroom management. Like Eisner (2002), Jackson's writing on the hidden curriculum deals with the rules and regulations taught to students as part of classroom management and classroom procedures. Although much of this strand of theory on the hidden curriculum has been found through research on the younger grades, it is not restricted to examples from elementary school. Jackson's work argues that discipline in the elementary school setting is not only for intellectual prowess but also institutional conformity. Jackson also describes the intellectual atmosphere and strict disciplinary rules of Western schools as comparable to mental institutions and prisons. Jackson bases this comparison on how students in schools are forced to attend, like the inmates

of prisons or asylums. What Jackson demonstrates through this comparison is that the disciplinary rules in schools have more to do with containment and compliance than actual education because they have little to nothing to do with the explicit curriculum. Jackson asserts that discipline should only be to the degree needed for scholarship, not at the demands of other people. Though this work is functionalist in its approach, it provides a platform to argue that the hidden curriculum blocks certain students and even hinders genuine learning. A question that arises is whether the disciplinary nature of the hidden curriculum, as Jackson sees it, blocks some students who could otherwise master the explicit curriculum, particularly given our current emphasis on accommodating children's different learning styles (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009). In the present research, I ask whether or not such social rules exist regarding sexuality and gender and whether mastering or not mastering such rules prevents LGBTQ students from academic achievement or feeling personal comfort in their educational environment.

Apple (1975) also discusses Jackson's (1968) extensive coverage of how students learn to cope with the "systems of crowds, praise, and power of the classroom," but Apple emphasizes that this focus does not touch on the "maintenance of the same dominant world view" (p. 96). Again, there is contention between analyzing the hidden curriculum as simply incidental learning and analyzing the agendas present in the curriculum. Apple (1975) looks into social conflicts in the school, an apt description of challenges to books. More importantly, he describes how these conflicts are used to "maintain the existing distribution of power and rationality in society" (p. 95). The detail on distribution of power is parallel to other patterns of censorship that target books promoting the questioning of authority (Carefoote, 2007; Winkler, 2005). Apple's description of conflict being used to create "boundaries of legitimacy" (p. 99) and maintaining "structure and order" (p. 108) raises interesting questions regarding what kinds of thought and

knowledge are promoted as legitimate, as opposed to others. More specifically, since he treats this hidden curriculum as intentional, it is of further interest to probe into what forms of knowledge are intentionally left out so to avoid conflict with the dominant world view and current distribution of power. Given the example of the omitted homoerotic passages in *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947), I pursue this question to show an evasion of same-sex relations and transgender identities for the maintenance of a preferred ideology.

Apple (1975) also observes that schools often try to avoid political tensions in exchange for maintaining political stability, demonstrating a defense mechanism on the school's part against foreseeable challenges. The existence of such a defense mechanism is based on the fact that, as Kidd (2009) and MacLeod (1983) establish, many typical challenges are motivated by the political beliefs of the censor. Because teachers and administrators, in general and like most other people, prefer for social equilibrium in schools, there is a constant emphasis on conformity and denial of conflict (Apple, 1975). The issue of conformity is more at the intellectual expense of the students who are not to question the ideas presented to them. Suppression of opinions, practices and ideas that challenge the norm means that dominant opinions, practices and ideas remain in place. An example of such unquestioned ideas can be an unquestioning acceptance of heterosexuality as the sexual ideal and a complete segregation of masculinity and femininity and not allowing any interruption or challenge to them. Conflict is displayed in the censorship cases of *Virgil v. Columbia County* (1989) and *Farrel v. Hall* (1988), both clearly being examples of school officials avoiding conflict between differing ideas by compromising the school curriculum through the removal of books found morally repugnant by the censors (*The Canterbury Tales*, *Lysistrata*, and *I am the Cheese*, respectively).

Portelli (1993), like Apple, indicates how students eventually give up trying to create meaning for themselves and become passive recipients of information. Portelli cautions educators that if students do not have full consciousness of ideologies behind what they are being taught, they may haphazardly accept a certain position without proper decision-making on their own. This predicament of students taking certain positions on social issues is an important one since it only displays students copying what they are told and not interrogating such curricula with critical thinking or personal discretion. Portelli (1993) concludes his work with a relevant question: "To what extent does teaching by means of the so-called hidden curriculum lead to a possible form of distortion" (p. 355). While Portelli's follow-up question is directed at the individual integrity and respect of students in the classroom, his idea of distortion should not stop there. An examination of distorted pedagogy regarding cultural norms, societal values and political agendas should be pursued when considering how informed and critical students are when taking positions on issues. This problem brings to mind the discouragement faced by Buckley (2005), when he was not allowed to critically analyze a part of his language arts curriculum in a way relevant to his interests as an LGBTQ student.

Other scholars on the hidden curriculum have looked into covert messages to students through the exclusion of certain ideas. Pursuing these excluded ideas raises new possibilities for exposing social hierarchy, the inclusion of anti-dialectics in the classroom, and for actions that work to narrow legitimacy. Ahwee et al. (2004) cover some of these issues with null curriculum when discussing how literature from certain cultures, such as Russia, was included in a curriculum but literature from other cultures was excluded. When they point out that such privileging and excluding of certain material sends out an implicit message to the students and faculty, the deeper social implications or possible consequences are not explored. Looking into

teacher selection, removals, and challenges that stop an examination of LGBTQ themes in the classroom is a way of exploring Ahwee and associates' point regarding literature that is excluded. Specifically, I argue that some literature is excluded because it interrupts the heteronormative-hidden curriculum in the classroom.

Though not looking at the hidden curriculum specifically, Freire (1970) is a key theorist in a broader critical pedagogy movement arguing for an examination of the hidden curriculum, and a need to understand its consequences. Freire points out the importance of dialogue between the teacher and his or her students in order to foster social justice. His question: "How can I dialogue if I am closed to and even offended by the contributions of others" (p. 148) is clearly relevant to an examination of censorship. This concern, regarding intolerance or even fear of differing opinions, is a potential explanation for why school administrators ban certain works from the English curriculum. It is also a valuable question to ask in light of the examples of ideological struggle among censors.

Freire discusses what he terms the "banking method of education" (p. 149), a method of teaching that is highly teacher-centered and does not promote dialogue as a necessary part of learning. He advocates for an educational revolution so that teachers do not dictate to their students but engage them in open dialogues. The banking method connects nicely to Eisner's (2002) description of how the hidden curriculum establishes goals that may not be of interest to students but nonetheless must be followed by them.

The term "dialogue" is also used and advocated by some censorship scholars to alleviate the possible misunderstanding regarding challenges to language arts curricula (Lent, 2008). However, since the reform of curriculum theory in the 1970s, its use has been for the sake of growing and exchanging knowledge as well as signifying the acknowledgment and the fostering

of individuality (Pinar et al., 1995). Clearly, the virtues of dialogue to help encourage individuality in students are counterintuitive to traditional patterns of censorship, especially when books that ask readers to examine their personal backgrounds are often banned (Winkler, 2005). Dialoguing in the classroom about books that break gender and sexuality boundaries, such as *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947) or *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999), would be advantageous for creating an LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum, promoting tolerance, and combating homophobia. Of course, teachers should use discretion on the nature of the dialogue that takes place in their classrooms to avoid worsening homophobia in schools. For instance, teachers should not initiate a classroom debate over whether or not LGBTQ students deserve the same rights as other students since this may make LGBTQ students, and those with LGBTQ parents and other family members, uncomfortable and allow the homophobic attitudes and misconceptions of other students to become explicit. Such a debate would also imply that LGBTQ students might not have a right to equal treatment since such an argument is being entertained as acceptable.

Heteronormativity and Heterosexism

To expand upon censorship patterns as enforcing and maintaining heteronormativity through the hidden curriculum, this section contains a discussion of heterosexism and heteronormativity as concepts. I incorporate the scholarship on heterosexism in education and in social media to make clear the significance and the rationale for interrogating the heterosexist agenda of censorship patterns.

Heteronormativity works to institutionalize heterosexuality as the expected social and sexual relationship on the basis that heterosexuality constitutes normality (Hoelscher, 2012; Ferber, Holcomb, & Wentling, 2013). This binary assumption also relies heavily on the

separation of the sexes through conventional gender roles of masculinity and femininity, with no overlap (Hoelscher 2012). Hawkes and Scott (2005) explain that this presents heterosexuality as normal, both socially and biologically, and that heterosexuality, as the default sexuality, does not need to be explained. In effect, heterosexuality is beyond reproach. Further, Hawkes and Scott (2013) describe heteronormativity as both omnipresent and invisible, and thus "not open to revision or challenge" (p. 6). Heteronormativity also creates heterosexuality as the standard of legitimate social and sexual relations (Ferber, Holcomb, & Wentling, 2013).

Heterosexism is a systematic oppression by privileging and promoting heterosexuality as superior to homosexuality "through everyday practices, attitudes, behaviors, and institutional rules" (Ferber et al., p. xxiii). Ferber et al. (2013), Hawkes and Scott (2005) and Hoelscher (2012) show that the enforcement of heterosexuality as normal and of homosexuality as abnormal takes place through social means such as cultural rites, advertising, film, and television plot scenarios. Some, such as Naugler (2012), insist that these social means are the only methods that inform a person's sexuality. Naugler describes intercourse as a purely personal activity and that only through cultural attitudes has homosexuality been identified as a problem. Naugler's argument brings to light the subjectivity of sexual orientation and, in doing so, exposes the changing foundation of both heterosexism and heteronormativity. Ferber et al. (2013) emphasize the sociality of sexuality by claiming that heterosexuality, as a sexual orientation, is not natural but, instead, is socially organized, mandated, and controlled. Rich (1980) claims likewise that there is a bias of compulsory heterosexuality taught to women. These analyses are important when considering the double standard regarding sexuality that states heterosexuality is genetic and that homosexuality is an unfortunate and destructive choice or something that occurs from a set of negative circumstances and experiences. These points are essential for creating empathy

and supporting the development of critical thinking that serve to arrest these heterosexist censorship patterns.

The social implications of heterosexism infiltrate schools through the hidden curriculum. Though not specific to a discussion of heterosexism, Esposito (2011), in her discussion of the hidden curriculum, identifies human bodies as "central texts" (p. 145) for the defining of social class and gender. She explores how socialized ideas of gender and sexuality play out in educational environments. Sears (1992) highlights how same-sex relations are seen as a threat to male-dominated culture and attributes this to a reluctance to include the topic of homosexuality in the school curriculum. He also draws a connection between a heterosexist curriculum and the hidden curriculum, both in how social aspects of schools are based around sexual undercurrents (such as proms and student couples) and how explicit discussion of sexuality in schools will mostly focus upon heterosexual activity. Further analysis on what it means to exclude or hide homosexuality (such as denying same-sex couples the opportunity to purchase prom tickets together) and whether such a cycle can be broken needs to be conducted. The propensity on the part of censors to exclude any works that as much as represent LGBTQ people or issues (in any form) can be a way of uncovering the depth of heteronormativity in schools.

Barnard (1993) also identifies the existence of heterosexism in the classrooms and the way it infiltrates specific curricula. Though discussing college courses, I believe Barnard's insight can be applied to any educational environment and is present in much of the scholarship on educational heterosexism. His most poignant and transcendent points are for teachers not to assume that their students are heterosexual, to set an example by not using heterosexist language, and to provide access to LGBTQ texts. Given the patterns of censorship, teacher-selection and challenges in North American language arts classes, the censorship examples this study will

examine are, by Barnard's definition, heterosexist by virtue of the prevalence of LGBTQ textbooks being discarded. I assert this heterosexist trend is problematic because it does not allow LGBTQ students to have their voices heard or their identities visible in the classroom. This, in turn, leads to further consequences.

In the context of heteronormativity in science classrooms, Hoelscher (2012) reflects on how life sciences curricula are highly sexualized and rigidly gendered. Hoelscher points out that American biology textbooks often erroneously refer to hormones as masculine and feminine to simplify the complexity of those hormones for students to understand. Hoelscher explains that this strategy sends an exclusionary message regarding sexual orientation and gender. She promotes challenging and analyzing these aspects in science classes. What teachers, publishers, and administrators unknowingly do by perpetuating these uninformed assumptions is to further isolate LGBTQ students by not acknowledging gender as a spectrum, allowing only a black and white reality, of masculine and feminine, to exist. By using a heterosexist model to make material more applicable to students' understanding, the teachers re-enforce the message of heteronormativity, creating a situation in which LGBTQ students "either come out, lie, or remain silent" (Barnard, p. 51), the latter two situations meaning the students do not have access to the same opportunities of engagement as straight students. Although LGBTQ students may be able to understand this model like heterosexual students and learn from it without issue, there is still an implicit message of unwelcoming exclusion for their identities.

Hoelscher (2012) expands on the significance of heteronormative practices, describing the increased likelihood of LGBTQ students having suicidal thoughts and demonstrating the gravity of the problematic messages that teachers and administrators send to students, knowingly or otherwise. The message is that there is something wrong with these students for not being part

of the heterosexual norm. This message is communicated by teachers who assume that all of their students are - or ought to be - heterosexual (Barnard, 1993). Hoelscher does not identify a hidden curriculum but instead refers to a tacit, and perhaps unintentional, message that would certainly be part of the concept of the hidden curriculum.

Like Hoelscher (2012), Blackburn and Buckley (2005) claim that LGBTQ students are not the only ones negatively affected by these trends: heterosexual children are left to believe that LGBTQ communities have nothing to contribute due to the exclusion of LGBTQ ideas and voices, a clear example of the null curriculum. While such an outcome disadvantages LGBTQ students, it would also foster heterosexist views in heterosexual students. Epstein, O'Flynn and Telford (2001) describe how heterosexist pedagogies are not only at the expense of LGBTQ students but also students who do not identify themselves strictly as female or male. To elaborate, even students who are heterosexual, but might not comply with standard, conventional ideas of gender, may feel marginalized because they do not fit perfectly into these narrow gender roles.

Another issue that points to heterosexism is sexual scripting. Sexual scripts refer to what early adolescents are taught to act on, feel, and understand regarding sexuality and gender (Sapon-Shevin & Goodman, 1992). Sapon-Shevin and Goodman also mention that although sexual scripts differ between homosexual adolescents and heterosexual adolescents, these scripts are based on adolescents' early impressions of cultural symbols and social activities. The authors highlight the consequences of male and female sexual scripts being so rigidly separated from each other, such as the difficulty of maintaining platonic cross-gender friendships and how following such scripts can be isolating for individuals. Troubling still is how public school sexuality education encourages these scripts by not addressing their existence or critiquing them.

Relevant to this concern is the absence of discussing LGBTQ-related sexual scripts and even families: Lugo (2013) stresses that the prevalence of LGBTQ families "in our present society" (p. 65) must be acknowledged at the school level to avoid discrimination and to promote equity. I believe it is of great interest to research and analyze typical sexual scripts for LGBTQ students and whether or not such scripts are also prone to distortion based on the overexposure of heterosexual images inside and outside of school settings.

An important aspect of sexual scripts is that they are also taught to children outside of classrooms through social norms, expectations, and conventions. The notion of sexual scripting is described by Raskin (1986) as what every speaker of a language "has internalized…[as] 'common sense' that represents his or her knowledge of certain routines, standard procedures, basic situations and so on" (p. 42). One could ascertain that these commonsense ideas regarding everyday life can extend not only to sexual routines but also sexual identities and orientations. What is more intriguing, especially for my research, is where such commonsense ideas are disseminated: Brunner (1992) argues that children are bombarded with sexual stimuli through movies, television, music, and fashion, and most of this mass media defines heterosexual legitimacy for adolescents. Brezicki (2012) also mentions this point of how ideas regarding sexuality and gender are already fostered in students through multi-media, when he argues against the conventional censorship patterns in language arts classes. Both censorship scholars and heterosexism scholars advocate that teachers need to teach sexuality and gender critically to better guide students' ideas of sex and sexual identities.

Media Analysis

Media analysis refers to the analysis of media content and its various effects on audiences (Atkinson, 2012). Atkinson mentions how the importance of the media, and the accessibility of it

for analysis, has grown due to advancements of communication technology and the impact of globalization. Altheide (1996) points out that major news media are central aspects of popular culture and have influenced social institutions. Employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which I describe in the next chapter, means that I am able to utilize interpretative reading of sample media texts to expose dominant assumptions, ideologies, and values informing such texts (Atkinson, 2012). Through analysis of news media on censorship, one of the assumptions that my research interrogates, which I will describe in more detail in Chapter 4 (Analysis) and Chapter 5 (Discussion), is the presumption on the part of both the censors and those reporting the news that LGBTQ issues are too adult or inappropriate for school discussions.

Conclusion

What seems to be missing in much of the literature on censorship is a further critical analysis in which specific social groups are left out as a result of these patterns. Scholars such as Barnard (1993), Blackburn and Buckley (2005), and McLaren (1994) argue that the use of constructs work to privilege heterosexuality as a dominant identity over LGBTQ identities. In short, heterosexism and heteronormativity organize society through sexual regulation, expectation, and the normalization of heterosexuality and gender normativity. As social systems, I argue that heterosexism and heteronormativity are at play in much of the teacher-selection and censorship in language arts classes and that such practices constitute a form of hidden curriculum.

Kidd's (2009) insight into the biased nature of how censorship research is typically conducted provides an important entry point for examining socially informed motives for censorship patterns, enforcing a heterosexist curriculum. Anti-censorship scholars, such as Donelson (2001), Downey-Howerton (2007), and Viex (1975), overlook the existence of a

systematic set of social values informing consistent and traceable censorship patterns. Censorship practices that arise from a book's representations of LGBTQ people, families, and communities, open up the possibility of a heterosexist-hidden curriculum through the suppression of LGBTQ-relevant texts (Winkler, 2005).

Neo-Marxist perspectives on the hidden curriculum provide a useful approach for bridging these three concepts of my research (the hidden curriculum, censorship, and heteronormativity and heterosexism) because of their recognition of tacit messages in schools outside of the explicit curriculum; this helps explain the implications of both what is included in classroom libraries and what is excluded. Apple's (1975) discussion of the hidden curriculum and the nature of conflict is especially relevant to the different patterns of censorship since his conception looks into boundaries of legitimacy as well as the maintenance of a dominant point of view. This dominant point of view, as the literature suggests, has not favoured LGBTQ students or teachers. Giroux and Penna's (2011) assessment of the hidden curriculum and advocacy for overcoming the social engineering of the hidden curriculum lends itself well not only examining how censorship works but also for understanding how heterosexism and heteronormativity are fostered in the classroom.

Despite the disagreement between neo-Marxism and functionalism as descriptors of the hidden curriculum, both can be useful. The structural-functionalist description of the hidden curriculum defines students as "passive recipients," and such a model causes "students to accept social conformity and lose the ability to make meaning for themselves" (Giroux & Penna, 1979, p. 24). Many of the concerns Giroux and Penna mention regarding social justice are present in the consequences and patterns of censorship and heterosexist pedagogies. The premise, as described by neo-Marxists, that the hidden curriculum makes students passive conformists

allows the possibility that students are learning heteronormative and heterosexist ideas in schools and are not thinking about such ideas in any critical manner. This is quite dangerous and a reason why arresting a heteronormative-hidden curriculum is important.

Lewis and Petrone (2010) argue for teachers and administrators to incorporate novels relevant to adolescents in the curriculum so students can be engaged with relatable concerns and scenarios. The hope in drawing on such material would be to help guide students through the flux and identity-building period of adolescence as well as sufficiently engaging the students with more contemporary material they find interesting. While the censorship of books that appeal to students' personal concerns may not constitute a banking method of teaching I argue that by not only allowing works that engage students' interests, dialogue between students and their teachers is profoundly diminished. It is possible that reducing the meaning of dialogue in the classroom by itself leads toward a banking method of teaching to occur, since the texts that are available will likely not appeal to students the way the censored texts may.

Freire's (1970) perceptions of curriculum and critical pedagogy are also relevant to both heteronormative pedagogy and heterosexist censorship. As mentioned before, many of Freire's goals, such as facilitating consciousness of students for their own self-determinism, are stunted by contemporary censorship patterns that prohibit books that question authority (Delfattore, 1992; Winkler, 2005). The idea of open dialogue in the classroom that breaks from a purely teacher-centered pedagogy can be used for the aim of bringing awareness to heterosexism in class, interrupting heteronormativity in the curriculum, and exposing how censorship prevents such dialogue from taking place. By bringing all three areas (censorship, heterosexism and heteronormativity, and the hidden curriculum) of study together, I provide a deep analysis of the heterosexist-hidden curriculum in the selected examples of censorship.

In Chapter 3, I describe in detail the qualitative methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis that I use in my analysis. Chapter 3 also describes my methods of selecting subjects for analysis (those subjects being the novels and the news reports on examples of heterosexist censorship in schools). Lastly, Chapter 3 will provide an outline for my analysis in Chapter 4 and my discussion of the analysis in Chapter 5.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

In the first two chapters, I argued that heterosexism is at play in the censorship of LGBTQ-themed novels in language arts classes in North America, and that such censorship constitutes part of a larger hidden curriculum in schools that privileges and recognizes some students (straight ones) at the expense of others (LGBTQ ones). My overall goal is to identify the presence of heteronormativity in the hidden curriculum as it shapes explicit language arts curricula through censorship patterns. After doing so, I make recommendations for educators and educational policy makers for incorporating LGBTQ curricular content. Depictions of LGBTQ characters and families in school-assigned books are a constant source of controversy leading not only to challenges from parents but also to removals of books by school officials (Cart, 2010; Karolides, 2011; and Sova, 2011). In this chapter, I outline the qualitative methodology that I employ in analyzing the discursive contexts that enforce the heteronormative-hidden curriculum. These discursive contexts are analyzed in Chapter 4. This outline will also include the elements of the methodology and how the primary subjects were selected for analysis.

Methodology

The methodology that I employed is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Discourse Analysis helps researchers to look into the meaning of words and the struggle for meaning between discourses in a common language: discourse can be defined, for the purposes of this study, as language used in the social practice of not just representing but signifying and constructing the world in meaning (Lock, 2004). CDA is a way of interpreting and examining the use of discourse as a means to construct social, political, and economic ideologies through power and control (Fairclough, 1995; Macdonell, 1986; Rogers, 2004). Another distinguishing feature of CDA is its ability to illuminate how social problems are constructed through discourse. CDA

addresses these problems through analysis and through social and political action (Rogers, 2004). A CDA approach helps me to recognize and interpret a hidden curriculum since the hidden curriculum exists outside of what is explicitly taught to students and underlies actual censorship. The ability of CDA to interrogate social problems is likewise an asset when examining heteronormativity and heterosexist censorship. In general, censorship is often a mirror of social problems because it represents a conflict of ideas between the censor and the author, or the censor and the teacher, and CDA is a tool for examining such conflicts.

Rogers (2004) argues that CDA has great potential for research into educational issues specifically, but emphasises the need to understand the relationship between the form and function of language, form referring to the system of language and function referring to the use of language. The relationship between form and function in CDA, as Rogers alludes, is described by Gee (1999) as form-function analysis that analyses language and context: 'form' is used by linguists to describe the structure of language while 'function' is used to refer to the meaning meant to be communicated by a form of language. Gee makes sure to not make form-function analysis merely about language representing function and demonstrates how language, through elements of speech, such as tone of voice, can create or transform context or meaning. According to Rogers, CDA also helps to illuminate the historical basis that informs present-day practices and ideas, and the transformation and continuation of social roles, all of which aid in the analysis of power-knowledge relationships (such as those in education).

The reinforcing nature of societal norms and roles is an important part of social discourse since, like heteronormativity, it is difficult to recognise without close critical examination of language beyond face value. Rogers believes that CDA also plays a significant role in underscoring the relationships between texts and social practices. She points to the institutional

and societal discourses at play in the school classrooms. She explains that, because of the presence of these discourses, analysts can discover how cultural models of teaching and learning are reproduced while other opportunities are closed by the same discourse. In making her point about perpetuating cultural models and closing off others, she uses language that is very similar to that used by critical pedagogues, particularly when discussing the hidden curriculum. Examples of critical pedagogues are Apple (1975), Eisner (2002), and Giroux and Penna (1979). The research of these scholars examines the existence of social, political, and economic ideologies in school settings that, while not explicit, are meant to influence the thinking and behaviour of the students. A critical look at the pedagogies used in schools is part of my research since heteronormativity is not openly part of a school's curriculum or policy, but is nonetheless present.

Macdonell (1986) chronicles the development of Discourse Analysis and CDA in Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*, spawning Structuralism in the 1960s: Structuralists believed that language possesses a "common code, or general system of sounds and meanings" that works to "underlay the mass of spoken and written utterances" (p. 9). What would distinguish Discourse Analysis from Structuralism is that Saussure and the Structuralists ignore the existence of struggles and contradictions in such narratives and how language is imbued with power; Discourse Analysis applies not just to written texts but oral and media texts (Coulthard, 1977). Discourse is viewed by linguists and discourse analysts as an organized set of statements that articulate meanings and values of an institution (Rogers, 2004).

Locke (2004) also comments that the difference between CDA and Discourse Analysis lies in the word "critical," denoting power relations that are historically situated. He claims the word in the context of Discourse Analysis also implies that truths are generated by the values of

ideology instead of being neutral, the relationship between signifier and signified is not entirely fixed, oppression takes many forms, and mainstream research reproduces systems of class, race, and gender oppression. Researchers who use a CDA approach position their data or analysis in the social. In other words, they assume a political position explicitly, and utilize self-reflection in the process of the research.

Schollon (2008) clarifies CDA further by discussing action, or the mediation of social action, and actors in a text or document. This means that a text may be performing many actions at a time and these actions may change as the texts are used. He thus introduces the notion of mediated discourse analysis that narrows the actions taken by a text as the actions mediated by the texts. Relevant to my research, Schollon points to how texts that record or comment on public policy, such as newspapers, create complicated intertextuality that extends to other discourses. This intertextuality can then be appropriated by individual social actors through interaction. In my use of CDA, I conceptualize the selected newspaper articles on censorship examples (and the examples themselves) as mediators for social action and purveyors of ideological perspectives. The articles are not a simple product of the reporting of facts from the supposed vantage point of neutrality. These details help us to recognize the complexity of the newspaper texts as active in the social discourse. I contend that this same notion of intertextuality can be applied to the censored novels since their intended meaning usually differs from the meaning inferred by their censors.

Locke (2004) describes how CDA analysis can be used to interrogate print text, particularly newspapers. The widespread belief that journalists are objective can be rejected by utilizing CDA and allows for interrogation of biases presented in the news articles. He also mentions the use of symbolism in newspapers through their utilization of political cartoons and

headlines, establishing the existence of implicit information in the medium. The symbolic properties of newspaper articles are significant because the content of the news articles and the headlines that are chosen, in addition to any accompanying artwork such as cartoons or photographs, convey political and ideological meaning.

The issue of ideological conflict in discourse is mentioned by Macdonnell (1986) who references Althusser's theory of struggle existing before the creation of classes or individual ideologies: "no ideology takes shape outside a struggle with some opposing ideology" (p. 33). In other words, ideologies that may be opposed to one another are not created in isolation but in connection to one another. Related to my research on school censorship and the hidden curriculum, Macdonell states that education and culture intersect and ideological forms, particularly dominant ideologies, emerge from the intersection. This is related to my thesis since these examples of censorship, and the court cases that result from some of them, all display an intersection of ideologies and education, specifically heteronormative beliefs (such as Judeo-Christianity) of parents and school administrators that intersect with a curriculum that includes LGBTQ literature. The ways that educational discourses intersect and conflict with one another are reminiscent of how Apple (1975) describes the hidden curriculum as the use of conflict and compromise to create boundaries of legitimacy in school and to maintain order. Also, this idea of ideologies being born out of conflict is very interesting when considering the cultural significance of these examples of censorship.

Discourse Analysis is based on the position that certain events and phenomena are rooted in the relationship between the form and function of language (Rogers, 2004). Adding "critical" to Discourse Analysis, my research specifically applies CDA to texts (novels and news articles) to make a case for how such form and function relationships are associated with certain social

practices (like censorship and teacher selection) and keep them in place (Roger, 2004). In other words, the "critical" aspect focuses on the inherent politics of discourse. To explain Roger's point further and connect it to my research, social practices like censorship and their outcomes are ways of maintaining a certain status quo. In this example, a status quo includes the promotion of heteronormative values and assumptions. Roger mentions further that CDA can be used to study power relations in language and to reject the idea of neutrality (the idea that truth is free from bias), an essential concept when viewing how censorship occurs, what motivates it, and the reaction to these events.

Fairclough (1995) expands on Roger's definition of CDA by stating that this methodology can be used to study power and ideology in language. This use is appropriate for my research on text selection and censorship since the power and ideology in language determine the control, distribution and consumption of certain texts (Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough's view of how language can be used and the ability of CDA to uncover this activity are essential to my research on heterosexist censorship patterns since these patterns are examples of efforts to control the distribution and consumption of LGBTQ books as text.

Rationale for using Critical Discourse Analysis in My Research

The potential of CDA for excavating the complexities in language, particularly in examples involving conflicting power discourses, is rich as a methodology for analyzing the discourse of heterosexist censorship. CDA is useful for exploring why LGBTQ novels are commonly censored in schools, and how such justifications are offered as sufficient rationale for school boards to remove particular texts. The discourse on censorship can be viewed by the specific examples and the news coverage of challenges and removals and how these articles present the censors' arguments and the censored books' content. What makes CDA so useful in

research on ideological conflict and language is its treatment of discourse as a tool to distribute and maintain power and control (Fairclough, 1995). Another essential element to the methodology is its recognition of struggle in discourse as a way of creating meaning for language and words to serve an ideological purpose (Locke, 2004; Macdonnel, 1986). As my study is not only a reflection of societal elements in school but also social struggles, CDA serves a very practical purpose in that it manifests the view that social order and discourse are historically constructed and therefore subjective and prone to change (Locke, 2004).

Since censorship is a practice of excluding works from discourse (particularly in schools), that fact that CDA can be used to research what is excluded (Fairclough, 1995) is advantageous to this thesis. Observing what is not included would also be needed for establishing the existence of a hidden and null curriculum. Censorship, particularly of books, is among the most obvious examples of conflicting ideologies through discourse and, thus, CDA is invaluable when analyzing the books and news articles I have selected. The existence of censorship patterns, informed by ideologies, is an example of what Foucault (2003) refers to as power in discourse presenting a 'truth,' based on subjective premises, to stand in opposition to another supposed truth. This assessment of truth and power in discourse greatly parallels the suppression of LGBTQ-related literature on the basis of the supposed 'truth' that homosexuality is morally wrong and/or objectionable.

Fairclough (1995) specifically interrogates language arts classes for how they inform students of sociolinguistic elements of their environment, thus demonstrating the relevance of CDA to educational institutions. He describes the potential of language arts classes, particularly those that attend to political and social contexts of the texts that are assigned, to contribute to social harmony and integration as well as resolve some of the social upheavals relevant to their

students' lives. Fairclough's (1995) views on the ability of schools to impact the social context of the students differs from the views of hidden curriculum theorists such as Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, and Taubman (1995). On the one hand, Pinar et al., see the traditional curriculum of a classroom as a reproduction of a vertically aligned class system. Fairclough, on the other hand, contends that the view of social engineering through education, especially pertaining to class, is exaggerated because it does not consider the influence of other domains. For the sake of my research, I focus on the social engineering elements in the language arts classroom but Fairclough's points will be kept in mind in order to 1) understand the limits of the implications of such findings, and 2) consider the influence of other social outlets (i.e., news reports) on my topic.

Limitations of CDA

One obvious aspect of CDA is that it limits me to an analysis of text and language. Thus, I can only study articles and books as texts and cannot make statements about the author's or news reporter's philosophical and ideological standpoints, unless they state them explicitly. Another limitation is that I cannot speak in any authoritative way on how LGBTQ students actually feel as a result of these censorship patterns or from the typical absences of LGBTQ literature in schools. However, I can make educated guesses based on empirical research on the experiences of LGBTQ children and youth in schools, as detailed in Chapter 2. It is reasonable to assume that such children and youth feel marginalized by the lack of LGBTQ representation in schools. It would also have been advantageous to interview actual censors to better understand their motivations for banning LGBTQ material. One problem with analysing news reports is that they are not written by the censors and so what is written may not reflect their intentions.

Hammersley (1997) criticizes CDA for taking its philosophical foundations for granted, as if they are unproblematic. Hammersley suggests that by not analyzing its own foundations, the use of the word 'critical,' in CDA, is inaccurate. He also criticizes CDA for being too ambitious, stating that CDA practitioners claim to offer an understanding of society and how it functions. Others who subscribe strictly to science object to the subjective nature of the approach and how findings can either be contested or differ from those of others due to cultural interpretations (Atkinson, 2012). This particular critique emboldens Hammersley's criticism of CDA practitioners' supposed claim to understand society and how it functions as a whole. Despite these criticisms, there is much to gain from CDA, particularly as a tool to analyze power relationships in language. Censorship is an example of such a power struggle, conveyed through language.

Text Selection Procedure

My research analyzes a selection of novels and news articles. I developed separate criteria for each form of text. The eight novels are my first source and I created specific criteria to acquire this selection from hundreds of censored books. Specifically, I chose novels that have sparked controversy because of their LGBTQ characters, themes, and plots (or subplots), and have been primarily taught from grades seven to twelve in Canada and the United States of America. The reason to focus on novels assigned at the intermediate and secondary levels, as stated in the introduction, is the growing evidence of harassment, assault, and feelings of isolation reported by LGBTQ teenagers (Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz, & Bartkiewicz, 2010; Taylor & Peter, 2011). For this reason, books with LGBTQ content that have elicited censorship and controversy for their inclusion at the primary school level, such as *Daddy's New Roommate*, *Heather has Two Mommies*, *And Tango Makes Three*, and *King & King* (Lugo, 2013; Sova,

2011), and the examples and coverage of their censorship, are not included in my analysis. This is not to say that heterosexism and heteronormativity are not issues to explore at the primary and elementary school levels, but that I chose, instead, to connect my research concretely with the national studies of Canada and the U.S., respectively, both of which focus on teenagers instead of children.

The novels that I chose, based on the established criteria, are *The Perks of being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky (1999), *The Wars* by Timothy Findley (1977), *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank (1947), *Annie on My Mind* by Nancy Garden (1982), *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* by Bette Green (1991), *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini (2003), *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger (1951), and *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker (1982). While many of these are YA novels, such as *The Catcher in the Rye* and *The Perks of being a Wallflower*, other books, such as *The Wars* and *The Kite Runner*, were adult novels that were taught in secondary classrooms, as evident in the articles covering the censorship (Henry, 2011; Karolides, 2011; Sova, 2011). Also, while *The Catcher in the Rye* is marketed as a YA novel, the book was written with the intention of being read by adults (Rohrer, 2009).

The reason there are eight novels is that these were the only books that have both been taught at the high school level with regularity and censored at least once for containing LGBTQ content. Originally, I had intended to research ten novels since that number seemed manageable within the time constraints of this thesis. Through reading the data provided by the American Library Association (n.d.) and research on censorship provided by Carefoote (2007), Cart (2010), Karolides (2011) and Sova (2011), I found only nine novels that had some depiction of LGBTQ characters or themes and had either a history of being censored or one reported example of censorship for its LGBTQ content. A fair question regarding these eight sampled novels is

whether there are any school-assigned LGBTQ novels that have not been censored. While there are many LGBTQ YA novels that do not have a recorded history of being censored, such as Rosa Guy's *Ruby*, M.E Kerr's *Night Kites*, Pam Muñoz Ryan's *Riding Freedom*, and Jacqueline Woodson's *The Dear One* ("Books inclusive of gay family members," n.d.); Cart, 2010) there is no way of knowing if these texts were ever available in any particular school board.

The ninth, and excluded, novel is Patrick Mann's *Dog Day Afternoon*, a book that was removed from a Vermont high school, resulting in a lawsuit by parents and students (known as *Bicknell v. Vergennes Union High School*, 1980). Although *Dog Day Afternoon* would have been ideal for its LGBTQ-related premise of a man committing a bank robbery to pay for a sex-change (Mann, 1974), reports on the *Bicknell v. Vergennes Union High School* case never explicitly mention anything related to the book's LGBTQ themes or characters (evident in "Court upholds book ban right," 1979). *The Bicknell v Vergennes Union High School* case also seemed to be the only time the book was selected for a high school library (Karolides, 2011; Sova, 2011). A possible reason why the exact motivations of the censors are so muddled in the reports is because *Bicknell v. Vergennes Union High School* was also in protest of the removal of Richard Price's *The Wanderer*, a novel without LGBTQ themes (Sova, 2011). As a result, *Dog Day Afternoon* was removed from my list, leaving eight novels for analysis.

All eight of the selected novels have a recorded history of being censored for LGBTQ content. According to the American Library Association (n.d.), *The Color Purple* (1982), *The Kite Runner* (2003), and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999) have been the most frequently challenged books of the 21st century, and each book was at one point challenged specifically for homosexuality. *The Kite Runner* was banned in Afghanistan, the author's native country and the story's main setting, for its depiction of a same-sex rape scene ("Kite Runner Banned in

Afghanistan," 2008). *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) is a much older book but was subject to very high profile censorship not long after its publication (Sova, 2011). In 1977, *The Catcher in the Rye* was banned in the schools districts of Pittsgrove Township in New Jersey (Alvino, 1980). One of the people spearheading the call for a ban said the book was promoting premarital sex, homosexuality, and perversion and was therefore "explicitly pornographic" and "immoral" (Alvino, 1980).

Bette Greene's novel has several recorded instances of being censored. The most recent recorded example was a removal from library shelves in Horry County, South Carolina for being "educationally unsuitable" (Goldberg, p. 25). The decision to not reinstate the book was finalized in a 7-3 vote by the district school board (Sova, 2011). The book was also removed from a school library in Barron, Wisconsin in 1998, (Sova, 2011). In 1995, a teacher in New Ipswich, New Hampshire was dismissed for merely offering the book, along with two other LGBTQ novels, *Maurice* by E.M. Forster and *The Education of Harriet Hatfield* by May Sarton, as optional reading (Sova, 2011).

Annie on My Mind (1982) was one of the very first positive LGBTQ YA novels (Cart, 2010). It was censored from a Portland, Oregon school library in 1988, six years after its publication (Sova, 2011). The subsequent removal of *Annie on My Mind* in Olathe, Kansas led to a court case based on the infringement of freedom of expression and right to information of the students (Harper, 2010): Six students and their families in 1994 teamed with the American Civil Liberties Union to file suit against the Olathe County School Board for their removal of the book (Meyer, 1996). It was decided in December 1995 by a US District Judge in Kansas that the school board had violated the First Amendment of the US Constitution ("Annie Goes Back to

School," 1996). The novel was therefore allowed back into the Olathe County School Board library (Gross, 1995).

The Diary of a Young Girl (1947) presents another very interesting example of heterosexist censorship because its censorship pre-dates its publication. When Anne Frank's father Otto brought the book to a Dutch publisher, the editors of the firm decided to delete passages that were deemed "tasteless" and "unseemly" (Sova, p. 36). One of these deleted passages, along with her discussion of her menstruation, describes Frank's adolescent sexual curiosity toward her female friend (Karolides, Bald, & Sova, 2005; Sova, 2011). In 1952, the full manuscript was restored, leading to protests over the inclusion of the homoerotic passages (Karolides, Bald, & Sova, 2005). The same passages, describing Frank's curiosity of her body and attraction to other girls, led to a challenge to the book by a mother in Culpeper, North Carolina in 2010 (Chandler, 2010a). Other complaints against the book include its unflattering and grim depiction of the period of history and the supposed undermining of parental authority due to Frank's criticisms of her parents (Karolides, Bald, & Sova, 2005).

While Timothy Findley's (1977) *The Wars* has yet to be removed from any secondary curriculum in Canada, it was challenged in 1991 when a student in Lambton County, Ontario argued that school board officials should remove the book entirely (Henry, 2011). The student argued for the book to be removed because it supposedly promotes acceptance of homosexuality (Carefoote, 2007; "8 people have sought to ban The Wars in Canada," 2012). The specific scene in Findley's novel that sparked these challenges is an all-male gang-rape of a male officer serving in World War I (Cohen, 2001). Findley's editor was the first to pressure the author to delete the scene by telling Findley the passage could "get the book in trouble" (Cohen, p. 24). The scene likewise prompted a fellow Canadian fiction author, Margaret Laurence, to personally

contact Findley to question his choice of including the passage (Carefoote, 2007). Laurence had communicated her contention with the scene to Findley personally by asking "[t]ell me why it has to be there" (Findley, p. 142). Upon Findley's (2002) answer that the rape was a metaphor for how the men were unjustly conscripted to war, Laurence responded: "Yes, I agree with you. But surely that's implicit in the book already. You don't have to *say* so" (p. 142). Laurence herself had faced censorship for her book *The Diviners* in her hometown of Lakefield, Ontario in 1976 (Carefoote, 2007). In an interview, Findley expanded this metaphor by likening the challenge to his book in the Lambton school to an act of rape: "[the censor has] taken an event and hasn't seen through what the artist has done with it and intended by it" (Aitken, p. 91).

The second source for my analysis comprises articles published in major news outlets such as *The New York Times* and *Washington Post*, and online articles for television news channels, such as *CNN*, *MSNBC*, and *Fox News*. These news articles discuss significant, recent, and historical examples of censorship of the selected novels. A full list of these articles appears below as Table 1. I looked into the Canadian Broadcast Corporation (CBC) and found coverage of a recent incident of censorship, specifically of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999), but this example did not explicitly mention either the LGBTQ content of the novel or that the censor's actions were in reaction to such content ("Ban The Perks of Being a Wallflower from schools," 2014).

The examples of censorship described in the news reports are significant because they have already been discussed or identified by scholars such as Karolides (2011) and Sova (2011) as well as the American Library Association (n.d.). I found articles on censorship examples since the year 2000 mostly through search engines while reports on examples from the eighties and nineties were discovered in archives, either through the news corporation's website or on

microfiche. Smaller news outlets, such as *The Acorn Newspaper*, or the Cobb County, Georgia newspapers reporting on the censorship of *The Color Purple* (1982), were also used as they were local to the censorship controversies. Reports that clearly showed, via word choices or quotes, heterosexism or the heterosexist motives of the censors were selected for analysis. In total, I selected 18 articles for analysis (see Table 1). I did not include reports that were vague about the content of the novel and the motivations of the censors.

Table 1

Article Title	News Outlet	Author (if provided)	Date	Censored Novel
8 People have sought to ban *The Wars* in Canada	*MacLean's*	–	July 1st, 2012	Timothy Findley's *The Wars*
Students call for the removal of Findley book	*Globe & Mail*	–	June 6th, 1991	Timothy Findley's *The Wars*
Books with gay themes not allowed by Superintendent overrules panel's recommendation-s	Kansas City Star	Nicole Saylor	December 15th, 1993	Nancy Garden's *Annie on My Mind*
Both sides in trial want focus to shift	*The Kansas City Star*	Andale Gross	December 30th, 1995	Nancy Garden's *Annie on My Mind*
Boards loses fight over book pulled at Olathe School	*The Kansas City Star*	Matthew Ebnet	November 30th, 1995	Nancy Garden's *Annie on My Mind*
Beware society's moralists	*The Kansas City Star*	Laura Scott	December 17th, 1993	Nancy Garden's *Annie on My*

				Mind
School board shouldn't back down	*The Kansas City Star*	Charles Lambert	September 20th, 1995	Nancy Garden's *Annie on My Mind*
Book's gay theme protested Parents, others burn a copy of one at KC school offices	*The Kansas City Star*	Mary Sanchez	October 8th, 1993	Nancy Garden's *Annie on My Mind*
N. H. teacher in hot water again for using gay-themed books	*The Advocate*	–	April 1st, 2011	Bette Green's *The Drowning of Stephan Jones*
Teacher Becomes Target in Lesson on Intolerance: New Hampshire: Penny Culliton assigned books that included homosexual characters to try to balance negative images in other literature, such as 'Catcher in the Rye.' The school board fired her	*The Los Angeles Times*	Nancy Roberts Trott	November 26th, 1995	Bette Green's *The Drowning of Stephan Jones*
'The Color Purple' at the center of fierce debated in Brunswick County Schools	*Port City Daily*	Hilary Snow	November 5th, 2013	Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*
The Color Purple	*The Times News*	–	January 15th, 1985	Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

		James Alvino		
Is it book-burning time again?	*The New York Times*		December 28th, 1980	J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*
Parents take son out of school over controversial book	*ABC*	–	March 3rd, 2008	Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*
Explicit 'banned book' infuriates Virginia father, leads to school review	*Fox News*	Joshua Rhett Miler	October 9th, 2009	Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*
'Kite Runner' not appropriate	*The Acorn Newspapers*	Muriel Latta	April 26th, 2012	Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*
School system in Va. won't teach version of Anne Frank Book	*The Washington Post*	Michael Chandler	January 29th, 2010	Anne Frank's *The Diary of a young girl Girl*
Anne Frank's diary is back on Culpeper school's reading list	*The Washington Post*	Michael Chandler	February 2nd, 2010	Anne Frank's *The Diary of a young girl Girl*

There are hundreds of articles that I could have chosen given that censorship is not an uncommon issue covered by news media. However, I deemed relevant the 18 articles listed in Table 1 for the following reasons: 1) they mention either LGBTQ content of the novel or the heterosexist motives of the censor or censors; 2) they are from a major news outlet, such as a major newspaper or an online article for a television news channel, or a smaller newspaper that is local to the censorship example; 3) they describe the censorship of one of the eight novels

selected; and 4) each one conveys a transparent sympathy pertaining to either LGBTQ themes and issues in school or the topic of censorship in general. These transparent sympathies are found through the CDA approach of rejecting the idea of an objective truth in language. Whether sympathy is for or against censorship or LGBTQ inclusion is determined by the arguments, word choice, headline, and accompanying artwork of the news report.

Although analyzing the omission of the heterosexist challenges or LGBTQ content in other news reports would be compelling, pursuing such a trend would prove difficult and would not fit within the analysis of the 18 selected articles or the content of the novels. The reason why analyzing these absences would be difficult is because it would require speculation on the intentions of the reporter or editor of the article, which is out of the scope of this thesis. Because I am using a CDA approach, I have to analyze these news reports as texts and, so, examining the absence of LGBTQ themes in the articles would yield limited analysis. A concrete understanding of why the LGBTQ content was excluded would require an explanation from an official of these newspapers, which I am unable to acquire.

From 36 possibilities, the 18 chosen were the only ones that explicitly mention either the LGBTQ content of the book or the heterosexist justifications given by the censors. I found out about these news reports through reading articles in academic journals, such as *The English Journal* and *American Library*, that either referenced specific news stories or historic censorship examples. When researching examples of censorship, I first found out the geographical location of the censorship, then researched what the major newspapers were in those areas, and then looked through the archives of those newspapers, available through their website or through microfiche. For instance, when researching a recorded censorship example involving *The Color Purple* (1982), which took place in a school in 2001 in Cobb County, Georgia, I looked through

the archives of the two major newspapers in that area: the *Marietta Journal* and the *Atlanta Journal/Atlanta Constitution*. The reason why these two newspapers are not part of the selection for analysis is because none of the articles written for those two papers mention either the LGBTQ content of the book or the heterosexism of the censors. However, because *The Color Purple* (1982) has a history of being censored for its LGBTQ content, I continued my search until I found more appropriate articles that met the purpose of my thesis research. News reports that use vague terminology to refer to the exact details of the censorship or the novel were either rejected or used as points of reference in discussion, but not as a source for analysis. Although the news reports' omission of the LGBTQ content is significant, an analysis of this absence would be too speculative of the personal intentions of the news reporter or editor and would not fit within the analysis of the articles that do mention LGBTQ content. This process helped me trim down the 36 news reports I had found in my broad search, via search engines and archives, to 18 relevant news reports.

Once the reports were chosen, they were categorized by what relevant analysis could be extracted from them. Articles expressing support for the inclusion of the literature in question were analyzed for whether or not they discussed the right for LGBTQ inclusion in schools. Articles, regardless of sympathy, that did not condemn or at least question the heterosexist reasons of the censors exhibit complacence in heteronormative assumption. Reports with pro-censorship sympathies were analyzed as examples of the perpetuation of heterosexism and heteronormativity in schools since these articles tended to exaggerate and quote out of context or not use actual quotes at all in the coverage of the story ("The Color Purple," 1985; "Crusade on to ban controversial 'Wallflower' at Rockland school," 2011; Miller, 2009).

Situating Analysis on News Articles

Rogers (2004) stresses that, when analyzing texts for power, it is not enough to explicitly interrogate social problems organized through hierarchical powers. She also argues that challenging social problems, as they are described in discourse, requires observing the social and political contexts from which these texts emerge. It is thus important not simply to isolate the books that have been censored but also to examine the greater context and the social actions (such as news reports and selection practices) that allow these censorship examples to take place. Assuming that truth does not exist without bias, these articles can be analyzed as argumentation in discourse. Jackson and Jacobs (1997) assert that an adequate theoretical approach to argumentation in text should discuss both the arguments and the process forming the presented arguments. Expanding on this description of the appropriate use of argumentation, Jackson and Jacobs claim that an argumentative conclusion must be relevant, sufficient, and acceptable in their ability to connect the conclusions to the content. Articles with less overt sympathies and that do not present argumentation are nonetheless still subject to CDA and semiotic analysis given that language, particularly written language, is multi-modal (Kress, Leite-Garcia, & van Leeuwen, 1997).

The impact of the media is demonstrated by Shariff's (2007) example of how the proliferation of Muslim stereotypes in the news has caused "psychological and physical harm" (p. 35) to Muslim citizens in the United States and United Kingdom by influencing other citizens to believe or sometimes act upon these negative stereotypes. Shariff also mentions that copying censorship patterns of other schools serves to continue what she calls the ignorance upon which the original examples were based. Her assessment of the power of the media, combined with her assertion that mimicking censorship patterns only proliferates ignorance, are powerful reasons

why the eight censored novels and the 18 news reports of their censorship ought to be analyzed. To expand on this rationale, since Cart (2010) mentions that most news reporters writing on examples of censorship have not read the LGBTQ books themselves, the sensational nature of the columns may lead teachers and parents to believe the books are much more graphic or objectionable than they actually are. Also, by making sweeping presumptions about the sexual explicitness of the censored texts, based solely on their inclusion of an LGBTQ premise or character, the news reports communicate a zero tolerance for LGBTQ youth in schools and curricula that represent them.

The reason why reports on school censorship are relevant to my research topic is that their accessibility to the public gives these articles influence to spread further challenges and removals of similar works or the same novel in another district. I believe that there is a tremendous amount to learn through the use of CDA in the uncovering of both heteronormativity and a hidden curriculum. Collecting such articles and contrasting the claims in them to the actual novels in question, through a CDA approach, is an excellent way of exploring heterosexism in language arts classes in schools. Also, the exposure of these censorship stories is sometimes linked to other school boards and teachers performing self-censorship to avoid controversy (Aslup, 2003; Freedman & Johnson, 2001; Mercer-Krogness, 1996), thus increasing the chances of heterosexist censorship and a heteronormative hidden curriculum.

Approaching news articles, examples, and the novels themselves through CDA is likewise the best way, beyond the available scholarship on censorship, to expose the workings of a heteronormative hidden curriculum taking place in language arts classes through heterosexist censorship patterns. The instances of censorship are examples of how, as Apple (1975) argues, schools deal with conflict regarding the explicit curriculum and what these decisions

communicate to the students about the school's values. Beyond this, the removal of LGBTQ-related texts create an implicit curriculum in itself excluding acceptance of same-sex relationships while promoting heterosexuality and strict gender role separation as ideal. Analyzing particular passages of the eight censored novels gives an indication of the justification of these censorship patterns, exposing, more fully, the discursive contexts needed for these patterns to take place.

Considering the fear displayed in the reasons given by parents and school administrations, and on the negative impact these eight books were presumed to have on students' minds, these censorship examples and how they are reported are relevant for uncovering Eisner's (2002) observation of how the hidden curriculum fosters compliant behavior (the behavior in this case being heteronormative). I add that since some of the eight novels were made optional, such as *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* (1991) and *The Wars* (1977), rather than mandatory (Sova, 2011; "Students call for removal of Findley book," 1991), there is a very strong enforcement of heteronormativity in schools. I argue that what is also present in these censorship patterns is a desire to foster compliance with a heteronormative-hidden curriculum.

Examining news articles as cultural text also exposes some of the mechanics that work to keep heteronormativity, as the dominant ideology of sexuality in schools and society, in place. As mentioned by many scholars of sexuality in media and in institutions, such as Barnard (1993), Ferber, Holcomb, and Wentling (2003), and Hawkes and Scott (2005), ideas of 'normal' sexual behaviour and even sexual orientation are socially constructed ideas that are treated as though they are genetic or natural. CDA is essential to tease out and draw further attention to these subjective and language based constructions in discourse as they appear in these articles justifying the removal of the eight books. Gee (1999) asserts that meanings of words are situated

in specific social and cultural contexts that are not only transformed by those contexts but are used to transform those contexts. I feel these changing contexts pertain to how language and discourse are used to define sexual identities as normal or abnormal.

By demanding the removal of works merely for their depictions of same-sex relations or transgender identities, the censors attempt what Hawkes and Scott (2005) call "social construction of the sexual body" (p. 10). This construction works to determine social order for acceptable and unacceptable sexual behaviour as well as gender hierarchies. By not allowing anything that could be perceived as promoting LGBTQ acceptance, censors perpetuate a heteronormative context in schools that works to quickly stigmatize, if not eliminate, any deviations. Such censorship not only pertains to language arts classes, but also to ideas of sexual norms perceived by the general public since the censorship is covered by major news media. To expand on these sexual norms perceived by the general public, Hawkes and Scott describe their view of the Christian tradition, which they argue typically views sexuality as sinful and dangerous, as a source for why sexual interaction is viewed negatively, unless used in the context of marriage or reproduction. Though I feel Hawkes and Scott are perhaps oversimplifying sexuality in the Christian theology, their point on how sexuality is viewed in heteronormative society is nonetheless valid. It is through this cultural construction that homosexuality and LGBTQ issues and themes are uncritically looked upon as strange and immoral. In the censorship of these eight books, the censors make accusations that the novels supposedly promote homosexuality and present those accusations as justifications for the books' removals. By analyzing these examples through CDA, and with the scholarship on heterosexism and heteronormativity as further guidance, the subjective societal prejudice of such complaints is exposed so that recommendations for more inclusive curriculum practices can be made.

From the scaffolding provided by the methodology I have discussed in this chapter, and the methods I have described, the research question explored in this thesis is: *What are the discursive contexts in which heteronormative environments are enforced through these censorship and selection patterns*? My research seeks to identify the justifications for removing LGBTQ literature, how the censorship is performed, and what, specifically, is found offensive about such LGBTQ content. As stated before, there are two sources for my analysis (the eight novels and the 18 news articles) and each is analyzed separately to best stimulate discussion for answering these questions. The questions related to why the censors objected to LGBTQ content, how overt the content is, and how the censorship was performed, are used to guide my analysis of these two sources.

Conclusion

The heterosexist censorship of these eight novels provide examples of deep ideological conflict in language and discourse as well as the use of power and control through the media. Thus, the application of CDA is appropriate and essential for examining and making opaque the hidden heteronormative curriculum. These incidents of censorship are very explicit examples of the conflict of different discourses pertaining to control, power, ideology, and the production and consumption of text. The fact that these censorship examples are reported in major news outlets means that they have significance to the larger social discourse regarding enforcement of social principles related to sexual behaviour and how society views and acts upon such principles. Analyzing these reports and scrutinizing the details of the particular examples of censorship, using the questions I have formulated, is a necessary step for answering my research questions, and will hopefully lead to recommendations for addressing the heteronormative-hidden curriculum.

Chapter 4: Analysis

In the first three chapters of this thesis, I articulated and justified the utility and value of analyzing eight school novels that were subject to heterosexist censorship, as well as the reports of their controversies through a CDA approach. In this chapter, there are two sets of subjects being analyzed: the eight selected novels and the 18 news reports on the censorship of these novels. The analysis of the eight novels is done not only as a point of context for the complaints but also to establish that their inclusion will not necessarily be enough to improve school environments for LGBTQ students. One of the main reasons why inclusion of these novels would not be enough to eliminate heterosexism in schools is because not all the LGBTQ representation within them is positive. The fact that all the books, regardless of whether their LGBTQ depictions are positive or negative, were accused of promoting homosexuality displays an overwhelming distrust, on the part of the censors, of any LGBTQ content. The news reports are for understanding the justifications given by the censors in their challenges and removals of the books or to discover the sympathies in these reports regarding the inclusion of LGBTQ issues and themes in schools. These sympathies are important when addressing the prevalence of heteronormative assumptions in mass media discourse.

Source 1: The Eight Novels

My rationale for analyzing the novels as a separate source is twofold. The first reason is to establish an important part of the context for the second source, the news reports. Understanding the full content of the novels will especially be needed when discussing the trend of censorship made out of context (censors who have misinterpreted the text). The second reason is to establish that, despite the complaints of the censors, there is a plurality in the way LGBTQ issues are represented in these novels and the depictions are not always positive. From this latter

fact I establish that simply stopping heterosexist censorship is not enough to improve school environments for LGBTQ students who may feel marginalized. This is not to suggest that books depicting LGBTQ people in a negative or incidental light ought to be censored but that teachers should analyze such texts appropriately for the facilitation of an LGBTQ-friendly atmosphere in the classroom. Because all these books have been accused of promoting homosexuality, despite their nuanced depictions of LGBTQ characters, there is a very intolerant heteronormative atmosphere being enforced through these censorship patterns. After my analysis of the eight novels, I look at the news reports on the censorship of these books.

A Double Standard in the Eight Novels

I discerned a difference between the presentation of gay male relationships and lesbian relationships. Specifically, while relationships with gay males are presented as leading to violence, same-sex relationships between women or girls are depicted as vehicles for self-discovery and self-empowerment. While lesbian relationships are treated as indications of affection, love, and self-discovery, gay male characters tend to be connected almost directly to assault. For instance, in Timothy Findley's (1977) *The Wars*, Khaled Hosseini's (2003) *The Kite Runner*, and J.D. Salinger's (1951) *The Catcher in the Rye*, male characters are discovered to be gay by way of committing a rape or molestation. In the latter two novels, none of the same-sex acts depicted are consensual.

While gay sex does occur earlier in Timothy Findley's (1977) novel, and not as rape, the scene responsible for the negative attention paid to *The Wars* is the climactic sequence of the protagonist being raped by a group of his fellow officers ("8 people have sought to ban The Wars in Canada," 2012; "Students call for removal of Findley book," 1991). Findley writes, "He struggled with such impressive violence that all his assailants fell upon him at once...Fingers

dipped down through his pubic hair and seized his penis" (Findley, 1977). *The Kite Runner* (2003) also depicts same-sex rape, but of a young boy by an older male. In this scene, the victim is held down by the attacker's friends while he is anally raped. Hosseini's representation could especially be read as negative since the character who commits the rape is revealed later in the book to have grown up to be a child molester, possibly implying a connection, in the minds of some readers, between gay men and pedophilia. Although both scenes could be read as depictions of rape with sexual preferences aside, both scenes were accused of promoting homosexuality ("Students call for removal of Findley book," 1991; American Library Association, n.d.; Carefoote, 2007; Latta, 2012).

Apart from sexual violence, homophobia seems to be validated in other novels. In Salinger's (1951) *The Catcher in the Rye*, for instance, the story is narrated by Holden Caulfield, a teenager who indifferently and crassly muses about people who he thinks might be "flits" (p. 143) and "lesbians" (p. 143), the former a slur for gay men used typically by American teenagers during the 1950s (Costello, 1959; Salinger, 1951). Sleeping over at a former teacher's house, Holden awakes to discover the male teacher petting his head: "he was sort of patting me on the Goddamn head…When something perverty like that happens, I start sweating like a bastard" (p. 192-193). Upon reflection of the inappropriate touching, Holden questions if this teacher is a "flit" (p. 195). Although all three scenes in the respective novels are important to the arcs of the stories, each is very brief. While the homophobic messages of these novels are debatable, these passages imply that none have an agenda to promote acceptance of LGBTQ people, in any distinguishable way. Ironically, all three novels were accused by censors of "promoting homosexuality" (Alvino, 1980; Curwood, Schliesman, & Horning, 2009; Henry, 2011), a claim that belies the notion of "expert opinion."

What also exists among the novels with gay male characters is violence in the form of indirect reactions. In the *Drowning of Stephan Jones* (1991), the entire premise is related to the harassment, assault, and eventual death of a gay male character, Stephan Jones, by a group of teenagers (Greene, 1991). While the characters of Stephan and his partner Frank are not aggressive to anyone, they are constantly met with physical and emotional attacks stemming entirely from reactions to their sexual orientation (Greene, 1991). As mentioned earlier, many readers objected to the novel's treatment of Stephan as a victim (Crisp, 2007). It would be relevant to note also that there is no description of physical affection between Stephan and his partner. The only way the reader is informed of the nature of their relationship is when they tell other characters that they are "a couple" (Greene, 1991, p. 107). The novel does not so much promote acceptance of LGBTQ people as it simply condemns bullying.

Chbosky's (1999) *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, while depicting a far more sympathetic gay character than the aforementioned novels, nevertheless connects gay males to violent themes. Two teenaged gay characters, Patrick and Brad, eventually break up after their relationship is discovered by Brad's father (Chbosky, 1999). When Patrick confronts Brad about their distance, Brad calls Patrick a "faggot" (p. 150) in front of a group of other students. Patrick responds by throwing "the first punch" (p. 151).

In these last two examples, the gay male couples are separated through violence: Brad from Patrick because of a fist-fight and Frank from Stephan because of Stephan's violent death (Chbosky, 1999; Greene, 1991). This trend connects the novels with earlier forms of LGBTQ literature, in which LGBTQ characters meet tragic ends because of their sexual orientations (Cart, 2010; Horning, 2007). This pattern is compelling, especially given the complete absence of violence in the lesbian depictions of the other novels.

As opposed to the portrayal of violence in gay male relationships, depictions of lesbians, when such depictions were offered among the eight novels, are connected to self-acceptance and a sense of identity. Garden's (1982) *Annie on My Mind* and Walker's (1982) *The Color Purple* both depict female characters exploring their personal identities through same-sex relationships in an atmosphere of social oppression. Frank's (1947) *The Diary of Young Girl* is a non-fiction book but offers the same representation of same-sex desire in girls in similar circumstances.

Alice Walker's (1982) *The Color Purple* centers on Celie: a black woman growing up in rural Georgia who faces domestic violence and oppression in a male dominated household (Walker, 1982). While the main focus of the plot is the communication shared between Celie and her sister, Nettie, through letters, a large subplot involves Celie's fixation and eventual relationship with another woman named Shug, a former girlfriend of her husband. The earliest passage indicating Celie's lesbian, or perhaps bisexual, orientation is when Celie is bathing Shug. Celie narrates: "First time I got the full sight of Shug Avery long black body with it black plum nipples [SIC]…I thought I had turned into a man" (p. 49). Later in the novel, Celie describes becoming aroused while watching Shug dance. Celie then mentions "My little button sort of perk up" (p. 81). Shug reciprocates Celie's affection, as evident in their love-making scene on page 113. This scene is not extremely graphic, but Walker does use words such as "fuck" (p. 111, p. 112) and describes Shug kissing Celie's breasts. It is important to note that before they make love, both women express their love for one another verbally. Thus, their claims to love each other signify that their relationship is not only sexual. The two characters express their love for one another verbally again later in the novel, after they have decided to part, in a non-sexual scene.

The portrayal of Celie as a lesbian could be interpreted not as a message of tolerance for LGBTQ people, but as symbolic of a broader feminist gender critique. The author herself confirmed that Celie's sexuality points to an issue beyond the LGBTQ community: "If you love yourself as a woman, what's to prevent you from loving another woman? I think many women feel a sense of liberation about that part of the story" (Schultz, 2011, para. 13). Note that Walker does not say many lesbian or bisexual women feel liberation from the depicted relationship, but many women, implying that the message pertains to both heterosexual and LGBTQ women. What can be determined from Walker's depiction of same-sex relationships is that not only are lesbian relations healthy and acceptable, but that consensual sex between two women can be used as a symbol of self-empowerment for all women who are or have been oppressed.

Sympathetic and compassionate relationships between women are also found in Garden's (1982) *Annie on My Mind*. Liza, the narrator, is courted by a girl named Annie who had previous experiences with other girls. Until meeting Annie, Liza had not considered herself a lesbian but later reflects on how her affection towards Annie "made sense" (p. 101). The phrase "made sense" is repeated in this passage, emphasizing that Liza's relationship with Annie is genuine and also a moment of self-discovery, since Liza reveals in other contemplations of her sexuality that she was never interested in boys (Garden, 1982). This theme of self-discovery is continued when Liza remarks, "the more Annie and I learned about each other, the more I felt she was the other half of me" (p. 116). Like the same-sex relationship in *The Color Purple* (1982) the word "love" is repeated many times, especially once Annie's and Liza's relationship is discovered and they are in trouble. The use of the word "love" in both Garden's and Walker's (1982) novel is also a point of contrast with the novels about men, since love is never used to describe the same-sex relationships in four of the five books depicting gay male characters (Findley, 1977; Greene,

1991; Hosseini, 2003; Salinger, 1951). Garden's (1982) novel, like Walker's, is about women facing oppression and finding refuge or empowerment in same-sex relationships. Unlike Walker's, the oppression in Garden's novel is related directly to the characters' sexual orientations.

The same-sex content of Anne Frank's (1947) *The Diary of a Young Girl* is very brief but parallels Walker's and Garden's work in its connection to self-discovery. A little over a year after the Frank family has moved into their hiding place in Amsterdam, Anne records having lesbian fantasies in her diary. She writes, "Once when I was spending time at Jacque's, I could no longer restrain my curiosity about her body" (p. 159). Anne then writes how she had requested to touch her friend Jacque's breasts, how female nude painting such as the Venus would send her "into ecstasy," and then concludes her entry by stating: "If only I had a girlfriend" (p. 159). When Anne wrote this entry, she was only fourteen years old and adjusting not only to the new environment of the annex but also the changes to her body, such as her menstruation (Frank, 1947). Because this journal entry is connected with other musings by Anne Frank on her body and how she is growing, the entry can be read as a part of her own self-discovery. The depiction of her fantasies for other girls is also linked to *Annie on My Mind* (1982) and *The Color Purple* (1982) since she, like the characters in these other novels, is facing oppression (the Holocaust).

These female same-sex relations are also depicted more sympathetically than the male same-sex relations, mostly because of points of view of the narration. In all three of *Annie on My Mind* (1982), *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947), and *The Color Purple* (1982), the narration is from the point of view of a female lesbian or bisexual character. In *The Wars* (1977), *The Kite Runner* (2003), *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999) and *The*

Drowning of Stephan Jones (1991), the narration is not from any of the gay male characters. Also, not one of the gay male characters is the protagonist. Even in *The Drowning of Stephan Jones*, the protagonist of the story is a teenaged girl named Carla who is in love with the teenaged boy who would eventually kill Stephan Jones, the main representation of LGBTQ content in the book (Greene, 1991).

The central trend that I found in these books was a tacit message that while same-sex relationships for women and girls are important for self-empowerment and discovery, same-sex relationships between boys and men result in conflict, either through direct or indirect consequences of violence. In the examples of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999) and *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* (1991), violent consequences visited upon the gay male characters were in reaction to their same-sex relationships. While there are consequences to the same-sex relationships in *Annie on My Mind* (1982), the LGBTQ characters are not met with violence (Garden, 1982). *The Wars* (1977), *The Kite Runner* (2003), and *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) depict same-sex rape or non-consensual touching. While it would be fair to assert the scenes in *The Wars* and *The Kite Runner* are depictions of violence and not homosexuality, both have been cited by censors as promoting homosexuality ("Students call for removal of Findley book," 1991; Latta, 2012) and both books are chronicled by scholars as being censored for homosexuality (American Library Association, n.d; Carefoote, 2007). Another issue is that books dealing with female same-sex relations portray their characters far more sympathetically than books with gay male characters. So, while it is important to include books that acknowledge the existence of LGBTQ people and situations, the actual forms of representation, in some of the literature, needs to be problematized. For teachers and school officials, selecting LGBTQ literature is only the first step to break from the heteronormativity in schools or to make LGBTQ

students feel welcome. This is not to suggest that books like *The Wars* (1977) or *The Kite Runner* (2003) should be excluded but that their potentially negative depictions of LGBTQ people should be discussed in ways to promote accurate awareness and acceptance of LGBTQ communities and individuals.

Source 2: The News Reports

There is a dual purpose to analyzing these 18 news reports: first, to find the sympathies or apparent biases evident in the reports, as they pertain to the issue of LGBTQ themes in schools; and second, to access the details of the censorship examples to discern patterns and trends. Regarding the former purpose, I found that reports either expressing sympathy with the censors or against censorship in general often did not include a condemnation, explanation, or interrogation of the heterosexist motives of the censors. Other subtle ways of expressing sympathy for heterosexist censorship are through language choices like the repetition of the word 'homosexuality' (as seen in Miller, 2009). In some rare cases, reports did have sympathy for LGBTQ rights and were, by contrast, openly supportive and direct, evident in the discussion of LGBTQ rights and the issue of homophobia (as seen in Scott, 1993; Trott, 1995). Regarding the latter purpose of ascertaining details of the censorship examples, I discerned a consistent theme of censors arguing for age-appropriateness and a pattern of making inaccurate claims about the novels. Challenges based on age were found mostly within the reports or by the parents as justification for blocking student access to the material. Challenges made out of context are based on reports and challenges that do not describe the censored novel or novels accurately, either by exaggerating the nature of the LGBTQ content or misreading the material altogether. After discussing my analysis of these two patterns, I focus on the actual actions, including the removals of books, performed by the school board or district officials. While some of these

removals, reviews, and restrictions were in response to challenges made by parents, other examples reveal a deep heterosexism evident in the school administration, perpetuating an atmosphere of heteronormativity. Throughout this discussion, I refer back to the arguments regarding heterosexism and heteronormativity to best contextualize the relevance of my analysis.

Censors and Reporters associating "Homosexuality" with Anti-Social Behaviour

Although subtle, a noticeable trend among the censors and the reports of these examples is the association of LGBTQ content with violent, anti-social, and self-destructive behaviour such as rape and narcotic abuse. While it could be argued that the reporters are merely reporting the facts, not all of these comparisons include direct quotes from either the censors or other witnesses to the controversy. Even in reports that do include a close examination of the details, the fact that LGBTQ content is used as justification for the book's removal is not often examined or described as intolerance. By reporters acting as though homophobic reactions are more understandable than the representations of LGBTQ people in schools, discernible heteronormativity is perpetuated.

The noticeable trend of listing the word "homosexuality" next to other content deemed objectionable by the censor is found in reports on *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999) and *The Color Purple* (1982). This trend is often not displayed in a direct quotation from the censors but a summation of the novels' contents in the report. Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* was challenged in February of 2011 by parents of a student in Clarkstown, New York. Most of the complaints made by the censor, Aldo DeVivo, are directed at profanity and, like the parent in *Virgil v. School Board of Columbia County Florida* (1989), DeVivo connects his outrage to his Christian beliefs ("Crusade on to ban controversial 'Wallflower' at Rockland school," 2011). Although DeVivo and the other censor, Lorenzo Fortunato, mostly concern

themselves with the language and vaguely complain about the sexuality of the book, the news report lists the book's content as "deal[ing] graphically with teenage sex, homosexuality and bestiality" ("Crusade on to ban controversial 'Wallflower' at Rockland school," 2011, para. 5). Immediately, the report communicates an assumption that the depictions of homosexuality may cause offense since there is not a direct quote from any of the parents. What is especially problematic about this list is the word "graphically" since the LGBTQ content of the novel is confined to one same-sex couple and the narrator's sexual curiosity (Chbosky, 1999). The descriptions used in the book for these same-sex interactions and fantasies are "kissing," (p. 36) "fooling around," (p. 43) "make love," (p. 46) and "together," (p. 146) all non-graphic terms for sexual interaction. There is also a chapter in which Patrick, a sympathetic gay character, takes the narrator, Charlie, to a park "where men find each other…[and]…fool around anonymously" (p. 161). While this chapter alludes to a place where gay males engage in casual and anonymous sex, no details beyond "fool around" are used to describe any sexual activity.

This trend is also displayed in the first reported challenge to *The Color Purple* (1982) in Far West High School in Oakland, California in 1984, two years after its publication (American Library Association, n.d). The parents challenged the book for its "troubling ideas about race relations…and human sexuality" (American Library Association, n.d). While the troubling ideas of human sexuality casts a wide net that may not include the lesbian relationship, a *Times News* article, based in North Carolina, describes the book as "graphically depict[ing] rape, incest and lesbianism" (*The Times News*, p. 11). Three parts of this news article on the Oakland controversy are compelling: one, that it is being reported in North Carolina, far away from California; two, that there is no direct quotation from either the principal of the school or the parent issuing the challenge but an elaboration of the sexual content of the book; and three, that the report

speculates that the human sexuality depicted in the novel that may have been found troubling is "lesbianism," which is also listed beside two forms of sexual violence. In the novel, there is equal attention to detail in depictions of consensual heterosexual sex between Celie and her husband as there is in the depiction of lesbian sex in the novel (Walker, 1982), but the news article does not list those scenes, thus communicating to the reader that lesbian sexuality, despite being between consenting adults, is troubling. Because there is no direct quotation or even explanation for why the novel was challenged by the actual censor, the report has described these depictions of sexuality through only the source of the book, thus communicating a judgment that the book is by itself offensive, rather than that someone was offended by it. The reporting of this example in a different state shows how vastly the misinformation regarding school censorship can be spread.

This trend is most recently observed in a reported challenge to *The Color Purple* (1982), which took place in 2013 in Brunswick County, North Carolina (Powell, 2013). While there were students in opposition to reading the book, the controversy was started by a parent who e-mailed the school board to complain about passages that "graphically describe rape and incest and detail a lesbian encounter between two characters" (Snow, 2013, para. 4). This passage is not a direct quotation from the parent, but the *Port City Daily* report's summation of the censor's complaint, again associating homosexuality with sexual violence without an explanation or interrogation. There is an ideological clash apparent in this example, much like that of *Virgil v. School Board of Columbia County Florida* (1989) and the previously mentioned challenge of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999), because many of the parents who challenged the book identified themselves as Christians. Although this report is not as sensational, in its nature, as the report by *The Times News* in 1985, the emphasis seems to be entirely about censorship and the

students' rights to information. Nowhere in the article is there expressed concern about why the parents felt a "lesbian encounter" was justification for the book's removal or how such a complaint might ostracize LGBTQ people in the community. Since this news report lists passages with LGBTQ content alongside sexual violence as the censors' source of offense, without condemning such justifications, the message communicated in the article is that heterosexist and even homophobic viewpoints are more understandable than LGBTQ literature.

Sympathies in Newspaper Reports

In the reports on challenges and removals of the eight novels, particular sympathies are apparent. While some sympathize with the censors, often made evident by how the information is relayed (seen in Arnold, 2007; Campanile, 2003; Kean, 2009; Wagner, 2003), others sympathize with a student's right to access information (as evident in articles like Alvino, 1980; Chandler, 2010a; Chandler, 2010b). Often, the latter case is a report on banned books in general with a recent example mentioned as a catalyst to open the discussion (this trend is found in Alvino, 1980; Flood, 2009; Henry, 2011). What is of interest is that very few of the reports discuss the heterosexism and, at times, outright homophobia evident in these censorship examples. In fact, whenever complaints of same-sex relationships in the books are mentioned in the articles, they are often listed alongside other complaints about the book and then never touched upon for the rest of the report (such as Alvino, 1980; Chandler, 2010a; Chandler, 2010b; "Crusade on to ban controversial 'Wallflower' at Rockland school," 2011). Such news reporting contributes to galvanizing the effects of these examples beyond the specific school board in which the censorship takes place.

The sympathy in one article, reporting on the censorship of Chbosky's (1999) *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* in Virginia, is quite apparent by the title: "Explicit 'Banned Book'

Infuriates Virginia Father" (Miller, 2009). By referring to the book as "explicit" rather than "controversial," the report expresses judgment of the book's content. Other news headlines on the censorship of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* use the book's title rather than a description of it. The title also uses the term "Infuriates" to describe the father's feelings toward the book, a much more inflammatory word than displeases, serving to hyperbolize the content of the book and its ability to offend. What also distinguishes this article from others is the repetition of the word "homosexuality," which is written three times to refer to the parent's objection, the book's content, and the reason why the book was censored in previous examples (this repetition is significant as the article is roughly 1000 words long) (Miller, 2009). This repetition is in contrast to articles, of similar length, written by rival news corporations since they only refer to the "homosexual" content once or remain vague about the offending sexual content (as seen in "Ban The Perks of Being A Wallflower from schools," 2014; "Crusade on to ban controversial 'Wallflower' at Rockland school," 2011). Although the report does provide perspective on the teacher who assigned the book, as well as a professor who argues for the benefits of the book, the repetition of the word "homosexuality" and the absence of any discussion of LGBTQ inclusion suggest a heterosexist assumption of complete heteronormativity in schools.

One very curious example of censor-sympathy in a report actually states explicitly the assumption that LGBTQ representation does not belong in schools. In his article on the lawsuit against Olathe County School Board for removing *Annie on My Mind* (1982), Lambert (1995) mentions how the school district had to prove that their decision was not based on any religious or political disagreement with the book's LGBTQ content. The report then states: "Strangely, prevailing societal norms could actually damage a board's case if they were shown to have been an influence in the decision" (para. 10). This passage implies that religious or political bias

against LGBTQ people is the "norm" and that it is strange that these biases are not viewed as proper justification for the book's removal. Here, the report implies that if prejudice is socially common or perceived as normal, then any attempt to change or combat prejudice is strange. Just to make the sympathy of the statement clear, the report states that Superintendent Wimmer and the board members who ordered the book to be removed should be "congratulated for the stance that they have taken in this case" (para. 12). Applying the report's logic, the board could justify removing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* because they did not like black people.

Although most reports concern themselves with the censor's rights or the students' rights, very few express concern for the heterosexism in these examples. A *Los Angeles Times* article reporting on the dismissal of Penny Culliton for selecting *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* (1991) is one of the very few reports I came across that expresses sympathy for the students and teacher and also for LGBTQ communities. This sympathy is evident in the title: "Teacher Becomes Target in Lesson on Intolerance" (Trott, 1995). The word "intolerance," when reading the article in context, refers not only to intolerance for free speech but also LGBTQ representation, made evident in the extension of the title: "Penny Culliton assigned books that include homosexual character to try to balance negative images in other literature" (Trott, 1995). This article is also the only one I found, in my broad search of the 36 news reports, to mention the word "bigotry" (para. 24) to refer to the social discrimination many LGBTQ people face in their daily lives. Similar to the previous article on the Virginia father who challenged *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999), variations of the word "homosexuality" appear multiple times (twelve, to be exact) in the article. In contrast to the other article, however, the word is consistently used by Trott to discuss Culliton's workshop to combat harassment of LGBTQ teenagers or to discuss Culliton's and the principal's conflicting views on the subject (Trott, 1995). The repetition of the

words "homosexual" (para. 2), "homosexuals" (para. 6) and "homosexuality" (para. 7) is done as a way to challenge the issue of LGBTQ repression in schools. This article is also the only one out of the 18 selected to use the word "homophobia" (para. 11).

A similar article to Trott's, titled "Beware Society's Moralists," was published in *The Kansas City Star* in 1993. It reported on the burning of *Annie on My Mind* (1982) in Kansas City, Missouri. While the title's sarcastic reference to the censors is enough to establish the sympathies in the report, the important point made is in the statement: "Project 21 [the gay rights group that donated *Annie on My Mind* to the school] has an agenda, but so do those who try to force onto others their views of what they should read" (Scott, 1993). This point acknowledges that, while the group that donated the books may have promoted particular values, the promotion of heteronormative values and other values is constantly occurring anyway through book selection decisions. This comment in the *Kansas City Star* acknowledges that accusing LGBTQ rights groups and authors of having an agenda of influence is hypocritical in lieu of the censor's desires to preserve his or her own heteronormative influences.

Alvino's (1980) article likewise demonstrates sympathy against censorship, but not necessarily for LGBTQ literature. The article is titled "Is It Book-Burning Time Again?" even though the specific censorship being discussed does not actually involve any copies of *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) being destroyed. There is also a photograph accompanying the article of a group of Hitler Youths burning books during the 1930s. The photograph and the statement of book-burning are both unrelated to the event of *The Catcher in the Rye* being censored but serve to establish that the report is making a statement about censorship in general, with sympathies obviously against the act. Interestingly though, Alvino (1980) cites one censor who

says *The Catcher in the Rye* promotes homosexuality but never challenges the validity of this claim or condemns it as homophobic.

Challenges Based on Age and the Promotion of "the Gay Lifestyle"

This section provides some information to answer one of my specific research questions: what are the rationales of the censors for why LGBTQ content is inappropriate for use in school curriculum? The rationale of the censors provided in this section is that LGBTQ content is not appropriate because of the age of the students. While most of the reports do not provide an elaboration on this concern of age-appropriateness, others state that books with LGBTQ characters would model a "gay lifestyle," a term that is often used but never explained by the censors and rarely challenged in the news reports (Miller, 2009; "Parents take son out of school over controversial book," 2008; Trott, 1995). While the claim that books like *Annie on My Mind* (1982) and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999) are "promoting a gay lifestyle" is incorrect, it is obviously homophobic and also parallels the common trend of censors claiming that their actions are for the good of society (as observed by MacLeod, 1983).

Age of the readers is another issue typically causing objections. For instance, Chbosky's (1999) *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is often challenged by parents who claim the content of the book is inappropriate for their child's age group (as seen in "Ban The Perks of Being a Wallflower from schools," 2014). In 2008, parents of a 15-year-old male high school student in New Hanover County, North Carolina went as far as to take their son out of school in protest against the assignment of Chbosky's book ("Parents take son out of school over controversial book," 2008). According to the news articles, the parents felt that the topics of "drugs, alcohol, gay sex, date rape" should be reserved for more "advanced classes" than for their 15-year-old son's class ("Parents take son out of school over controversial book," 2008). The reaction of the

parents in this example reflects Apple's (1975) ideas of social conflict and compromise in schools; this example shows a drastic approach by the parents removing their child rather than have him receive ideas conflicting with the values of his family, caused by the curriculum.

The argument that Chbosky's book should be reserved for "advanced grades" does not satisfy all censors. For example, a Virginian father, John Davis, objected to the book being taught to his 16-year-old son in grade eleven (Miller, 2009). Davis, like the others, cited the book's "references to homosexuality" as a source of offense (para. 1). Davis was quoted as saying the book was not age-appropriate for anyone and described the book as "junk" and "pornography" (para. 7). Davis also accused the book and the teacher who assigned it of "corrupting his [son's] mind" (para. 7) pointing, rather clearly, to the trend of censors fearing that the literature and curricula will model unwanted behaviour and values to their children. This accusation also further demonstrates the heterosexist enforcement, by censors, to protect heteronormativity in schools by disallowing any possible deviations.

The full edition of *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947) by Anne Frank, including Anne Frank's same-sex fantasy about one of her friends, has also been charged with being too adult for young readership. Karolides, Bald, and Sova (2005) point to several situations in the 1990s when the book was first distributed in its full edition and faced censorship for its LGBTQ content, but then, as recently as 2010, a parent in Virginia objected to the book's LGBTQ content being included at the intermediate level (Chandler, 2010a). The complaint was launched by a parent in Culpeper County who found the entry "in which Frank describes having erotic feeling for another girl" (para. 8) troubling along with Frank's discussion of her genitals (Chandler, 2010a). This censorship is important as it led the county's director of instruction, John Allen, to decide not to use the latest edition of *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947) and for the school board to

discontinue its assignment of the full version of the book (Chandler, 2010a; Chandler, 2010b). Allen claimed that the older version of the book, in which the lesbian-related passage is excluded, would be assigned instead, pointing very clearly to heterosexist selection practices. It is also ironic that, while the narrative takes place during a period of mass genocide and a horrific war (Frank, 1947), these parents found the sexual musing of the narrator to be the most worrisome. These complaints seem to parallel those of Wagner (2003) who objected to the LGBTQ content of *The Shell House*, even though she admitted the depictions were not sexually graphic, but not its discussion of the horrors of World War I. Since this situation in Culpeper County, like the North Carolina censorship against *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999), caused the school board to hold committees to consider the removal of the book (Chandler, 2010a; "Parents take son out of school over controversial book," 2008), the implied message is that objections to LGBTQ content have power over the rights of students to access LGBTQ-themed literature. This trend sends a very unwelcome message to LGBTQ students, parents, and faculty members.

The censorship of Garden's *Annie on My Mind* (1982) was also justified because of age but the censors argued that the book was teaching young children to be gay. In 1993, parents and grandparents of children attending high schools in Kansas City protested the inclusion of the book. These protestors also expressed outrage that copies of the book were donated by Project 21, a gay-rights group (Sanchez, 1993). The protestors argued that Project 21 was trying to "seduce [their] son and recruit young men and women into the gay and lesbian lifestyle" (para. 8). Here, the protestors acting to censor and literally burn the book have elaborated on the argument of age appropriateness; they believe the novel promotes homosexuality or, as they put it, a "gay and lesbian lifestyle" to young children. The protestors' justification is not only

compelling because it clearly parallels the politically-motivated censorship trends chronicled by MacLeod (1983) but also because it erroneously refers to this singular lifestyle that apparently all LGBTQ people are assumed to lead. The principal who fired Culliton for her selection of *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* (1991) said he did so because she was also promoting "the gay lifestyle" (Trott, 1995, para. 12). This widespread misconception that all LGBTQ people lead a specific lifestyle establishes that ignorance of LGBTQ people needs to be corrected, as Project 21 had intended.

Challenges made out of Context

This subsection addresses another research question: *how explicit or overt the depictions of LGBTQ content have to be for the content to be deemed inappropriate for use by students?* It appears that censors determine the context and overtness of the content, since many of these censors and reports either exaggerate the sexual nature of the LGBTQ characters depicted or erroneously argue that there is a promotion of gay acceptance, even when the depictions of LGBTQ characters are quite bleak and negative. Expanding on the latter point, it would appear that some of these censors and reports do not acknowledge the nuances of the LGBTQ characters but only reduce them to their sexual orientations.

As mentioned earlier in the literature review, some scholars argue that censorship derives completely from a lack of knowledge of the content. I maintain that, while there are some examples of censorship that are not justified, most challenges are derived from a combination of distortion and a conflict of ideology between the censor and the literature in question. Within these censorship examples is an amount of misinformation on the part of censors who believed that three of these eight novels were promoting homosexuality though the books only incidentally include LGBTQ content.

Alvino (1980) reports that censors in Pittsgrove, New Jersey objected to *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) for its profanity and accused the book of promoting "premarital sex, homosexuality and perversion" (p. 18). The supposed promotion of homosexuality is used as justification to argue that the book is "immoral," "filthy," and "explicitly pornographic" (p. 18). While the heterosexism of the censors in this example is obvious, the lack of knowledge of the book's content displayed is astounding. The only obvious same-sex interaction to take place in the book occurs when the protagonist, Holden Caulfield, is non-consensually touched by an older teacher while sleeping. Other than that, the narration includes some crude references to "flits" and "lesbians" (Salinger, 1951) but nothing else vaguely connected to actual LGBTQ characters. In fact, Penny Culliton, who was fired for her inclusion of LGBTQ literature, reportedly wanted to counter the negative LGBTQ stereotypes depicted in *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), as well as other books, by selecting LGBTQ-friendly novels (Trott, 1995). To be clear, *The Catcher in the Rye* is explicitly mentioned as an example of literature depicting "negative homosexual stereotypes" (para. 5) in the report.

Like *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), *The Wars* (1977) was likewise accused of promoting homosexuality although its depiction of male same-sex interactions is violent and negative. In 1991, a secondary student in Lambton County, Ontario, argued that the book should be removed because it "encouraged students to accept homosexuality" ("8 people have sought to ban The Wars in Canada," 2012, para. 7). This statement stands out in stark contrast to the actual story, since the prominent same-sex encounter is a gang-rape of a vulnerable officer (Findley, 1977). *The Globe & Mail* (1991) reports that the student specifically pointed out the rape scene as offensive and then claimed that reading the book "pressures" (p. C5) her and other students to accept homosexuality. Since the student based her argument for the book's promotion of

"homosexuality" on the gang-rape scene, I argue that she has either read the book out of context or has failed to see the depiction beyond the presumed sexual orientation of the attacking officers. This student continued her opposition to the book by starting a petition to have it removed from the school board and acquired 155 signatures supporting this, but admitted that many who had signed the petition had not read the entire text. Pointing to the gang-rape as promoting homosexuality is similar to the parents, mentioned by Booth (1992), who felt a short story about the guilt of cheating on a test was encouraging students to plagiarize (Booth uses this example to demonstrate a censor's typical lack of proper context). This incident of censorship is an example of how misinformation and ignorance are spread, a trait of censorship Shariff (2007) has noted. The censor's misunderstanding influenced 155 other students to agree to have the book censored, even though they had not investigated the source material themselves. It is also strange the original censor believed she was being forced to "accept homosexuality" (p. C5) since the principal offered an alternative to the book ("Students call for removal of Findley book," 1991).

Another book accused of promoting LGBTQ acceptance is *The Kite Runner* (2003), although the book depicts its sole LGBTQ character in a condemningly negative light. While many of the challenges to the film and book of *The Kite Runner*, both in the United States and in Afghanistan, were in reaction to the rape scene ("'Kite Runner' stirs up controversy with rape," 2007; Flood, 2009), there is a definite ideological nature to these challenges. In a letter published by *The Acorn Newspapers*, an Agoura Hills, California media outlet, Muriel Latta (2012) writes that the "sexual issues" in *The Kite Runner* are inappropriate for a classroom and that "[i]t appears that the sexual behaviour in this book is being promoted as acceptable" (para. 4). She concludes her point by stating that the sexual behaviour depicted in the novel "may be against

the home moral standards of the student" (para. 4). The use of the word "may" leads me to assume that Latta is referring to same-sex relations rather than rape in general since rape alone would be an affront to the moral standards of any family. What makes her argument so troubling is that same-sex relations in the novel are only depicted by way of rape, thus any indication that either is being promoted seems farfetched. Reading the text itself, the character who commits the rape, Assef, has a friend who meekly objects to the act. The friend tells Assef before the attack: "I don't know…my father says it's sinful" (Hosseini, p. 80). Assef replies with "Your father won't find out" (p. 80). Whether the perception of sin is with regard to the act of rape, or the act of same-sex intercourse, is irrelevant; what is established is that the scene is meant to depict deception, a crime, and cruelty. Again, this challenge by Latta (2012) seems to be made with a lack of proper understanding of what is transpiring and communicates an understanding of any depiction of same-sex relations as sympathetic.

Actions by School Officials

This section provides some context to the third research question of how books are removed by the schools. While different districts makes it difficult to have a singular answer regarding how these removals are performed, it seems that there are commonly committees established to review a book when a complaint against it has been filed by a parent. For instance, the complaints lodged against *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999) by the parents in New Hanover County, North Carolina, caused the school's spokesperson to have the book reviewed by the school's media advisory committee and then the district's media advisory committee ("Parents take son out of school over controversial book," 2008). A similar committee was established for removing *The Color Purple* (1982) when it was challenged in Brunswick County, North Carolina, but this committee allowed student input (Snow, 2013). In other examples, the

school officials have acted as censors themselves and have acted unilaterally (as seen in Trott, 1995; Saylor, 1993).

The censorship patterns to *The Color Purple* (1982), for instance, led to the book's removal, or discussions of the book's removal in several schools (MacDonald, 2001; Joyner, 2001; Peterson, 2014; Powell, 2013). While there were less specific objections to the sexual content of the book, when it was challenged and subsequently removed in Cobb County, Georgia, in 2001, Alice Walker had speculated that the challenges were motivated by heterosexism and homophobia (Joyner, 2001; Labrise, 2012; MacDonald, 2001). The exact quotation Walker offers regarding the censorship of her book is as follows: "The lesbian nature of Shug and Celie's relationship was especially hard to bear for people who believe sex, like marriage, should only occur between a woman and a man" (quoted in Labrise, 2012, para. 4). Assuming that heterosexism was at the core of why the censors wanted the book removed, the compliance of the school officials in the face of these challenges gives a troubling precedent of how heterosexism and homophobia can affect a school's curriculum and book selection.

Within these censorship examples, there is a palpable atmosphere of boundary maintenance to eliminate anything, like Chbosky's book, that seems to challenge heteronormativity in schools. Davis, who challenged *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999) in 2009, had called for the dismissal of the teacher who had assigned Chbosky's novel (Miller, 2009). Although the principal of the school declined to do so, professional repercussions have happened as a result of heterosexist censorship. Penny Culliton, a teacher in New Ipswich, New Hampshire, was fired from her school board in 1995 for selecting *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* (1991), as well as other LGBTQ themed books, in her classroom ("N. H. teacher in hot water again," 2005; Trott, 1995). Culliton's dismissal was actually caused by a newly assigned

principal who also objected to Culliton's youth support group for LGBTQ teenagers claiming it was "a promotional workshop for the gay lifestyle" (Trott, 1995, para. 12). Although Culliton fought the dismissal and was eventually reinstated ("N. H. teacher in hot water again," 2005), this is an example of the heterosexist maintenance of a school's heteronormative-hidden curriculum. What is also ignorantly perpetuated in the coverage of this censorship is the idea that there is a single "lifestyle" that all LGBTQ people lead.

To give greater context to the New Ipswich principal's complaint, the entire premise of *The Drowning of Stephan Jones*, as previously mentioned, is related to the harassment, assault, and eventual death of the title character who happens to be gay (Greene, 1991). It is hard, therefore, to understand how the book can be interpreted as promoting anything other than tolerance. One of Culliton's students was quoted in summarizing the book's LGBTQ content by saying, "It was a guy and his life. It wasn't like saying homosexuality is good" (Trott, 1995, para. 7). The principal's discomfort with the incorporation of a book that only condemns violence against LGBTQ people is, therefore, quite disturbing.

One of the most notorious examples of heterosexist censorship by a school official is the removal of *Annie on My Mind* (1982) by Olathe County, Kansas Superintendent Ron Wimmer (Sova, 2011). Wimmer had removed the book from the school libraries against the recommendations of the school's review committee (Saylor, 1993). Wimmer claimed that he did so to create a proper learning environment and not "a place to deal with all the tough issues in our society" (para. 11). Considering that *Annie on My Mind* was distributed by a gay-rights group and is based on a lesbian relationship and how such relationships are perceived by society (Garden, 1982), it is fair to assume that Wimmer is referring to the LGBTQ issues in the novel. Wimmer's reported justification seems very vague and only perpetuates the idea that LGBTQ

themes and characters are inherently taboo regardless of context. The vague terminology of "tough issues in society" seems to be a way to screen the boundary maintenance to preserve heteronormativity in schools. In fact, what Wimmer has stated, perhaps unknowingly, is that a proper learning environment is heteronormative since the inclusion of an LGBTQ novel, according to this quotation, disturbs that learning environment.

The censorship of *Annie on My Mind* (1982) from the Olathe School Board not only attracted media attention but also political attention. Kansas Senator John Russel, in reaction to Wimmer's decision, vowed to introduce legislation banning schools from promoting or advocating "homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle" (Sanchez, para. 9). He elaborated on his pledge by paradoxically claiming "I don't think that public or private schools should become a platform for someone's agenda" (Sanchez, 1993, para. 9), ignoring his own heterosexist agenda, and the agendas of the conservative coalitions protesting the book, to maintain a heteronormative school environment. The senator's pledge to ban any efforts promoting LGBTQ acceptance in schools is the most obvious heterosexist enforcement of heteronormativity, though from a source outside the school. His pledge is also an example of what Schollon (2008) refers to as social actors appropriating intertextuality to extend to other discourses (in this case, the intertextuality of the newspapers covering the censorship to political and governmental discourse).

Despite Wimmer's rather weak justification for removing the book, others have pointed to a more direct heterosexist bias on his part. The parents and students who filed the lawsuit against the school for the removal claimed that Wimmer's actions were informed by a prejudice against the book's (LGBTQ) content (Gross, 1995). When federal Judge Thomas Van Bebber ruled that Wimmer's decision had violated the First Amendment rights of the students and teachers, he called it "viewpoint discrimination" (para. 2), suggesting that Wimmer censored the

book because he disagreed with its LGBTQ-friendly premise. Wimmer contended that he did not object to the book's content but wanted to answer the controversy that came from Project 21's donations (Gross, 1995). The removal of the book in answer to heterosexist demands for the book to be banned (or even destroyed) may not be personally heterosexist but is certainly complicit with heterosexism and is, therefore, a heterosexist act.

While not exactly a removal, another important example of school officials acting as censors is the censorship of *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947) in Culpeper County, North Carolina. This censorship is an example of teacher-selection that is highly heterosexist in its exclusion of the only LGBTQ-related passage of the book (Chandler, 2010b). Even though the book is based upon World War II and the Holocaust (Frank, 1947), the actions of John Allen, the director of instruction for the school board, communicate that lesbian behaviour, even in thought, is more inappropriate and offensive for students than mass violence (Chandler, 2010a). Again, I feel it is necessary to emphasize that the depiction of LGBTQ content is restricted only to Anne Frank's recorded fantasies and nothing else (Frank, 1947). Allowing such a small and brief passage to be overblown and controversial can send a very damaging message to LGBTQ children and others that even lesbian or gay thoughts are offensive and inappropriate for children to have. The fact that a girl having sexual thoughts for another girl is deemed more offensive to the censor than the violent actions of the Nazis in the book, compacted with Allen's decision to eliminate the challenged passage, sends a very confusing, heterosexist, and intolerant message to students.

Conclusion

Apparent in the analysis of these examples of heterosexist censorship is that the discursive contexts that reinforce heteronormativity are based on an immediate suspicion of any

form of literature that incorporates an identifiable LGBTQ character, subplot, or incidental point. Within these contexts is an assumption that any literature with explicit LGBTQ content is "promotional of homosexuality," regardless of how the content is presented. The spectrum of contexts regarding how these books are used in the classrooms is likewise very broad; while Penny Culliton faced professional reprisal for running a workshop to support LGBTQ teenagers, as well as selecting *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* (1991) (Trott, 1995), the mere presence of Garden's (1982) *Annie on My Mind* in the Olathe school library was enough for censors to believe it needed to be removed (Meyer, 1996). Also within these contexts, any representation can be argued to be too graphic, too adult, and even pornographic ("Ban The Perks of Being a Wallflower from schools," 2014); Miller, 2009). It is imperative to understand these contexts so that they can be mended and to make recommendations for confronting such heterosexism and heteronormativity.

The common rationale for why the censors' object to the inclusion of LGBTQ content in language arts classrooms is based on age-appropriateness: this explanation is justified by hyperbolizing the depiction of sexual content or claiming the book is modelling homosexuality to impressionable children. This answer is odd, and is premised on the objectionable idea of a singular gay lifestyle and the assertion that children can be influenced to become gay. What is likewise strange about these explanations, and leads into the next research question, is also how varied the depictions of LGBTQ content are: while *The Wars* (1977), *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), and *The Kite Runner* (2003) depict same-sex through sexual violence (a hard sell for the accusation of promoting homosexuality), the depictions of same-sexual interaction in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999) and *Annie on My Mind* (1982) are not explicit, and in *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* (1991) such interactions are nonexistent. While Walker's (1982) *The*

Color Purple does use profanity and detailed descriptions of lesbian sex, the same degree of attention is used for consensual heterosexual acts in the novel (for which the censors did not complain). What seems to be implied is that it does not matter how overt the LGBTQ content is because any depiction of it is enough for heterosexist censors to see it as a challenge to the heteronormativity in schools. These censors either exaggerate the sexual nature (if any) of the LGBTQ content or claim that the books are promoting a "gay lifestyle," a term that is never explained but rather treated as self-evident.

The manner of how the challenges are performed is interesting when considering the lengths some censors have taken: while some parents have written to the schools to protest a book, some have staged protests and destroyed the book in question (Sanchez, 1993), and in one example, two parents took their son out of school so he would not learn a book they found offensive ("Parents take son out of school over controversial book," 2008). All of these examples demonstrate how ingrained heterosexism is in school discourse and what lengths people will go to maintain that heteronormativity.

The way removals take place demonstrates an immediate reaction on the part of school administrators to avoid controversy, paralleling Apple's (1975) observations on how school actions are usually to avoid social conflict. In some of the censorship examples, the school administrators would put the challenged book through a review process that would include committees, librarians, and school consultants ("Parents take son out of school over controversial book," 2008; Powell, 2013). In other examples, such as the removal of *Annie on My Mind* (1982) from Olathe County, Kansas, removals were done in spite of the advice of school committees and were performed by only one person in authority, much like the *Farrel v Hall* (1988) case. In examples like the censoring of *Annie on My Mind* or the censoring of *The Drowning of Stephan*

Jones (1991), via the termination of the teacher who selected the book, the decisions of removal were eventually reversed, but these actions are nonetheless very indicative of the heterosexist discomfort for LGBTQ content in schools, especially since they were based on the person's opinion rather than an objective process.

The next chapter is the discussion of my analysis. What will be argued is the significance of the deeper implications of this analysis and why they are detrimental to language arts classes and the school environment in general. After establishing the significance of my analytical findings, I prescribe some general ideas on how school officials and teachers can better deal with this kind of censorship and how they can make a more inclusive atmosphere for LGBTQ students and families.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter, I contextualize the findings from the previous chapter and discuss their significance. Based on my analysis of newspaper articles on censorship examples, there are three significant reasons why heterosexist censorship should be viewed as unacceptable in schools: one, it perpetuates a negative stigma on LGBTQ people that can be harmful for all students; two, it discourages critical thinking and discussions for social justice; and three, it disallows inclusive representation of LGBTQ identities, families, relationships, and communities in the curriculum. While some of these censorship examples are relatively old, an interrogation of them, as precedents, still has much to teach us about making drastic changes for inclusion and equity in present-day and future school practices. After discussing these three reasons, I then provide recommendations for teachers and school officials to create more accepting school environments for LGBTQ children. The necessity of these recommendations is then emphasized by the possible consequences of not following them.

Perpetuation of Negative Stigma

The trend of schools removing books immediately following heterosexist complaints is highly problematic for LGBTQ students since this kind of censorship compels them to either argue for their right to exist or hide their orientations or identities. While some of these examples, such as the censorship of *The Color Purple* (1982) in Brunswick County, North Carolina, have led to councils being held to debate the continuation of the books (Powell, 2013), most of the censorship has been done to end any inclusion of LGBTQ conversations in schools (Chandler, 2010a; Chandler, 2010b; Miller, 2009). In the latter trend, school boards, districts, and the censors have subtly communicated that LGBTQ content is too controversial for schools attended by juveniles and adolescents, and that such controversy cannot be alleviated by rational

discussion. By not questioning the belief that LGBTQ content is too graphic or inappropriate for young students to learn, these acts teach students to have the same biased, heterosexist attitudes or to never question such attitudes.

Another point to consider is the double standard of how gay sex is usually referred to as being too graphic, even if there are equally or much more graphic heterosexual scenes in the same novel. In both *The Color Purple* (1982) and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999), there are detailed scenes of heterosexual sex but the same-sex scenes are the ones that are referred to as being explicit or graphic either by the censors or in the newspaper reports (as seen in "The Color Purple," 1985; Miller, 2009; "Parents take son out of school over controversial book," 2008). While the same-sex interactions in *The Color Purple* are arguably as detailed as the heterosexual scenes, the descriptions of heterosexual scenes in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* are far more drawn out and detailed than any of the LGBTQ content (Chbosky, 1999; Walker, 1982). The unfortunate message that news reports and censors convey through this trend is that same-sex sex is wrong or less wholesome than heterosexual sex. Such messages are not analyzed or interrogated. Rather, they are treated as a given. The newspaper reports discuss gay sex and LGBTQ characters in a way that suggests any mention of them is taboo or graphic. This is in contrast to how heterosexual sex is treated, perpetuating the idea that LGBTQ themes and characters are prohibited.

Undermining Critical Thinking and Social Justice

By censoring literary representations of LGBTQ people, censors and the school administrators perpetuate stigma of LGBTQ identities and relationships and the idea that such identities and relationships are not appropriate subjects for adolescents to learn about or to even acknowledge. Perpetuating this stigma is insulting to all students in general since they are in a

learning environment. By allowing heterosexist attitudes to dictate change in schools and override the considerations for LGBTQ groups, students are taught to avoid social conflict and that LGBTQ identities, families, and issues are insignificant.

More problematic is that students are taught that LGBTQ representations, in any context, are morally wrong. Censorship shuts down any discussion or debate from taking place regarding sexual orientation and the rights of LGBTQ people to be represented in schools. By not allowing discussions of LGBTQ rights in school, any lesson on social justice is limited and therefore problematic: generally, students are taught that while race and gender inequality and prejudice are wrong, such social equity and justice considerations do not extend to LGBTQ people. This is conveyed more through silence on LGBTQ issues than explicit declaration. This paradoxical attitude that social equity covers only discrimination based on race and gender but not sexual orientation is potentially confusing for students and could render any lessons for social change and justice limited (especially pertaining to the students' daily lives).

Need for Inclusive Representation

Not all of the eight novels portray LGBTQ characters positively: some novels have incidental inclusions of LGBTQ content [such as *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947)], while others portray their LGBTQ characters negatively [*The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), *The Kite Runner* (2003), *The Wars* (1977)]. The fact that all of these novels have been censored for supposedly promoting homosexuality, despite their differing depictions of such themes and topics, creates an intolerant atmosphere in schools for LGBTQ people. LGBTQ content and LGBTQ issues cannot be treated as so prohibited that students are not even allowed to access them or discuss them in an academic manner. For any curriculum to be inclusive of LGBTQ people, teachers and administrators not only need to include LGBTQ literature, but also need to

analyze them. Allowing teachers to select LGBTQ content in literature is just the first step; once the material has been included, such themes should be analyzed by students in terms of how the content is presented. A book such as *The Catcher in the Rye* has an incidental depiction of same-sex contact but is not marketed as an LGBTQ novel (Salinger, 1951) and should thus be interrogated for how it depicts gay men. It should be understood that just because the novel has a gay male character does not mean its portrayal of LGBTQ people is positive.

In order for teachers to create an inclusive environment for LGBTQ students, they not only need to select LGBTQ-related texts but need to teach them critically. Timothy Findley's (1977) *The Wars*, Khaled Hosseini's (2003) *The Kite Runner* and J.D. Salinger's (1951) *The Catcher in the Rye* all have the potential to perpetuate a negative view of male homosexuality, depending on how they are taught, since the homosexual relationships depicted in these novels all lead to conflict or negative consequences, either through the stereotypical association of gay men and pedophilia or the connection of homosexuality and violence. Teachers, especially of language arts, not only need to counteract this material with more positive representations of LGBTQ people, but they also cannot be afraid of discussing negative stereotypes in ways that advocate for more inclusive and positive representation. When students come across characters in novels that depict stereotypes, it is the job of the teacher to guide discussion on what is depicted so that students can think critically rather than absorbing the content in an improper context. This calls for additional education so that educators will recognize heterosexist and transphobic stereotypes to ensure the existence of positive representation in the classroom.

It is important to communicate LGBTQ inclusion in high schools not just for the education of the students but also for student safety. As expressed earlier, the period between the ages of 13 and 19 is not only the time when LGBTQ students are often beginning to become

aware of their identities, but also the period when they feel the most marginalized and vulnerable in schools (Luthanen, 2007; Taylor & Peter, 2011). Youth is a time when most people explore their gender and sexual identities and those who do not fit within a heteronormative environment need to feel welcome and to know that they are not alone. Yet, heterosexist censorship patterns are counterproductive for creating such conditions in schools. As shown in Chapter 4, what is more problematic about these examples is how the news reports sensationalize and take the LGBTQ content out of context and how these challenges are able to influence decisions, by the school board members, to remove or consider removing the books instead of defending them.

What is also problematic about these censorship cases is that a message of acceptance or tolerance of LGBTQ people is considered a justification, beyond reproach, for a book to be removed or restricted. These arguments by the censors are reflective of what Ferber, Holcomb, and Wentling (2013) refer to as the social creation of heterosexuality as the norm, and demonstrate how homosexuality is made to seem as different and strange. I make this connection because the censors do not feel a need to justify their complaints beyond asserting that these novels "promote homosexuality" (Alvino, 1980; Henry, 2011; Trott, 1995). Many of the censors do not seem to be offended by the way LGBTQ issues are presented. Instead, they are offended by LGBTQ issues being present, at all. Their evident refusal to see past a character's sexual orientation is a reduction of that character to merely their sexuality. Penny Culliton, the teacher in New Hampshire, tried to confront the negative stereotypes present in the novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), but was consequently fired by her principal (Trott, 1995). Culliton's dismissal was the result of her selection of *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* (1991) and for holding a youth group to help LGBTQ teenagers (Trott, 1995). The construction of heteronormativity through

language is an idea to be directly explored in language arts classrooms, not hidden, since it gives credibility to the importance of examining language and societal assumptions.

Recommendations for Teachers and School Officials

To fully commit to why these censorship patterns need to end and to support the education of teachers and school officials about LGBTQ identities, families, and issues, I offer some recommendations for addressing future challenges and preventing future removals. The first recommendation is to have an explicit policy supporting the inclusion of LGBTQ students and parents and confronts heterosexism in language arts curricula, specifically, and in schools, generally. By establishing such a policy, teachers will have a better idea of what they can select for teaching tolerance and acceptance, and also how they should discuss such material with students. Policy gives teachers a platform to validate and support such choices. Having such a policy in place will also mean teachers and school officials will have a procedural response for parents who complain about books that include LGBTQ content. In fact, the establishment of such a policy would inform parents proactively, even before the assignment of such literature, that LGBTQ students and their families will be represented in curriculum and instruction.

While some may perceive such a policy as giving "special treatment" to LGBTQ students, it is important to stress that, as a matter of equity, this policy counters heterosexist attitudes among staff, homophobic bullying among students, and acknowledges LGBTQ students, parents, and even teachers. Once explained in context, this policy would not be in conflict with the policies or practices of religious schools and boards. Some parents will refuse to see it any other way, but there is no reason why their particular religious beliefs should be privileged. It would be no different than having a policy against racism, sexism, or bullying. The policy could also be likened to multiculturalism in that it is the acceptance of human diversity

and conceptualizes homophobia as akin to racism. While this policy probably exists in a subtle way in most school boards already (Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz, & Bartkiewicz, 2010), it needs to be made explicit so that heterosexism and homophobia are established as unacceptable. Once such a policy is established and adopted, censors cannot challenge a book being taught in schools simply on the basis of its having LGBTQ content.

As an extension, language arts teachers need to be willing to acknowledge LGBTQ rights and issues in their classrooms. The obvious example is for language arts teachers to discuss issues of gender and sexuality when discussing novels such as the eight featured in my analysis, and to acknowledge and analyze heteronormativity in the media. Allowing for these kinds of discussions should not be looked at as promoting some false notion of a singular "gay lifestyle" but instead as acknowledging the presence of LGBTQ people in the community and the school itself. Also, this kind of pedagogy allows students to make the material relevant to their own lives or the world outside since LGBTQ rights are now a topic of worldwide debate (one example being the Sochi Olympics, which has served as a platform to discuss the suppressed LGBTQ rights by the Russian federal government, as seen in "LGBT activists hope to make the Sochi Olympics," 2014). Teachers should definitely not avoid positive and supportive LGBTQ curricular content and discussion in the classroom. Doing otherwise discourages student learning and sends the message that LGBTQ issues are inappropriate. The fact is that students learn about such issues anyway, outside of the classroom, and what they learn is typically negative, if not vitriolic. Thus, teachers have good reason to teach students that homophobia and heterosexism are forms of unjust social oppression.

What teachers should avoid is initiating a debate for students to argue for or against LGBTQ rights, inclusion, or representation in schools. Such debates do not make it clear that

heterosexism and homophobia are wrong and do not contribute to an atmosphere in which LGBTQ students or supporters are made to feel welcome since they would be arguing, essentially, for their right to exist. In fact, such debates provide a platform for the sharing of bigotry. As it is with race, bigotry has no place in educational activities such as debates.

My last recommendation is that teachers, principals, and school board officials need to make LGBTQ literature available in their classrooms and need to openly support those selection decisions. Novels such as *Annie on My Mind* (1982) and *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* (1991) were both written and published with the desired purpose for making adolescent literature more inclusive of LGBTQ people (Greene, 1991; Horning, 2007; Trott, 1995). These motivations do not seem to be understood by the censors or the school administrators who have removed these books. Understanding these reasons for the books' creation and selecting them for the classroom for the same purposes, teachers and principals can give united support for LGBTQ students and families, and would therefore lessen any internal conflict in the face of heterosexist censorship. This open support for LGBTQ material in schools also increases the opportunities for LGBTQ students to be positively represented and not systematically neglected or marginalized.

Consequences of Perpetuating Heterosexist Censorship

Treating LGBTQ issues as strictly forbidden while also discussing other forms of oppression, such as racism and sexism, students in high school are given contradictory lessons on tolerance and social justice. What makes this paradox so dangerous is that it potentially limits non-LGBTQ students' understanding of social oppression and does not teach students how to apply social justice considerations to similar circumstances. Likewise, allowing LGBTQ content to be removed, without explaining why the censors are offended by the content, communicates to students that LGBTQ people are to be approached with extreme prejudice. This may set students

up for further problems later on, such as when non-LGBTQ students graduate and enter post-secondary or other settings where they encounter advocates for LGBTQ rights as well as openly LGBTQ people. Some of these non-LGBTQ students will become teacher-candidates who have remained ignorant about or prejudicial against LGBTQ people and issues. LGBTQ students in schools deserve better.

What also must be considered is how a lack of policies against heterosexism can affect LGBTQ students. While my research has no way of determining if or to what degree academic success among LGBTQ students is reduced by these censorship patterns, it would be fair to speculate that, because LGBTQ content is considered inappropriate for a school environment, some LGBTQ people might feel hesitant to become teachers. Having openly LGBTQ teachers would be helpful to slow down and eventually stop much of the marginalization LGBTQ students feel in school but by protecting environments where heteronormativity flourishes, lessons about tolerance and acceptance of LGBTQ people are undermined.

Although the mandate of my research was not to measure how heterosexist censorship could impede LGBTQ students' learning opportunities, it is clear from the work of Taylor and Peter (2011) and Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz, and Bartkiewicz (2010) that most, if not all, LGBTQ students feel discomfort, to say the least, in schools based on how their orientations and identities are perceived by the faculty and other students. It is thus clear that there is a need for schools to be more inclusive of LGBTQ people, including representing them positively in language arts curricula. A central problem I have identified is how, in some examples, censors operate from their own prejudices. While Kosciw et al., and Taylor and Peter found that schools without a supportive LGBTQ structure tended to undermine LGBTQ students' feelings of safety, allowing

explicitly anti-LGBTQ practices to alter school curricula would, at the very least, not improve school contexts for these students.

Conclusion

The actions and implications of the censors and those who support them, hampers the education of all students by spreading misinformation about LGBTQ people and also denies the rights of LGBTQ families and students to be represented in schools. My recommendations to arrest both the censorship patterns and the damage they potentially cause is an explicit school policy for LGBTQ inclusion, teaching pedagogies and practices that confront heteronormativity, and an open support for the selection of LGBTQ literature on the part of both the teachers and the school board officials. The consequences of ignoring these recommendations or the implications of my analysis are a continuation, if not instigation, of LGBTQ marginalization in schools and the possible loss of relevance and understanding of any lessons on social justice and equity for all students.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

What I have found in my research is that the context of the LGBTQ representation in literature is irrelevant to most censors. In the selected examples of censorship in schools, censors are the ones who often dictate how the representations are perceived and their appropriateness. Censorship of LGBTQ-related novels, which are assigned in schools, creates a vast distortion about the representations in them and a spreading of misinformation regarding LGBTQ people. Because so many of these censors use LGBTQ content as their justification for banning particular books ("Students call for the removal of Findley book," 1991; Wagner, 2003), discussion, either in a class or in the reports, about why such content is so contentious is typically omitted. By shedding light on the elements of these examples, my research provides a platform for interrogating such attitudes and how to teach against them.

By analyzing two sets of subjects - the eight censored novels and the 18 news reports on the controversies - I was able to establish that, not only is heterosexist censorship often misguided (i.e. claiming a book promotes of LGBTQ acceptance when it has either incidental or negative LGBTQ depictions), but that inclusion of LGBTQ literature is not enough to arrest heteronormativity and heterosexism in schools. Looking past the exaggerations and misconceptions of the novels by the censors, some of the novels themselves reveal negative, incomplete, and even homophobic representations of LGBTQ characters, themes, and subplots. Teachers and school officials not only need to deflect heterosexist censorship in schools, but also need to be actively vigilant against heterosexism and heteronormativity in order to create environments in schools that support LGBTQ students.

My research puts into perspective the LGBTQ representations in these novels and dispels the basis for any argument that these novels promote any so-called "gay lifestyle." The only

novel, of the eight selected, that promotes acceptance of LGBTQ people is *Annie on My Mind* (1982), but by no means does it do so in a way that could possibly be at the expense of heterosexual people. It breaks the heterosexist belief that all people are, or should be, straight and the heteronormative assumption that same-sex relationships are wrong, immoral, or a sign of mental illness (Garden, 1982). It is also relevant to note that my research highlights the plurality of LGBTQ people and that there is no singular "lifestyle" they all lead, just as it is that there is no singular heterosexual "lifestyle" that all straight people lead.

Allowing access to positive LGBTQ literature in schools is not enough to break heteronormativity or to eliminate heterosexism. Teachers and school officials must also be willing to accept LGBTQ students and their families as part of the school community and must be willing to defend them and their rights to be represented when under attack by heterosexist censors and members of socially conservative religious communities and organizations. Evident in the reports on these examples is an attitude that LGBTQ content is enough for a book to be censored, and this attitude is rarely criticized or even challenged in news reports or, evidently, school officials who decided to retract or remove the material. Censorship is often made without reading or accurately understanding the material and so the response of school board officials to them cannot be reactionary but instead should be thoughtful, respectful, and educated. In the case of LGBTQ content, however, calls for censorship tend to be swift and determined. The consequences of such censorship are why challenges, selections, and removals in schools need to be addressed and analyzed.

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