Jesse Sosa

11/26/2018

English 112B

Annotated Bibliography

Dr. Mary Warner

Overcoming Death and Loss:

Young Adult Literature Dealing with Death and Loss, Specifically from Suicide

A sensitive subject to initiate a conversation about is death and loss, especially from suicide. An individual will stomach various types of deaths throughout their lifetime such as natural, accident, homicide and suicide. After a voluntary and conscious death, as with any other type of death, the emotionally distressed should consider seeking refuge in Literature for Young Adults, rather than other alternatives such as the consumption of alcohol, and other substance abuse. Therefore, the focal point of my annotated bibliography is the overarching theme of death and loss, specifically from suicide, especially amongst young adults in their last year of high school.

The centerpiece of my annotated bibliography is Matt De La Pena’s novel, *We Were Here*. Hopefully, Matt De La Pena’s novel can motivate adolescents to engage in the steps necessary to overcome their demons because the novel is about a troubled youth, named Miguel, who forges ahead in search of absolution from his past with two of his companions, including Rondell, and Mong. The novels protagonist, Miguel, lingers on negative aspects in his life, rather than positive ones. One of the unique issues the author grapples with is how to deal with the death of a sibling, and a suicidal death of a friend, he writes: “ I had to do just like the marine marching into war. Keep marching. Don’t think about it. Look at the sand. These are your orders. This is what you're supposed to do” (194). Sometimes an adolescents workload can seem unbearable from their day-to-day life, and internal or external stressors, but an adolescent most remember to continue to forge ahead without hesitation and not allow death, and loss to deter or discourage them. Miguel's trials and tribulations can teach an adolescent about death and loss, specifically from suicide. In other words, the purpose of presenting Matt De La Pena’s novel, *We Were Here* is to help an adolescent obtain a happy medium between their day-to-day stressors and daily life.

An adolescent will come to realize that hope can take physical form through the pages of Young Adult Literature. There are various novels for young adults about death and loss, specifically from suicide, including Matt De La Pena’s novel, *We Were Here,* Robert Cormier’s novel, *After the First Death,* Jay Asher’s novel, *Thirteen Reasons Why,* Susan Vaught’s novel, *Trigger,* Gayle Forman’s novel, *I Was Here,* Jeff Zentner's novel, *Goodbye Days,* Katherine Webber’s novel*, The Heartbeats Of Wings Jones,* Erika L. Sánchez novel, *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter,* Michelle Falkoff novel, *Playlist for the Dead*, and Cynthia Hand’s novel, *The Last Time We Say Goodbye* represents significant teaching tools that can benefit a young adult dealing with similar issues. These realistic fiction novels are only a handful of various other exemplary novels, which can empower and inspire adolescents who are enduring hopelessness and despair from death and loss, specifically from suicide.

Annotated Bibliography1. Hand, Cynthia. *The Last Time We Say Goodbye*. HarperTeen, 2016.

(Haven't read)

**A brief summary of the work (2-3 sentences)**

The main protagonist, Lexie, a mathematician striving to find a happy medium between her day to day stressors such as the aftermath of her parents separation, pondering whether she will be accepted to a private research University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and her brothers suicidal death, which she believes she could have prevented. She attempts to be strong by ignoring her feelings, resulting in a physical and emotional toll on her wellbeing. For example, Lexie is regretful and blames herself for the separation of her parents, and the suicidal death of her brother, which deters her from completing her daily workload.

**Reference:**

*Goodreads*, Goodreads Inc, www.goodreads.com/book/show/17285330-the-last-time-we-say-goodbye?from\_search=true. Accessed 26 Nov. 2018.

**A commentary/evaluation/critique of the resource (3-4 sentences)**

I read this book and I found it very exhilarating and suspenseful. *The Last Time We Say Goodbye* is a helpful book because the book highlights topics about suicide, divorce, and the gloomy emotion of guilt, which can teach an individual to utilize perspective-taking in ordinary life. Exeter Qualities three and seven best relate to *The Last Time We Say Goodbye* by Cynthia Hand. Lexie reflects experiences of adolescents, which isn't always the norm in literary canon, especially when it comes to powerful female protagonists. Hence, the story is narrated by eighteen year old Alexis who lingers with her guilty conscious as a suicide survivor and the intense ill will she feels towards her parents, yet she's able to withstand her predicament at the end of the novel. The theme of closure illuminates issues numerous adolescents experience such as suicide and divorce. Also the amount of resilience an individual must embody to face adversity to express forgiveness and acceptance. This supports the notion of emotional and intellectual growth through engagement with personal issues because the novel brings awareness to the suffering an individual endures during demoralizing circumstances, which enhances the ideas of death and loss, specifically suicide.

2. de la Peña, Matt. *We Were Here*. Ember, 2010.

(Have read)

**A brief summary of the work (2-3 sentences)**

*We Were Here* is well written and deeply heartbreaking story about young boys seeking redemption from their past. The novel focuses on two profound moments in Miguel's life, including the death of his brother, Diego and the suicidal death of his friend, Mong, which propels Miguel to make amends for his past actions and behavior.

**Reference:**

*Goodreads*, Goodreads Inc, www.goodreads.com/book/show/6234369-we-were-here?from\_search=true. Accessed 26 Nov. 2018.

**A commentary/evaluation/critique of the resource (3-4 sentences)**

Adolescents will identify with Miguel’s realistic voice and his struggle to come to terms with his guilt. Therefore, *We Were Here* emphasizes issues about suicide, camaraderie, and redemption, which can have a profound impact on adolescents, whether it be to help comprehend, or to help find closure during demoralizing situations such as death and loss, specifically from suicide. In some ways, the aftermath of Mongs suicidal death propels Miguel and his friend to form a strong friendship with one another.Exeter Quality four best represents the novel because Miguel experiences his absolute lowest point of his life, yet he never gives up on the grueling task of life. Miguel embraces his demons, maneuvering through the agony associated with death and loss, rather than allowing tragedy to discourage him from reaching absolution. This can inspire adolescents to utilize Miguel's experiences to learn and develop in their own lives because adolescents encounter similar issues to that of Miguel such as suicide and remorse.

3. Cormier, Robert. *After the First Death*. Laurel Leaf, 1991.

(Have read)

**A brief summary of the work (2-3 sentences)**

The novel focuses on three characters such as Kate, a high school student, Miro, a hijacker, and Ben, the son of a general affiliated with an anti-terrorism organization. All three main characters experience a violent situation, which can be the difference between life and death.

**Reference:**

*Goodreads*, Goodreads Inc, www.goodreads.com/book/show/869907.After\_the\_First\_Death?from\_search=true. Accessed 26 Nov. 2018.

**A commentary/evaluation/critique of the resource (3-4 sentences)**

Cormier’s book*, After the First Death* is a helpful book because adolescent readers might identify with characters from the book. For instance, Miro is determine on validating his manhood, Kate doubts her abilities, and Ben contemplates his own patriotism and bravery. Absolutely, these emotions of self-doubt, and self-validation are very common in young adults. Therefore, Exeter Qualities three and four are best represented in Cormier’s novel, *After the First Death*. Kate is a strong female character who struggles with self-confidence throughout the novel, which reflects experiences of teen readers. An adolescent can utilize this novel to learn about other social norms in others parts of the world because people like Miro who are pressured into becoming a child soldier never experience a typical childhood. In addition, readers can utilize Miro’s situation to learn and develop empathy in their own lives.

**4. Asher, Jay. *Thirteen Reasons Why*. Razorbill, 2011.**

(Haven't read)

**A brief summary of the work (2-3 sentences)**

The narrator, Clay Jensen is involved with day-to-day stressors, including the suicidal death of his crush, Hannah Baker. Hannah Baker commits suicide because of her own personal stressors, resulting in the creation of various heartbreaking, and intensely personal cassette tapes recorded before Hannah Baker's death. Clay is mentioned in one of the cassette tapes, which propels him to find out why his classmate committed suicide.

**Reference:**

*Goodreads*, Goodreads Inc,

www.goodreads.com/book/show/29844228-thirteen-reasons-why?from\_search=true. Accessed 26 Nov. 2018

**A commentary/evaluation/critique of the resource (3-4 sentences)**

*Thirteen Reasons Why* is a significantly helpful book to shed light on the topic of suicide and traumatic experiences adolescents face, including bullying and sexual assault. Perhaps, teachers can utilize this book as a tool to prevent youth suicide. For much of the book, Clay struggles against the after effects of Hannahs unresolved suicide death. Therefore, Exeter Quality seven best suits Asher’s novel because the novel conveys the horrors of bullying, sexual assault, and suicide, which has the potential to teach empathy about the subject matter and trigger an emotional and intellectual growth through engagement with their own personal life-changing situations, family problems, emotional difficulties, illness, and so on.

**5. Vaught, Susan. *Trigger*. Bloomsbury USA Childrens, 2011.**

(Have read)

**A brief summary of the work (2-3 sentences)**

The protagonist, Jersey Hatch comes from a supportive household and seems to have found a happy medium between his social life, and athletics. On the other hand, he attempts to commit suicide by shooting his own head off. Jersey Hatch must now climb an uphill battle to piece his life back together.

**Reference:**

*Goodreads*, Goodreads Inc,

www.goodreads.com/book/show/406084.Trigger?from\_search=true. Accessed 26 Nov. 2018.

**A commentary/evaluation/critique of the resource (3-4 sentences)**

*Trigger* is a heart-rending story of survival in the face of distress and discomposure. This particular book is helpful because it features an inspirational and insightful journey inside the psyche, heart and viability of a suicide survivor. Therefore, an adolescent can utilize this novel to learn and apply in their own lives because Jersey Hatch goes beyond a typical high school experience. In other words, an adolescent can learn about the long-term negative consequences of suicide, including physical health problems, depression, memory loss, and so forth, which can raise awareness, and stir up a conversation about suicide prevention. In conclusion, the book presents an exploration of Exeter Quality four in Vaught’s book.

**6. Forman, Gayle. *I Was Here*. Speak, 2016.**

(Have read)

**A brief summary of the work (2-3 sentences)**

A page-turner that combines death and loss, especially from suicide. This novel revolves around Cody's close friend who commits suicide by consuming a bottle of industrial-strength cleaner, which shocks and demoralizes him. In the novel, Cody attempts to figure out why his better half decided to commit suicide.

**Reference:**

*Goodreads*, Goodreads Inc,

www.goodreads.com/book/show/18879761-i-was-here?from\_search=true. Accessed 26 Nov. 2018.

**A commentary/evaluation/critique of the resource (3-4 sentences)**

*I Was Here* is a significantly helpful book that address an emotional story about the devastating effects of suicide on another individual, rather than the individual who committed suicide. An emotional read with frightening details about an online group of individuals that encouraged and convinced Meg to commit suicide. The ripple effects of Meg’s suicide raises awareness about suicide, depression, suicidal thoughts, toxic relationships, and social media. Therefore, the book initiates a conversation about suicide prevention because a parent should monitor their child's computer and cell phone activity to prevent family tragedies such as suicide. In addition, the book encourages people to speak up about another person's depression or suicidal behavior before it's too late. Thus, Exeter Qualities four and seven can be noticed in Forma’s novel.

**7. Zentner, Jeff. *Goodbye Days*. Ember, 2018.**

(Haven't read)

**A brief summary of the work (2-3 sentences)**

I have read Carver Briggs sent a text message to Mars, Eli, and Blake, resulting in the death of his friends. He’s unable to forgive himself for contributing in the death of his friends. In addition, other characters in the novel blame him for the deaths of Mars, Eli, and Blake, rather than letting him grieve in peace. In the novel, tension rises when Mars’s father, a well-known judge, opens a criminal investigation into Carver’s text message.

**Reference:** *Goodreads*, Goodreads Inc,

www.goodreads.com/book/show/30649795-goodbye-days?from\_search=true. Accessed 26 Nov. 2018.

**A commentary/evaluation/critique of the resource (3-4 sentences)**

*Goodbye Days* is a helpful book because it displays how to cope with social isolation and traumatic experiences. The book address one of the most traumatic and difficult situations an individual can endure in their lifetimes, but still manage to grasp a handful of hope to continue to live through the guilt of murdering a group of individuals. This novel encourages an individual to reevaluate their relationships with their family members, friends and so on because life is very unpredictable and it's impossible to know when someone is gonna past away. It also provides insight to those individuals struggling to move on from a demoralizing past full of pain. Therefore, Exeter Quality seven best describes Zentner’s novel.

**8. Hopkins, Ellen. *Rumble*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2014.**

(Have read)

**A brief summary of the work (2-3 sentences)**

This novel revolves around Matt’s little brother, Luke who commits suicide because bullies at school would stop picking on him, which causes him to commit suicide. Matt was a phone call away from stopping his brothers death, but he missed his brother cries for help. In the novel, Matt attempts to figure out why his brother decided to ultimately commit suicide through the examination of homosexual content in books.

**Reference:** *Goodreads*, Goodreads Inc,

www.goodreads.com/book/show/20726924-rumble?from\_search=true. Accessed 26 Nov. 2018.

**A commentary/evaluation/critique of the resource (3-4 sentences)**

I have read this book and enjoyed the entity of the novel. The book presents the Exeter Quality seven in Hopkins’s book. *Rumble* is a heartbreaking story that highlights the severity of bullying. Matt failed to pick up his phone when his little brother, Luke was bullied mercilessly to the brink of suicide because he was focusing on his girlfriend, rather that his suicidal brother. Therefore, a teen can utilize this novel to learn the risks and warning signs of suicide and how to prevent it. In other words, a teen can learn about the long-term negative consequences of disregarding signs of suicide, which can raise awareness, and ignite a conversation about suicide prevention.

**9. Sánchez, Erika L. *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*. Vintage Espanol, 2017.**

(Haven't read)

**A brief summary of the work (2-3 sentences)**

The tragic death of Olga has a profound effect on her family, resulting in her younger sister, Julia being shoved to the side, rather than checking up on her because she is broken, too. It's not long before Julia recognizes that her sister wasn't as perfect as everyone seems to remember her as.

**Reference:**

*Goodreads*, Goodreads Inc, www.goodreads.com/book/show/29010395-i-am-not-your-perfect-mexican-daughter?ac=1&from\_search=true. Accessed 26 Nov. 2018.

**A commentary/evaluation/critique of the resource (3-4 sentences)**

Julia is a rebellious female character who struggles with depression throughout the novel, which reflects experiences of teen readers**.** Julia endures the horrors of depression in the face of her sister's death and receives criticism from her family members for being different, rather than like her deceased sister, Olga. For this reason, the book raises awareness about suicide and depression through Sánchez’s literary work. An individual can learn about the importance of speaking inner truths and working through a difficult situation to prevent the long-term negative consequences of suppressing it all. In addition, communication is a very important aspect of a good relationship with either a family member, friend or partner, which can trigger an emotional and intellectual growth through engagement with their own personal relationships. Therefore, Exeter Qualities three and seven best describes this novel.

**10. Falkoff, Michelle. *Playlist for the Dead*. HarperTeen, 2015.**

(Haven't read)

**A brief summary of the work (2-3 sentences)**

The protagonist, Sam periodically goes through the motions, but all of a sudden his best friend, Hayden, was found dead. To figure out what happened, Sam utilizes a playlist created before Hayden's death, which propels him to listen to the entirety of the playlist to understand what really occurred to Hayden on that dreadful day.

**Reference:** *Goodreads*, Goodreads Inc, www.goodreads.com/book/show/17838490-playlist-for-the-dead?from\_search=true. Accessed 26 Nov. 2018.

**A commentary/evaluation/critique of the resource (3-4 sentences)**

*Playlist for the Dead* is a helpful book that parents, teachers, and siblings can utilize to prevent youth suicide. For much of the book, Sam is troubled after the suicide of his friend, and attempts to decipher her friends reasoning for committing suicide through the examination of Hayden’s playlist. Therefore, Exeter Quality seven best suits Falkoff’s novel because the novel conveys the horrors of suicide, which raises awareness about the subject matter and causes an emotional, and intellectual growth through the recollection of an individual's past or present life experiences.