

Title: On Being Transgender in Children's Literature

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Previously, transgender characters were taboo in adolescent literature. In the 21st century, we have seen a shift in the representation for transgender people. It is crucial for literature to include trans characters as more resources are available for people to transition. In contrast, individuals still commit atrocious offences to those realizing their gender identity. This mentality stifles the social process of accepting transgender individuals who are in the process of coming out. In the novel *George*, Alex Gino illustrates what it means to be transgender through the eyes of young Melissa, who others view as George. The novel plays it safe when describing transphobia as George does not talk about issues of suicide. As oppose to the young adult novels *Birthday* and *If I was Your Girl*, written by Merissa Russo, a transgender woman. *Birthday* follows a young transgender girl named, Morgan throughout her high school years that climaxed to her suicide attempt. Similarly, the novel *If I was Your Girl* follows a female transgender teenager in her senior year of high school in the conservative state of Tennessee where she is publicly outed and brutally beaten. Suicide and brute force are graphically described in both Russo's novels and reflect the consequence trans youth face in terms of transitioning from their accepted social norm to their transgender identity. It is crucial transgender youth are represented in literature for cisgender people to see how issues such as dysphoria, suicide, and transphobia can lead one over the edge.

Works Cited

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