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English 112B

1 December 2023

Rationale

When thinking about what brings people together we usually guess it's due to interests they share, but what if their common ground was their traumas? Living in a world where people are expected to have such an individualistic mindset towards others, adolescents are not taught to be as open to helping or be in communion with others, yet a lot of young adult literature shows a different perspective for teens to be able to be in communion with each other through their experiences. Within schools young adult literature doesn't always hold as much of an importance as historical or European literature, to which I don't believe is best for teens. Although I believe historical and European literature is beneficial for adolescents, young adult literature allows adolescents to relate and feel connected to the literature they are reading. It provides interest and shows the viewpoint of the world through a young adult's eyes, something most people don't always notice or care about. I believe young adult literature presents different ways teens deal with their traumas, and shows how universal trauma and pain comes from everyone. All adolescents deal with some sort of trauma or pain within their lives, and don't always know how to process it and often end up sheltering themselves away from others. Young adult literature can show them a different approach on how to deal with their trauma through relatability and comfort, and shows how to be in communion with others by having a common ground with others through their life experiences.

My central topic for my annotated bibliography is the different ways adolescents deal with trauma, and how they build relationships through their shared experiences with others. With the novels I present in my annotated bibliography I chose to follow the bases of chapters four, five, and six of *Adolescents in the Search For Meaning: Tapping the Powerful Resource of Story* as the novels I chose all have the common themes of real life experiences, death and loss, the search for one's identity, and dealing with self discrimination presented through the characters within each of the novels. Many adolescents have and/or are going through situations in life that relate to the themes listed above, to which the novels I chose could be books that they would feel connected towards as they relate to them. Having these novels within their lives can provide more of an insight on the ways they can process their own trauma. Being able to have a relatable character or situation presented to them as well as how the character got out of their situation could help the adolescents within their own lives. These novels can and have brought adolescents together through their similarities with their life experiences and trauma, just as the characters within the novels. Which is why I believe young adult literature should be held more of an importance within the schools curriculum.

Annotated Bibliography: Dealing with Trauma and the Relationships Built Through It

1. *Woven in Moonlight* by Isabel Ibañez

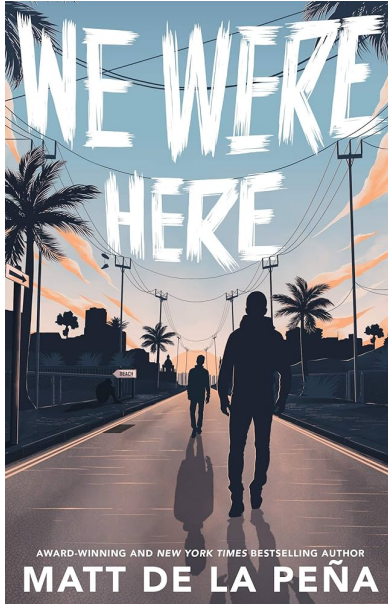


Read in 2023.

The Ilustrian people are under attack by an oppressing nation, the Llacsans. During this crisis the Ilustrians send a girl named Ximena on a mission to pose as their leader, and become the next Queen of the Llacsans, as requested by the tyrant king. Although she is against the Llacsan people, her perspective changes when she meets the princess and healer of the Llacsan kingdom.

Woven in Moonlight is an important and helpful novel because it shows the themes of identity, self discrimination and finding a way to be one's true self. Ximena is a character that would relate to adolescents as she deals with self discrimination due to her not being true to herself and pretending to be someone else. Ximena learns through her relationships with her "enemies" how similar their traumatic lives actually are and how they shouldn't fight but unite with one another. Due to the relationships she develops, Ximena becomes more comfortable within her own identity and chooses to unite with the Llacsan people against their tyrant king. *Woven in Moonlight* provides the knowledge of compatibility and communion being a strength while dealing with traumas, as Ximena's relationships with the princess and the healer of the Llacsan kingdom help her realize that everyone has trauma, and that they are not the reason for her trauma, but instead relate with her and help her deal with it.

2. *We Were Here* by Matt de la Peña

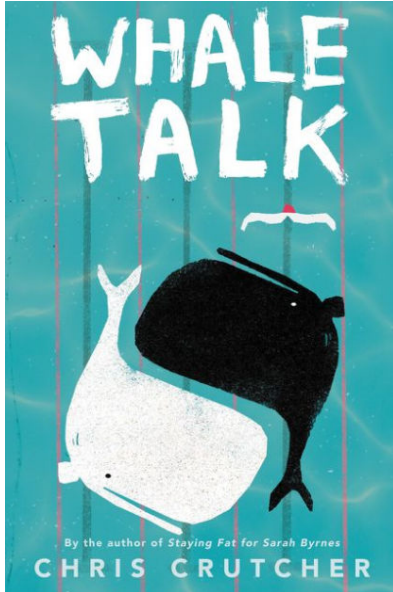


Read in 2023.

A boy named Miguel gets in serious trouble and is sent to a group home where he meets two kids named Mong and Rondell. They all decide to run away and go to Mexico where they believe they will be able to live freely. During this journey Miguel gains a different perspective on his life and the lives of others through unexpected events.

We Were Here is an insightful and helpful book as it shows the themes of friendship, loyalty, and trust within others. After Miguel's incident he shuts himself out and dissociates himself from the world, thinking that's the best option. Yet with the company of Mong and Rondell, Miguel starts to have a different perspective, in which he sees that everyone has skeletons within their closets and nobody is perfect. Miguel learns that what he had done within the past is not what defines him as a person. *We Were Here* provides the knowledge of how intense self discrimination can be and how the actions of a person does not define their true character and how they are as a person, as everyone evolves for their past selves. This novel provides young adolescents relatability and comfort in knowing that anything they might feel guilty or are burdened by does not define them as a person, it also shows them how important friendship and communion with others is as it helps individuals through their struggles.

3. *Whale Talk* by Chris Crutcher



Read in 2023.

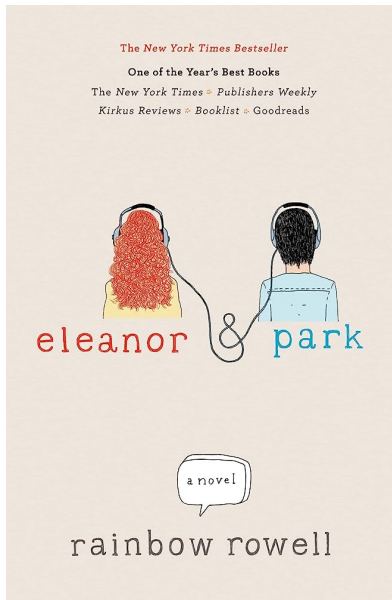
TJ, a young, black, talented athlete, who lives in a predominantly white city is determined to build a swim team at his high school. The boys he assembles for his swim team are the school's underdogs. During this process, TJ is exposed to the chaos of his peers and the harsh reality of their lives. Dealing with racism, abuse and violence, TJ obtains a different

perspective on his life and the lives of others.

Whale Talk is helpful as it shows themes of racism, violence, abuse, and grief. On the other side it also shows themes of friendship, belonging, and unity. The relationships TJ has with his swim team shows how important it is to have friends and unity with others, as it gives a sense of belonging to a person. There are many traumas of the characters that are told throughout the story and through those traumas TJ learns to be more understanding and compassionate towards people, even if he doesn't agree with the actions or like the other person. *Whale Talk* provides the knowledge of the process of trauma and the different ways people deal with it. This shows how being understanding and compassionate towards others is important, and how important friendship is as it makes those who are alone feel less alone.

4. *Eleanor & Park* by Rainbow Rowell

Read in 2019.

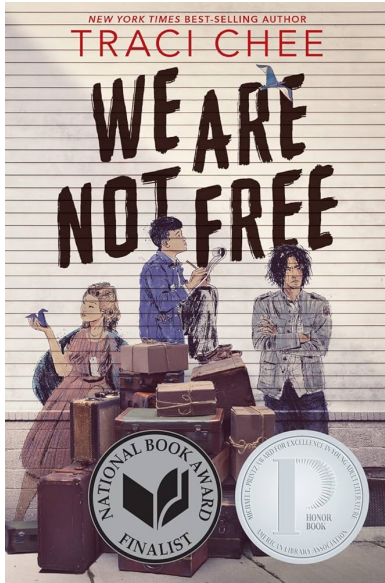


Eleanor is the new girl in town. Nobody knows her and she doesn't know anyone at the new school she attends. Park is the boy that grew up with everyone since elementary school. When Eleanor is forced to sit next to Park on the bus during their trip to school, they both didn't expect to connect through the exchange of comic books and cassette tapes, and the unexpected similarities of their lives that came with it.

Eleanor & Park is helpful towards young adolescents as it shows them two different perspectives and lives, while connecting them through their feelings and experiences. Both characters feel a sense of neglect yet Eleanor comes from a household where she's dependent on herself and has to take care of her little sister, and Park has two loving parents who provide a lot for him yet don't treat him and his brother the same. Although both Eleanor and Park are from different backgrounds, their differences are what brings them closer as they share the same feelings. *Eleanor & Park* provides the knowledge of how different livelihoods can have the same effect on people. Eleanor comes from a more rural background versus Park, yet they both help each other grow and feel comfort in knowing that someone else feels the same way.

5. *We Are Not Free* by Traci Chee

Have not read it.

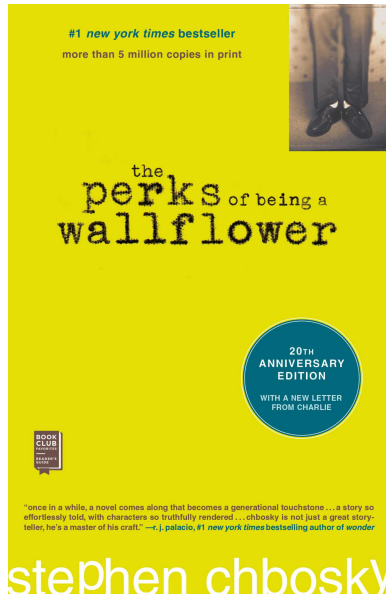


Fourteen teens who grew up together all have the common experience of being incarcerated during World War 2. Their lives turn upside down when they realize their persecution is based on their Japanese descent. They all try to stay together through the racism and injustice towards them that tries to pull them apart.

We Are Not Free is a helpful novel as it shows the importance of sticking together through harsh and difficult times. The fourteen teens built a family among themselves and tried to stay in communion as they knew they wouldn't be alone because they shared the same experience of being incarcerated. The novel is valuable as it provides insight of the harsh experiences these teens had to go through and how by sticking together they helped each other to get through this traumatic experience. *We Are Not Free* provides the knowledge of how important it is to stick together and be there for others through hard and traumatic times, as it gives comfort and strength to those in need.

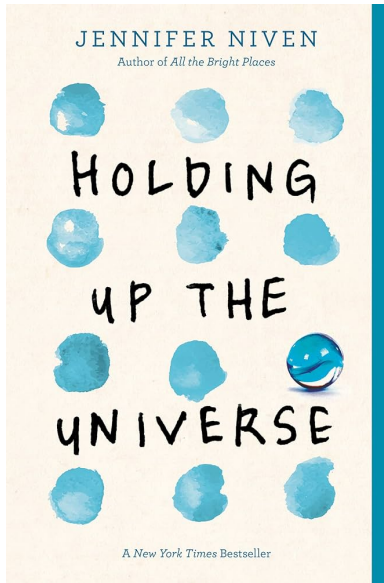
6. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky

Read in 2023.



Charlie, a 15 year old boy, is starting his first year back in public high school. He meets Sam and Patrick, two seniors who become his friends throughout the year. Charlie meets many people through Sam and Patrick's friend group, and begins to feel like he belongs somewhere.

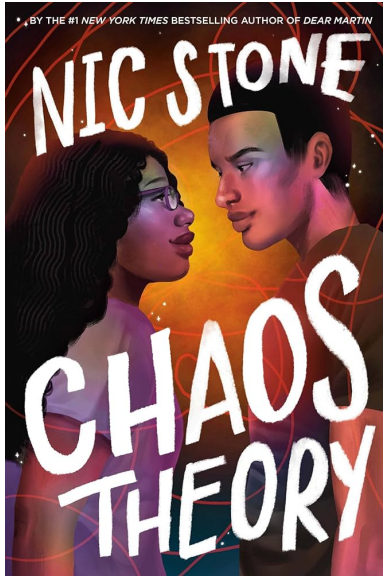
The Perks of Being a Wallflower is a helpful novel because it shows the importance of mental health and having people who are for your best interest within your life. Charlie deals with PTSD from his traumatic experience of the loss of his Aunt and best friend, and his realization of his Aunt being inappropriate with him at a young age. Sam and Patrick are accepting of him because he is respectful and accepting towards them. They provide a safe space for him to grow and find his identity. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* provides the knowledge of how important healthy friendships are towards people and how much they can affect a person who might be going through something. Just as Sam and Patrick were welcoming towards Charlie, young adolescents could have the same kindness towards others through this novel.

7. *Holding Up the Universe* by Jennifer Niven

Read in 2018.

Holding Up the Universe follows the relationship between Libby and Jack, two teens who met through an insulting, bullying game. Libby deals with her past of being obese, and Jack deals with his secret of having a disorder. Through the punishment of being in a group counseling session Libby and Jack are surprised to find themselves feeling less alone with each other.

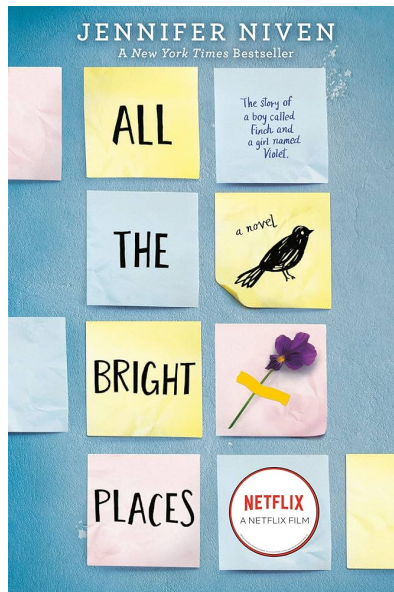
Holding Up the Universe is helpful as it questions the meaning of being seen and what it means to see other people. Libby deals with the feeling of being judged and laughed at for being obese in the past, and Jack deals with the secret of having a condition that prevents him from being able to recognize faces. Both have deep rooted insecurities that hold them back from feeling free and comfortable within society, yet they both help each other deal with their issues and feel less alone with each other. *Holding Up the Universe* provides knowledge of what it means to see others and who they truly are despite what others think about them, and what it means to be seen as your true self. Adolescents often feel judged and alone, yet this novel provides a different perspective on how to see others and yourself.

8. *Chaos Theory* by Nic Stone

Have not read it.

Shelbi and Andy, two black teens who deal with mental health issues, meet and build a relationship. Through their connection Shelbi sees Andy at his lowest and relates with him, which pulls them closer together. Although they are on cloud nine, the closer they get, the more their past issues threaten to pull them apart.

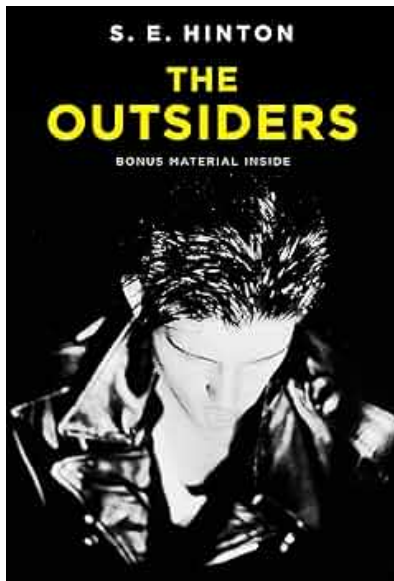
Chaos Theory shows the challenges of addiction and mental health, and how unity can help those who are struggling. The theme of relatability is shown through Shelbi relating to Andy through his struggles and hardships. Shelbi feeling a sense of relatability helps Andy as she gives him comfort in a time of need and has knowledge of how to deal with his struggles together. *Chaos Theory* provides knowledge of the importance of helping those who are struggling and supporting each other through hardships in life. Many teens don't always have people to rely on or have any support system for themselves, which leads them to feel alone. This novel shows how important it is to support and comfort those who are suffering and how one can help others by being in communion with those who have been through the same issues or have gone through similar experiences.

9. *All the Bright Places* by Jennifer Niven

Have not read it.

All the Bright Places follows the relationship between Finch and Violet. Finch deals with mental illness and is considered a “freak” within town. Violet is a popular girl who deals with the loss of her sister and develops an intense fear of driving. They both relate to one another and try to help each other grow despite their problems.

All the Bright Places is helpful as it gives insight on the challenges of mental health and how it affects a person. Both Finch and Violet have traumatic experiences happen to them and they both don't fully know how to handle their unhealthy thinking habits, yet they try to help one another. Although they both suffer in their mental health, they both help and support each other through their experiences. They both end up being the support system through their suffering. *All the Bright Places* provides knowledge of the struggles of mental help and how to be a supporting system and rely on others for help when needed in times of suffering. Many times teens try to deal with their problems by themselves and not ask for help, yet having the help from others is comforting and rewarding as one doesn't feel alone and helpless.

10. *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton

Have not read it.

The Outsiders follows the life of a 14-year-old boy named Ponyboy Curtis who deals with familial bonds, friendships, class conflict, and loyalty. Within his society, where one either was a part of the Socs or the Greasers, Ponyboy struggles to find his place and feels like an outsider. After a conflict with the Socs ending in Ponyboy and his friend getting beaten up his life gets thrown off course and he has to find his way back.

The Outsiders shows themes of identity, and friendship. Ponyboy doesn't feel a sense of belonging as he doesn't fully fit in with the Greasers or the Socs. After the incident between himself, the Socs, and his best friend, Johnny, Ponyboy deals with the struggle to find his own identity. He questions his life and who he should be as his brothers and friends are Greasers, and Ponyboy doesn't want to be in a gang. He is loyal to Johnny as both of them feel a sense of belonging with one another. They both have gone through the same experiences due to being of lower class status. *The Outsiders* provides knowledge of the struggles because of class conflict and how sticking together is beneficial as there is a sense of belonging in difficult times. Many teens don't realize the benefit of having a supportive friend to give them a feeling of belonging when times are tough. Today's society has more of an individualistic approach to being in communion with others. The concept of being there for others is almost a bargain now as one might think their help should be earned and not just simply given to others because they asked for it.

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