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HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLF

Gender Non-conformity in YAL

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On school grounds, we see students celebrating who they are in a multitude of ways through fashion, music, make-up, and hairstyles among myriad other markers. Those same students may be holding hands with peers of the same or opposite gender or those whose gender expressions cannot be readily discerned. Regardless of how an adolescent looks or the person's hand that is held, these expressions of identity are a significant part of social functioning and wellbeing in schools. In each generation, the discourse around adolescence is shaped by social, cultural, historical, and political contexts, but is all too often reduced to a focus on the "problems" of youth (Hagood, 2002; Lesko, 2012; Vadeboncoeur, 2004; Petrone & Lewis, 2012). A positive focus on expressions of identity among students provides insight into the livelihood of adolescence (Kirkland, 2009; Mahiri, 2004; Moje & van Helden, 2004; Wallowitz, 2004, 2008). To the chagrin and detriment of students, however, most teachers have limited familiarity with the language of identity labeling around gender and sexuality that seems normalized and commonplace within youth culture. A limited number of young adult (YA) novels address students' non-conventional challenges to gender non-conformity, gender variance, gender expression, behavior, mannerisms, and roles, and yet while they may reflect adolescent readers' realities, teachers often lack the discourse and negotiating skills that can mediate positive student gender non-conforming self-expression. Gender norms and heteronormativity are most often normalized in classroom practice, typically due to blind spots in teachers' self-awareness or changes in generations that teachers sometimes struggle to stay in step with. When left unchecked, teachers participate in passing on anachronistic perspectives about gender norms, mannerisms, expressions, and even heteronormative values. This chapter steps up to these blind spots and challenges them by interrogating and unpacking gender non-conformity in Liar by Justine Larbalestier, as a resource to
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book cover page
The role of the school environment on minors’ sense of self

Children’s environment is a key factor in their development. The school environment plays a crucial role in shaping a child’s sense of self. In the context of education, the school environment provides a platform for children to explore their identity, develop their skills, and interact with peers. A positive school environment fosters a sense of belonging, whereas a negative one can lead to a diminished sense of self. Therefore, it is essential to create an inclusive and supportive school environment that caters to the diverse needs of students.

Schools play a pivotal role in shaping students’ identities and self-concepts. A supportive school environment encourages students to feel safe, valued, and understood. On the other hand, a hostile or oppressive school environment can lead to feelings of isolation, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Thus, it is crucial for schools to promote a culture of inclusivity and respect, where all students feel welcome and empowered to reach their full potential.
Johnie Darnell and Cag Hill

Young Adult Novels

Unpacking Portrayals of Poverty in "The Worst Form of Violence"