Abilities Of Brain In Jane Yolen’s Novel Brier Rose And Amanda Lohrey’s Novella Vertigo

If I show you a picture, I am pretty sure all of us or most of us will be able to relate to this situation. But have we ever wondered why we can suddenly relate to this image or any other image? Our brain has the ability to interpret various images that can trigger certain emotions and feelings. This is represented in Amanda Lohrey’s novella Vertigo a narrative of love and awakening and how unexpected emotions can return in life and how life can change from one experience. Similarly, this is displayed in Jane Yolen’s novel Brier Rose, a disturbing experience of the holocaust in the form of an appropriated fairy tale of sleeping beauty. Both of the novels draw our attention to the experiences that we can relate to for example struggling with new experiences, lose something important and trauma. From these two novels, we as an audience can learn how to cope with different situations. Sudden situations in the novels help to overcome any situations and shows us that whatever we experience in our life whether it’s a sad experience or a loss of someone it is not difficult to overcome from that sadness.

Losing something important to us is something that we have to go through at some point in our life even if we don’t want to. Distinctive imagery illustrates us to other experiences of losing something important. In Vertigo, Anna suffers from a miscarriage, the sense of losing a child has deeply affected Luke. “He stumbles, weeping, through the powdery ash,...and he is back in the delivery room” the use of tactile imagery of “stumbles” “weep” allows us to imagine how Luke is sad over the miscarriage and makes us feel that we all have experienced what it is like to weep and stumble.

Similarly, Jane Yolen crystallises clear links to the genre of fairy tale to release Gemma and the audience from the war. Gemma is Becca’s grandmother who hides her mysterious past from her family. The hiding of the truth is symbolised in Gemma’s store of old documents in a box engraved with a rose. The hiding of “our deepest…...truth” may “seem like lies” but only highlights the extent of terror of the war. Gemma believes that “she is Briar Rose” and she copes with PTSD through the rose dyed frames of the fairy tale, “I have no memories but one….a fairy tale”. Gemma passes her experiences to her family. The line of her story “not the best of times” as a euphemism idealises the holocaust of the war. Through this, Yolen conveys the true impact of the war by allowing us to sympathise with Gemma as she give up from a harsh reality. The metaphorical mystery of briar rose gives away the truth, and later we as an audience are challenged with a complete realisation of Gemma’s past through the character of Becca “she had stayed in there longer than necessary….trying the understand that Gemma-her-Gemma has died….” This juxtaposition shocks us into horrible “ironies” of life such as the suffering of camps like Gemma and the death of Gemma. Yolen expresses the horrors of the holocaust through interactions between Gemma and the fairy tale. Gemma makes the real story that is full of struggle and challenges sound like a fairy tale and understandable for kids. But then that bedtime story for kids come in real later in their life. From this novel we as an audience we learn that no matter what challenges life throws at us we should always take it easy in our lives and treat them as a fairly tale.

In Vertigo Luke and Anna are moving their houses from city to country because city life was not suitable for them. They faced so many challenges in the city like not able to overcome with

memories of their son, Anna suffering from asthma, they tried different habits like bird watching, reading books and were not able to have time for each other. So, both of them decided to move to the country to overcome challenges. In chapter 3 both Luke and Anna faces a significant challenge the couple in the bushfire. This is an extremely challenging experience which triggers Luke and Anna to move forward let go of the lasting pain of their miscarriage. When Luke's navy-ribbed sweater he wore while shattering the boy's ashes into the ocean, is destroyed in the fire. Luke becomes upset and disappears for a long day in the bush. Although Luke "could not bear the thought that the sweater might come to harm" and he is sad that the sweater is ruined. The sweater symbolises "the boy" and horrific memories that surrounded him. However, to protect the house the sweater becomes a symbol of renewal and care of life, which helps Luke and Anna to bury their pain. The fire has reminded her of the short nature of the life, therefore, ending her presence of the boy and moving forward with family planning. Because of the extremely challenging nature of their near-death experience, both Luke and Anna are reminded of their own humanity, which leads them to change their outlook and attitudes towards future decisions. Challenges like Luke and Anna faced in their life like losing their son, and bushfire teaches us that no matter what challenge life throws at us, there is always a solution for that challenge. So no matter what we should never lose hope and faith in us and in people around us because they can help us in any situation because they might also have been through the same situation.

In conclusion, both Vertigo and Briar Rose show us how new experiences and telling stories allows us to overcome difficulties in our life and also makes us a new and better person in our life. Therefore, telling stories of life and experiences to others is good to bring change in ourselves and in the life of others and ourselves. Jane Yolen mentions in her novel that asking people to "talk about the past" so they can "live again in the future".