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22 April 2019

LGBTQ+ Annotated Bibliography Rationale

The world is full of harsh realities for people who fall under the LGBTQ+ spectrum. As someone who falls under this umbrella, I know how isolating the experience can be, which is why I decided to choose the LGBTQ+ spectrum to focalize on for my Annotated Bibliography. I am extremely interested in canon formation as well, and the Young Adult LGBTQ+ literary canon is not even close to fully developed. Therefore, when choosing this topic, I had a younger version of myself in mind. What would help a younger, less developed me come to fruition? I have come to the conclusion that reading more books centered around LGBTQ+ issues would have sped up my development– and would make me feel a lot less alone. Doing this for the LGBTQ+ youth is something I am passionate about; I would be willing to continue this line of research outside of the classroom.

I have sifted through many Young Adult LGBTQ+ novels before choosing the ones I have included in my Annotated Bibliography. My main goal is to be intersectional within the community; I included trans identities, lesbians, gay men, and even protagonists with queer parents. My main goal is to let young queer readers know that their struggles with isolation, depression, self-harm/suicidal thoughts, substance abuse, and other repercussions are shared with many other LGBTQ+ people. In addition to queer readers, straight readers can also learn to be more empathetic to the struggles of queer people by reading the selected novels in my Annotated

Bibliography. Writers bringing visibility to these issues helps an entire community of young people feel less alone in a huge, dark void. I know this because I myself am gay, and while reading the novels I have read, they touched a part of me other novels can not. My aim in life is to help young queer people feel they have a space in this world; discovering a literary world entirely centered around their struggles is synonymous with giving them room to breathe in a world that keeps cutting off their oxygen supply.

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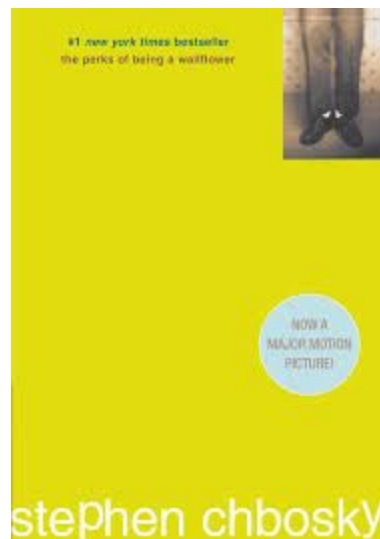
Professor Warner

21 April 2019

Annotated Bibliography:

LGBTQ+ Youth

Chbosky, Stephen. *Perks of Being a Wallflower*. New York: Simon & Schuster LTD, 1999.



(Have read)

In perhaps one of the most famous and pervasive young adult novels of this millennium thus far, many LGBTQ+ themes arise as a result of the more secondary characters, like Patrick and Brad. Patrick, the first of Charlie's high school friends, is gay and having an extremely private affair with the high school football star Brad. Brad's father found out about his relationship and beat him for it, hence why he is so compelled to hide his sexuality. In the midst of Charlie's daze from a pot brownie, he accidentally walks in on Patrick and Brad making out. Brad freaks out, but Patrick consoles him and talks to Charlie, who swears he will not say a

thing. After this confrontation happens, however, Brad calls Patrick “faggot” and attempts to fight him in order to display his machismo and dominance. Parents who disapprove of homosexuality can make young gay men deny their sexuality, which is an extremely relatable and common experience of internalized homophobia.

Winterson, Jeanette. *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*. Vintage Books, 2014.

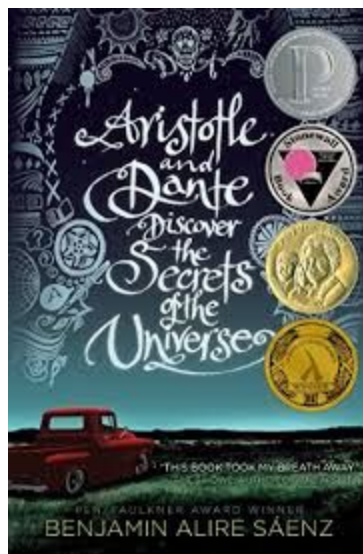


(Have read)

Jeanette, an orphan adopted into a Pentecostal home with the chief aim of growing up to continue her adopted mother's legacy of becoming a missionary, is a lesbian. Jeanette is also convinced she is destined to become a missionary; however, once she gets older and starts thinking about romance, she cannot help but be influenced by the loud and incessant disdain married women harbor for their husbands, and thus begins her discovery. Jeanette befriends and converts a friend she gains interest in, Melanie. They are caught in the act by Jeanette's mother, and taken to church the following Sunday. Melanie repents, but Jeanette does not think there is

anything wrong with loving women and being a Christian simultaneously. Jeanette then goes on to have more sapphic relationships, but in the future, she is caught in the act again. This time, the church performs multitudinous exorcisms on her. Exhausted, she leaves the church, and is in a sense excommunicated from her adopted family and community. Jeanette is all on her own for her upper teen years after coming out to a religious community, which is an extremely common thing for young gay people to undergo. Church communities are oftentimes unaccepting of homosexuality, and unfortunately, young gay children are cut off from everyone in their lives because of who they love. This book can bring comfort to LGBTQ+ youth that may have been cut out of a community due to their sexuality.

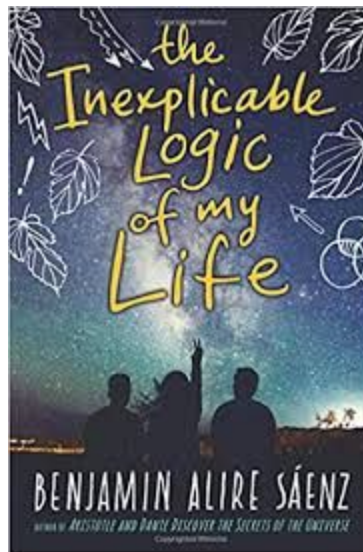
Sáenz, Benjamin Alire. *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. Thorndike Press Large Print, 2018.



(Have not read)

Aristotle and Dante... but not the ones you're thinking of. This is the story of two young boys growing up in El Paso, Texas in the late 80s. While they do not end up together, they experiment with gayness together, as well as straightness. Along with the LGBTQ+ aspect, there is a heavy emphasis on the benefits of a good friendship. From the extensive synopses I have read about the novel, *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* seems like a great read for any young individuals questioning their sexuality. This novel does not deal with explicitly gay individuals, but individuals who are questioning, which is a wide demographic of prepubescent teenagers.

Sáenz Benjamin Alire. *The Inexplicable Logic of My Life*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018.

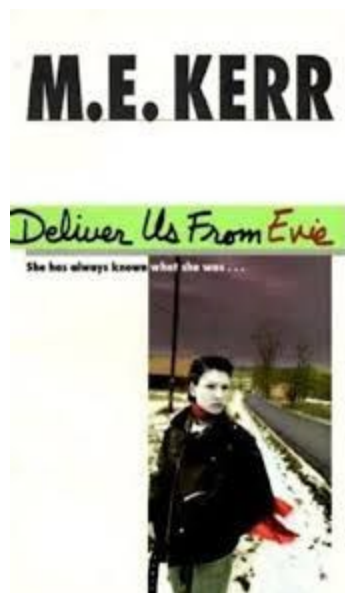


(Have not read)

This novel has a different plot than the majority of the novels in this Annotated Bibliography; instead of dealing with the sexuality of the protagonist, it deals with the sexuality of his adoptive parent. Sal's adoptive father, Vicente, a gay man, has been single since he took

Sal under his wing when his mother died. However, soon enough, Marcos, Vicente's ex-boyfriend, and Vicente get back together. Sal is now worried about trying to fight for his father's attention. Sal also faces terrible acts of homophobia when a kid at school calls his father "a faggot," which ignites a fight. This novel is beneficial for children or adolescents who may have gay parents themselves. When I was in high school, I had a friend whose parents were lesbians. Weirdly enough, this exact same scenario happened to him: someone called his mother "a faggot," and he punched them square in the jaw. Clearly, this novel could be of great assistance to young people with gay parents, to let them know they are not alone and that their parents are still capable of all the love in the world for their children.

Kerr, M. E. *Deliver Us From Evie*. HarperTrophy, 1995.



(In process of reading)

A young butch lesbian, Evie Burrman, from a rural farm town in Missouri is narrated through the lens of her younger brother, Parr Burrman. Parr follows Evie through her secret

rendezvous and dalliance with the more feminine but rebellious daughter of a rich and influential family, Patty. What is so great about this novel is the point of view from which it is told; a sympathetic family member. This novel explores the way in which homosexuality affects the loved ones surrounded by the homosexual at hand. The shame, violent homophobic acts, and escapism that comes with being gay is a widely shared experience of gay individuals; however, these things also affect those close to gay person. This novel is a great tool for young gay people to understand how being gay can also affect the people who are the closest to them emotionally and physically.

Kerr, M. E. *Deliver Us From Evie*. HarperTrophy, 1995.

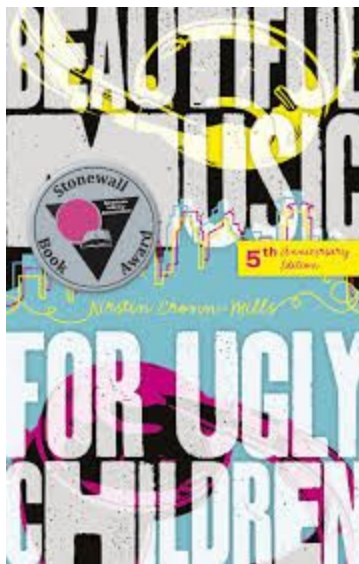


(Have read)

Created by Alison Bechdel, the woman who created the infamous “Bechdel Test,” this graphic novel/memoir is filled with plenty of LGBTQ+ appropriate content. The story focuses predominantly on Alison’s relationship with her closeted homosexual father, Bruce, who takes out his pent-up rage from this concealment on making their home perfect. Bruce also is very

distant to his family, especially his wife, whom Alison rarely sees being physical with her father. In addition to being distant, Bruce can be aggressively angry with his family. On top of the novel's discussion of Alison's father's closeted sexuality, the novel also deals with her own sexuality, which creates an amazing contrast between closeted and open gay people. Alison is a lesbian herself, and resides on the more masculine end of the spectrum. This graphic novel explores themes such as the affects, both negative and positive, that queerness can have on someone's life, including suicide, depression and other mental disorders. Also, it is an interesting combination of having a gay parent, as well as the protagonist being gay.

Cronn-Mills, Kirstin. *Beautiful Music for Ugly Children*. Flux, an Imprint of North Star Editions, Inc., 2017.

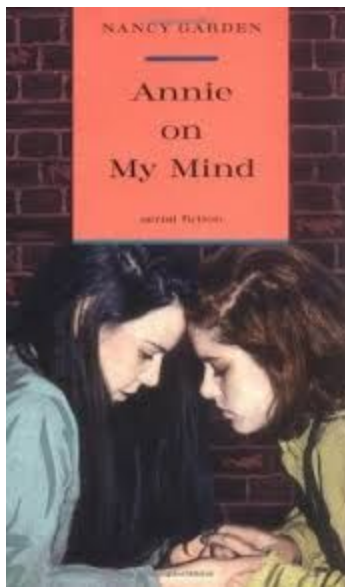


(Have read)

Beautiful Music for Ugly Children is the first novel on my list that is about a transgender identity. Born Elizabeth, turned Gabe, the transition from female to male has had its ups and

downs for him. Gabe is an ardent music lover, so he decides to start a public radio show called Beautiful Music for Ugly Children which gains popularity with his peers from his high school. However, issues arise for Gabe when bigoted kids from his high school uncover the radio DJ's duplicitous persona-- Elizabeth, the masculine lesbian from school. Gabe undergoes experiences of falling in love with his best friend, bullies, working a job he loves and trying to come out to his community as transgender. There is not much literary visibility for trans teens in young adult fiction yet, so this novel is a must-have for my LGBTQ+ themed Annotated Bibliography. This novel is a great way to understand the struggles of transgender people, both for cisgender and transgender readers.

Garden, Nancy. *Annie on My Mind*. Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2013.



(Have not read)

Annie on my Mind was written by Nancy Garden, who also wrote the article much of this Annotated Bibliography is inspired by, "LGBTQ Young Adult Literature: How It Began, How It

Grew, and Where It Is Now” in The ALAN Review. Liza and Annie, two high school students from New York, have polar opposite desires. Liza is from a wealthy family, and she is more inclined towards choosing a left-brained career and studying to go to MIT, while Annie comes from a poorer family with hopes to go to UC Berkeley to finetune her singing career. However, something brings them together; they end up falling in love with each other and realizing they both may be lesbians. A couple that operates as a foil are Liza’s teachers, two women together who live together in a Boston marriage, let Liza and Annie watch their house while away on vacation. Eventually, both lesbian couples get found out, and the consequences are heavy. This novel is good for any young people questioning their sexuality. It is also a good read for straight people who do not understand just how heartbreaking the consequences that being gay can bring upon homosexuals.

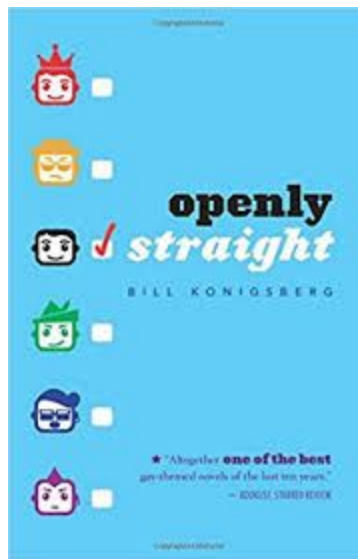
Denson, Abby. *Tough Love: High School Confidential*. Manic D, 2006.



(Have not read)

This graphic novel, *Tough Love: High School Confidential*, is based on Japanese manga. I learned about it through Garden's article in The ALAN Review; the novel deals with the struggles of young gay people. From what I have read, it seems to deal with gay bullying, and suicide attempts. The graphic novel approach is also handy for younger readers. Narratives that center around the pain of young gay adolescents is solely important, mostly because they are so relatable for young gay people. In addition to the relatability aspect, straight people can learn to empathize with gay struggles through novels such as this.

Konigsberg, Bill. *Openly Straight*. Scholastic Inc., 2015.



(Have not read)

Openly Straight is a great Young Adult novel that deals with role reversal of gay and straight identities. The protagonist, Rafe, unlike most of the books discussed in this Annotated Bibliography, has been openly gay since middle school. However, during when switching schools, he decides to hide his identity in order to have equal opportunity and not to be known as

the school's "gay kid." Konigsberg's approach of writing an LGBTQ+ narrative that does not focus on "coming out," but rather "staying in" is a hilarious and refreshing idea. This Young Adult novel puts this in perspective of how utterly ridiculous it is that gay people have to "come out" at all, and once they do, they are known as the model "gay kid."