

SOCIETAL CONFORMITY AND NON-BINARY IDENTITIES: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF "THEY BOTH DIE AT THE END" BY ADAM SILVERA

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ABSTRACT

The given research paper refers to the combination of the standards and conformity of society and non-binary gender identities in a teenage novel by Adam Silvera, *They Both Die at the End* (2017). Through the prism of critical appreciation of the growth of character, organization of the story, and its themes, this paper strives to speak about the manner in which Silvera addresses the trope of gender binarity and, on the other hand, alleviates the pressures of conformism in the current society. Within the paper, I will claim that not only can the work of Silvera be described as the window into the current approach of society to the gender identity problem but also as the fire to the debates concerning the theme of inclusiveness and acceptance. By examining textual sources and applying models of queer theory to clarify the text, this study will be capable of demonstrating how the novel could serve as an instance of larger questions of building identity and social acceptance and having the courage to exist as oneself in a normative world. These findings mean that the literary devices that Silvera uses make it possible to provide many chances to see how the life of non-binary people is when they have to live in heteronormative cultures that do not acknowledge their gender identities and do not intend to accept them without objections.

Keywords: non-binary identity, societal conformity, young adult literature, gender representation, queer theory, Adam Silvera.

INTRODUCTION

Few young adult fiction writers today have been able to explore the nature of both genders and fitting in society as well as Adam Silvera did in his novel *They Both Die at the End* of 2017. These themes of the book are mortality, friendship, love, and identity as trailed in the life of the main characters of the novel are two men, Mateo Torrez as well as Rufus Emeterio, whose lives can be seen living in the dystopian near-future world whereby people could be told that they are soon to die with 24hrs notice. However, beneath the seemingly superficial layer of the plotline, it can be seen applied the more profound and nuanced way of examining the collision of societal norms and expectations of

being able to conform to them and finding that proper expression of gender identity through the lens of these not necessarily deserving easy labels of placement on the scale of gender binary, which can be traced most prominently to the characters that were not straightforwardly placed in such a fashion.

The study of the non-binary identity in the context of conformity in the current cultural conditions cannot be overestimated (Sabir et al., 2021a; Ali et al., 2016; Ullah et al., 2021; Iqbal et al., 2021; Javed Iqbal et al., 2021). With society regaining affection towards the newly emerging concept of gender and sexuality, literature is also used not only to document the present-day

attitudes towards the topic but also to leave people more enlightened and conscious of the topic. The intent to put the background of the struggle of the character against the stereotype of gender in the background and the fact that this individual is compelled to live as truthfully as possible within the few remaining hours of his existence makes the work performed by Silvera especially imposing (Sabir et al., 2021b; Ullah et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2020).

The thesis of the research paper is that the work titled *They Both Die at the End* can be viewed as the critical digestive tract of the role of the conformity pressures of society on individuals with non-binary gender identity and in what way the state of mortality is urgency may both free and constrain the authentic self. In this paper, the critical approach adopted by Silvera in employing the use of narrative, character development, and theme use to aid in the enlightenment of the issues involved in the development of gender identity under the conformist social system will be analyzed.

Literature Review

The topic of gender identity and adherence to gender roles in young adult stories has been drawing the attention of scholars progressively over the last ten years. The evolution of the depiction of the LGBTQ + group in the literature of young adults was also examined (e.g., Cart and Jenkins, 2018), and scholars report the significant shift toward the representation of different sexes and sexual orientations in a more natural and thorough way. The transformation may be regarded as one of the features of the changing manner of society in conceiving and embracing gender diversity and as one of the means of demonstrating how nonconformers to the traditional two-category system remain struggling. Theoretical models of perception of non-binary identities through which the scholar of gender Judith Butler (1990, 2004) came up with the notion of gender performativity according to which gender identities are constructed and reified by acts of a specific social behavior. But the concepts by Butler, which allude to the fact that gender is a kind of performance rather than a given one, offer an excellent model with the aid of which one can think how the characters of Silvera address their gender natures in social situations that do not have the capability of observing or acknowledging their actual natures.

The conformity of society is a state that has been totally covered in the literature of psychology and sociology. The iconic experiment conducted by Asch (1956) has shown the extent to which the pressure of a group could have an effect on individual actions and judgment. This fact was elaborated further in the works of Cialdini and Goldstein (2004), where the authors explain how conformity pressures operate within contemporary society and how this pressure proves to be an essential factor in forming the identity of children at their younger ages.

In the specific context of the LGBTQ + young adult novels, researchers are discussing the mirrors and windows effect of the text and how it can reflect the LGBTQ + youth and simultaneously teach the non-LGBT+ + readers about the different lives and identities (Blackburn and Clark, 2011). These works emphasize the importance of realistic depiction and the potential of writing as a tool for bringing social changes and fostering a greater degree of acceptance.

The newest study of non-binary representation in novels has mentioned where this cause has been successful and what it has yet to accomplish. As McCann and Monaghan (2020) have also found in the book in question, the problematic part of the study is that the non-binary characters are present in a considerable portion of works belonging to the genre of young adult fiction, and the authors are generally unable to depict them without being stereotypical. The latter background makes a softer gender-identity strategy used by Silvera rather remarkable and worthy of in-depth analysis.

The second crucial theoretical complex that we will apply in the given analysis is that of heteronormativity, described by Warner (1991). The ideology of heteronormativity is the perception that heterosexual relationships and two different gender identities are dominant and against which the rest of identities and relationships are evaluated. It is especially noteworthy that this theory may be used about how the characters of the book of the men who are going to die at the End interact with the social codes of behavior in the endeavor to disclose their very natures.

Theoretical Framework

The multi-disciplinary theoretical aspect was used in studying how queer theoretic, literary criticisms, and sociological approaches to consider and think about conformity and identity formations and interpretations will be affected. The primary theoretical framework should be linked with the theory of gender performativity proposed by Judith Butler (1990), in accordance with which the idea of gender identity is not natural but is constructed due to the multiple repetitions of gendered performances and activities. Particularly, this theoretical framework can be applied in the analysis of how the characters of Silvera approach defining their genders within the social worlds that are not always able to recognize and accept non-binary expressions.

Even after that, the theoretical material authored by Butler in 2004 (on undoing gender) provides even more theoretical contributions on how individuals can be obedient and transform gender norms through their actions and self-portrayal. The concept is critical in explaining how characters in the novel by Silvera challenge the social rules as they learn to live with the only End to time, and it is death.

The sociological concept of conformity developed by Asch (1956) and perpetuated by contemporary scholars serves to reveal the effects of social pressure on the behavior of individuals and the methods of expressing themselves. The conformity theory can help in the explanation of the reason why individuals will hide some part of their authentic self in an effort or with a wish to fit in the social network or to have appreciation in the eyes of society. Taking the analysis into consideration, it is possible to spotlight the theory of conformity, according to which the specification of the issues of the destinies of the characters with non-binary identity is erased in the realm of social relations that presupposes the presence of two binary genders.

The formulation of the queer theory (Sedgwick, 1990; Halberstam, 2005) can bring a background through which the direction of the organization according to the disparity and the abuse of the cultural norms can be interfered and balkanized at individual and at group levels. The proposed queer theory instability and fluidity of the identity categories can be of particular use to the

analysis of the means through which the characters in Silvera embody and express non-binary gender identities.

The focus of this literature is traditional and current as it revolves around the term coming of age when an individual passes through childhood to adulthood, but it is complicated in a more multidimensional way when the subject matter is aptly termed gender identity development. One of them is identity formation, within which young adult literature, investigated by such researchers as Trites (2000), examines the features of narrative human being, and the same framework can be used to elaborate how the development of gender identity occurs within the condensed time-scale of the story told by Silvera.

Methodology

The research employs the qualitative method in textual analysis in the sense that it undertakes the research aspect as a close reading and also examines some passages, character progression, dialect, and plot in *They Both Die at the End*. The feminist and queer literary critical styles are the logical continuations of my analysis because they recognize the importance of the literary text and, in particular, the construction, dramatization, and subversion of gender and sex in literature.

The use of narrative structure and pacing (analysis) in the research is also the tool for evaluating the effect that the condensed nature of the width of time to which the novel is concerned (24 hours) has on the creation of the characters and their identification (Sabir et al., 2021c; Shah et al., 2020; Ullah, Ali, & Khalid, 2017; Ullah et al., 2020). This period provides a special context to research the importance of urgency and mortality in self-authenticity and also in the resistance to the conformity struggle.

Discussion and Analysis

A Dystopian Situation Gender Identity Construction

This dystopian premise of the book *They Both Die at the End* by Adam Silvera provides a unique literary framework where one can think about gender identity building. The primary assumption of the novel, i.e., that people know only 24 hours before you die creates a fantastic background on which the characters must solve the problem of revealing themselves in the most

challenging time frame of all possible. It is a compacted period, which is both a stepping stone and a restriction to real gender identity.

The protagonist Mateo Torrez has many features defying stereotypical images of the man's gender. Expressive in his feelings and reluctant to be involved in something related to masculine behavior, it can also be mentioned that Mateo is sensitive and does not fit in the limits of the traditional gender in the whole novel. Silvera claims that she never belonged to such a kind of a guy who could approach people and start conversing with them (Silvera, 2017, p. 45). That kind of description immediately puts Mateo as someone who does not conform to the shared ideals of what a man is supposed to be in terms of assertiveness and aggression. The lexical use of the choice of words to create the phrase kind of guy points out ironically that Mateo is aware of the mannerisms through which his identity conflicts with the gender categories that are deemed to be the standard of masculinity, implying some form of insinuation that his true identity is not aptly fitting into the rubric of the masculinity category.

The masculine activities traditionally put Mateo out, too, which is how he shows himself to be out of the gender limits as well. After having considered the expectations held by his father on his part, which was just that he liked baseball, he states, "Dad also used to take me to the baseball games where he hoped that I would get hooked up on this love of the game, but I always found myself more interested in the life story of people in the stands than the game itself" (Silvera, 2017, p. 67). This text reminds us how Mateo is the kind of person who is not really into ruthless sports but is into emotional connection and literary knowledge; this fact is apparent that he is a person who falls out of the masculine stereotype to be interested. Other than viewing the world and relating with the world with activities that are considered masculine, he gives us a different approach to relating with the world that is more empathetic and understanding in analyzing what people engage in.

Furthermore, Mateo and his father's bond signifies the conflict between generations in terms of being male readily and appearing in the male code gender. It is an internal dilemma for Mateo due to the rules set by his father against his masculine composure in this struggle between

actually being himself and winning over his family members. This conflict is highlighted in these lines since Mateo ponders: "My father always wanted me to be a slightly tougher kid, but I believe he did not understand that being sensitive does not imply being weak" (Silvera, 2017, p. 78). In this text, the process of transferring social pressures of conformity through the family system is illustrated, as well as how a non-conforming gender option people get as a way of complying with such parameters is exercised. The explanation of Sensitivity as a virtue rather than a vice provided by Mateo is a frontal attack on the black-and-white approach to masculinity being an assertion of being emotionally challenging and femininity being one of expression.

The gender expression, as unsupported by the already existing expectations of gender, is explored in the novel in the context of the relationship between Mateo and the creative life and the relationship in the inner world. He even admits that "I had never read adventures; I read books about them, and I am sure that is one of the things Dad was not very happy about at a point I can not make clear" (Silvera, 2017, p. 112). This vicarious inclination collides with a masculine need for action and risk-taking. Self-reflection and literary curiosity are natural to Mateo, as are other aspects of this personality in non-masculine spheres of interest, within which he is not blind to the fact that failure in gender expression revolts his father socially.

The two characters depict unorthodox notions of common masculine interests and activities. When they get an opportunity to engage in something quite risky and may injure themselves and their friends on the last day, Mateo says, "Rufus suggests we go skydiving or bungee jumping, but I am certain that I would enjoy our last day together with them, by just talking with them and learning more about another human being" (Silvera, 2017, p. 134). The willingness to be emotionally close to people instead of risks and adrenaline contradicts the masculine stereotype, as well as indicates the fundamental values of Mateo. His explicit choice of talks and communication instead of adventure proves that an alternative way to a real experience lies in a relationship with another human being instead of a triumph.

The other problem in the novel is gender non-conformity, which exists together with creativity and art expression. Mateo has a hidden talent where he can be allowed to express his creativity to be a photographer so that he can capture and preserve emotional feelings, something that he can do rather than get involved in manly work. According to him, he prefers to take photographs because they allow him to remember not only the events but also the feelings (Silvera, 2017, p. 189). This philosophy of photography is related to emotional capture and emotional reflection and contradicts the masculine in terms of technical/competitive achievement. In his preference of emotion to the event, he indicates a radically new way of experiencing that makes inner emotional topography primary, not an outer accomplishment.

Societal Conformity and Identity Suppression

As aforementioned, the theme in the novel runs on numerous levels, and these include institutional social expectations, peers, and finally, those that have been internalized. The very institution of Death-Cast can be considered a metaphor for monitoring and restriction of society, which not only presupposes the time during which people will pass but also influences how people would prefer to spend the last moments of their lives. A new order of compulsions to adapt to the norms of society is also introduced with such a system as the characters have to pass the standard of what one should do when he is about to die along with their actual persons.

Social anxiety and the tendency to isolation reveal themselves in Mateo and can be seen as the response to the pressure to fit in in a way that the true expression of the individual appears to be unsafe or even impossible. He has feared to be judged and disliked and, due to this, has suppressed part of his personality and of his desires. This fact is already revealed in written words when Mateo states, "I was losing my days being exasperated with thoughts about what other people thought when I should have rather simply figured out what it is that I wanted" (Silvera, 2017, p. 134). The given text demonstrates the process of alienation that the weight of conformity may lead to when it gets impossible to be who one is and know who one is.

Difference in the manifestations of conformity pressures exerted on the members of various socioeconomic and cultural groups is another concern, which is outlined in the novel. Life of a foster child in Rufus provides us with details of how the people in the margin are subjected to greater influences to change. His effort to fit in with the social workers and prospective adoptive families by appearing normal and well-regulated has compelled him to suppress some of his characters and styles. She received the message in the early days of life that she should avoid being too emotional or independent; otherwise, she could be sent to another house (Silvera, 2017, p. 89).

Technology and Social Media play a Critical Role.

This application of technology and social media in the novel by Silvera provides a new background to understand how the system of conformity pressures works in gaps within the cyber world. The app called Last Friend, which is meant to connect people in the last days of their lives, comes not only with the possibility of authenticity but also with the force of performativity. The question that is given to the characters is how they can be as they are and still comply with the requirements of the digital platform and the conventions of social media.

As the novel says, technology can easily facilitate the performance of gender identity as well as complicate it. Internet technology provides individuals avenues through which they can socialize with others who have had similar experiences or feelings about being, but it can also be used in conducting another form of scrutiny and judgment. The fact that Mateo does not want to engage in social media so deeply can be perceived as one of the extensions of his concerns with the possibility of social assessment and the problem of conformity.

The very fact that this novel has been considered means that the true meaning of relations can be the fields of such resistance to the pressure of conformity. Also, the two (Mateo and Rufus) gain some things about themselves in the friendship that the two might not like to learn when they start learning. Their acceptance of one another becomes an element of the micro-environment through which the nonconformity expression of gender becomes legitimate and becomes the

subject of celebration as opposed to being a source of policing and correcting.

The practice of the family consisting of the parents and the children exhibited by Silvera reveals that covert pressures to conform are transmitted through the family and that successive generations did not share the same information regarding gender and identity issues, thereby creating conflict within the family establishment. This struggle between Mateo and his father may be regarded as the illustration of what young generations have to do when they are not enabled to save their authentic selves, which, however, do not exactly follow the traditional ways of gender typologies that were adhered to by their parents.

As it is also depicted in the novel, the pressure to conform may be augmented by family trauma/loss and also be complicated by it. The desire to satisfy his father, together with the necessity to keep the dead memory of his mother, introduces the issues that are linked to the expression of the true self in Mateo. It is possible to trace this conflict in the text because when Mateo expresses himself, he says, "Mom always told me that I should be myself, but I do not believe that Dad would be interested in who I am" (Silvera, 2017, p. 167).

Subordination and Independence

Despite the heavy pressure mentioned in the novel that we should comply with the social expectations, Silvera still reveals opposition and strength to act in the many instances that people choose to be true selves and not just social expectations. The panorama of such resistances is fascinating because it is the plot within the destroyed timeline of the final day of the characters, which means that being authentic is more important than being in the queue when the implications of the final meaning are on the table.

Among the protest modalities against the pressure to conform is Mateo making a decision to be friends with Rufus despite the fact that they vary in terms of education and social standings. The fact that he has no hesitations about leaving his comfort zone or thinking that he needs to interact with a person who does not live up to his preconceptions is good evidence that his self-trust is something that is taking over the expectations of society.

The novel addresses the issues of visibility/invisibility as related to non-conforming gender identities. The characters find out when and how to reveal themselves in the world, making compromises between the possible gains in terms of being their true selves and the potential risk of being shunned by society or being beaten.

Silvera handles these politics of visibility in a very intriguing manner when he presents it as a matter of security and family and the social context and not of courage and authenticity in the least concerning the choice to be visible or invisible. The novel gives a message that individuals have a right of their own choice of the information they can reveal about their bodies without the preconceptions that other people might have about their activities.

Character Analysis- Mateo Torrez

The image of Mateo Torrez being the most significant illustration of the character in the novel that possesses the non-traditionally masculine gender identity and gender expression makes him an important character to be studied regarding the relationship between the non-traditionally gendered identities and social obedience. Mateo, ever since the introduction of the novel, is depicted as sensitive, anxiety-prone, and introspective, which does not fit with the conventional ideas of masculinity among adolescents.

The state of the relations between Mateo and his father provides one with an insight into the notion of how pressure to conform causes identity within a family. The fact that his father is disappointed in the fact that Mateo has not a single traditional masculine interest and manners of behavior constitutes the persistently existing source of internal conflict. As Silvera puts it, Dad is inclined to make her more socialized, assertive, and the son he truly desires (Silvera, 2017, p. 62). This text reveals how an expectation of a parent can create pressure to fit in terms of gender to feel natural.

One may view how the character is warring against social anxiety as his character trait as well as his response to the conformity pressures, which leads him to think that the expression of self is risky. Mateo prefers to do things alone as well as the fact that he is insecure in a social situation depicts that he is aware the people

around him may not accept his most authentic self. Such awareness has impelled him to engage in coping mechanisms that prioritize safety over genuineness.

The methods through which Mateo is coming to an understanding during the novel exemplify the notion that in the context of an extreme circumstance, identity can be turned into a realm of discovery and actuality. He begins to appreciate personal honor rather than acceptance of society on his dying day. He changes, and this can be observed as he states, "I was petrified of being judged, so I never gave anyone the chance of getting to know me at all" (Silvera, 2017, p. 189).

The very fact that the character is fascinated with creative work, that he is sentimental, that his range of interests goes beyond general socialization in most of the interests he has, and that he has been practical with meaningful communication all go into making the character a person whose sense of identity is not necessarily reflected in the binary gender system. In as far as the novel has not been released to state that Mateo would not fit into any gender, his features and that which he is exposed to agree with many propositions of non-binary affiliation as posited in the current gender theory.

Rufus Emeterio Analysis of Character

The other, albeit a very complex relationship, regards the topic of gender norms and the societal assumptions in Rufus Emeterio. English hypernym/ hyponym gender The English hypernym/ hyponym derogatory noun Rufus, played by Stoyan Rufus as a between feminine-masculine, as a between hypernym-hyponym, also questions the male/female dichotomy and dichotomous taxonomy.

The fact that Rufus is not afraid of demonstrating his vulnerability, his emotions, and his emotional diversity, particularly in the context of dating, brings the stereotypically masculine emotional indifference into question. His unambiguous displays of love, fear, and concern relegate him as a character who takes emotional honesty most seriously as opposed to his masculine attitude. That is, it can be found in the reflection of the main character in the novel: "I would far rather be real and vulnerable than fake that I am anything at all" (Silvera, 2017, p. 142).

His status as a foster child has required him the extent to which he has to fulfill the requirements of the institution as well as judgments made by the social worker, giving him more pressure to conform to them than those characters who were brought up in stable families. This has made him learn to be tactical as far as his self-image projection is concerned, as much as he keeps at the center a few aspects of what he is.

The sexual connection of Rufus and his girlfriend Aimee reveals the prospect of emotional intimacy and aversion to the traditional ways of relation patterns of men where dependency can no longer be considered as elevated as independence. The very mournfulness that he feels about the separation from her is an emotional sensitiveness that would not go down well with ordinary masculine sensibilities of emotion and love.

Thematic Analysis: Death Liberation

In the novel, death hangs over it, and this theme is seen to play different roles concerning gender identity and the need to possess a gender identity. One can view death as an escape that enables one to be an honest self as well as an expression that can bring in greater anxiety and obedience.

In the two pilots, the looming death brings about the antagonist and the good guy that, give a sense of anxiety and conformity behavior first because they are seeking to attempt how they can reconcile who they are with what is expected of them by society. However, later in the day, the knowledge liberates them from being as long-lastingly affected by non-conformity and leaves them free to be more truthful in expressing themselves.

The novel states that the fear of death is connected with the fear of living an authentic life. The irony of the story is that those who conform under the weight of conformism and have suppressed a portion of themselves die as though they have not lived through their life but their identity. The theme is particularly moving to characters, the gender identity of which might be out-of-the-ordinary.

When Silvera uses the crunch of time, she aims to explore the reasons why being true to oneself is more than being a conformist to the eventualities. The daring of being someone original is an idea that, in this way, is closely

related to the concept of accepting the fact of death and some finishing of human life, as suggested in the novel.

Both of them die out in the end. It is a social statement about contemporary issues of gender identity, pressurization to fit in, and the ability to live like who you are in a society that, in most cases, does not necessarily reward living being your unique self. The sensitivity of a reasonable representation of the gender variation/LGBTQ + rights in young adult literature and the establishment of the agenda in the cultural debate makes the novel belong to the segment of contemporary cultural debate.

The mode of handling technology and social media in the novel is associated with the contemporary realities of young people getting to experiment with their identities in the virtual space. The Last Friend app is a metaphor that helps one to think about the technology and the manner in which it is capable of generating a real feeling of connection and diversity of new kinds of containment and performance pressure.

It is particularly curious of the way Silvera confronts the issue of gender identity: this issue is very subtle and natural as well. As opposed to straightforward naming and labeling of characters or an attempt at conveying didactic messaging on gender diversity, the novel includes leeway for the characters to portray and embody non-conforming gender ontologies as the expansion of their personal lives as humans.

The novel does not only contribute to the larger controversies about the importance of LGBTQ+ representation in the young adult genre, but it also does not marginalize or make heroes out of youths in the LGBTQ+ mentality. Silvera puts the gender identity and gender conformity questions in the broad perspective that is about death and friendship and living the actual lives, which demonstrates that the questions on gender identity and gender conformity are not on the margin of human lives but in the center of the universal lives.

The Implications of the Young Adult Novels

As it has been observed in the analysis of the coming work *They Both Die at the End*, the latter has a series of essential implications on the subject of juvenile literature and how the same can be applied in addressing the questions of gender identity and social conformity. The novel

presents how authors can be honest to the non-binary without engaging in direct identification and educational declarative statements that may cause the characters to merge into the non-binary but, on the contrary, use it as a part of their stories as a logical continuation of their personalities.

The success of this novel shows that young adult readers need some authentic works through which the different genders and how they express themselves can be portrayed. The possibility to reflect ourselves (mirrors) to the readers, especially to the LGBTQ people, and to look into some worlds where people are allegedly different in their sexual preferences (windows) helps to make the world more comprehensible and acceptable to us; Silvera provides the readers with this opportunity through the characters that contradict the traditional gender roles, and, despite that, are nonetheless full-fledged personalities close to us.

The fact that modern technology is adopted and social media is integrated into the plot is a sign that young adult literature can address the contemporary youth and tell them about the predicaments of being a modern human attempting to discover themselves on the internet. The approach is flexible and authentic in that the intended audiences can relate to it.

The role of the family organization described in the novel and the relations between generations is a thing that can give the answers on how the problems of the young adult literature can be approached when having into consideration the multi-stripped family negotiations having to be done with the young people when their authentic whole conflicts with the desires of their parents or with the family traditions.

Conclusion

A critical assessment of the book *They Both Die at the End* makes it possible to consider the fact that Adam Silvera is clever in discussing the consequences of the aforementioned intersection of homogeneity of society and non-binary gender in the YA novel series. Throughout the bright light in the lives of two protagonists, Mateo Torrez and Rufus Emeterio, the novel throws insight into the problematic situation wherein individuals whose authentic personalities are incapable of being delimited by the creations of the gender they are to pursue ought to regard the

necessities of the social world and live up to the requirements requested to them by their relatives. In the discussion, it is revealed that Silvera employs the rare style of plotting death that is looming to bring issues of absolute individualism and struggle against conformity pressure. The time-scale squeeze of the novel is, on one side, an accelerator and a hindrance to the actual manifestation of identities. On the other, the combination is the exceptional literature terrain where these defining societal issues are to be investigated.

It is not just the representation that makes the novel play a significant role in the field of young adult literature because the process of gender development happens within the wider frames of family relations, the social expectations and pressure by peers, as well as the institutional relations. Simply depicting the characters without deploying the identifiers as an explicit tag but allowing them to be as expressive as any gender, Silvera demonstrates how the natural representation of authenticity can be achieved without the attempt at tokenization and reductionism.

The theoretical approaches applied in this text which include the Butler theory of gender performativity, the conformity theory, and the queer theory perspectives, have a positive light through which the acceptance of gender diversity and the boldness that it takes to live as ourselves in the conformist communities can be viewed in the bigger picture.

Based on the results, one can state that "They Both Die at the End" has numerous uses since one can use it as a mirror for readers who share anything in common with the non-conforming gender identities and as a window by the readers who want to learn about the other experiences and as a springboard to talk about various issues connected to one subject inclusivity and acceptance in general. The fact that the novel is a commercial and critical success indicates that the young adult audience is keen to witness the true reflection of the differences along with the variety in lives.

The reaction of readers of diverse demographic backgrounds to the novel in regards to gender identity and conformity can be studied in the future; respondents to the story can be asked how it influenced the future of young adult literature as relates to these concepts or how teachers and

librarians can use the novel to introduce the discussion of gender diversity and social acceptance.

The artistic worth of this work does not end in the literary context, but it continues to include its potential addition to the existing tendencies to make this world more accepting and less judgmental of people whose identity is not the one that is present in the mainstream. Bringing realistic characters and the nuance of describing these complex questions, literature, including that one by Silvera, contributes to the promotion of society, understanding, emotions, and societal changes to a large extent.

All in all, the fact that both of them end the book they were both in at the end is a significant element of the permanent process of the improvement of the young adult literature concerning diversity and truthful depiction of various genders and their gender expression. Regarding the level of its profound treatment of how the spheres of social conformity and non-binary identities overlap with each other, the novel can offer the reader not just an exciting reading experience but also the finest possible insight into one of the most critical social issues of the present day. The courage that one requires in order to be actually authentic can be explained through the final day of Mateo and Rufus, who are employed in bringing about a narrative and a call to the action of the readers who are on their way towards being authentic persons in conformist cultures.

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