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## GENDER IDENTITY CRISIS – REFLECTIONS FROM JULIE ANNE PETERS', ' LUNA'

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### Abstract

Transgender is a term that includes the many ways that people's gender identities can be different from the sex they are assigned at birth. Transgender involves a movement across the socially imposed boundaries of one's assigned sex at birth. We live in a society and when we are born, our bodies undergo medical gaze, to determine into which sex we belong. We all assigned to a social category- 'the gender', based on the appearance of our bodies. Gender explains what our bodies mean. No one has the right to pick the body they want. It is something that we don't have agency over. Transgender people have a gender identity that differs from their assigned sex, what they look and what they are in real. This includes people who are not masculine or feminine.

Key words: Transgender, boundaries, society.

### INTRODUCTION

Am I a boy or girl? "He or she"?, " A son or daughter"?, This is the unanswered question coming from the mouths of those unseen, unidentified fellow -beings, the Transgender, living with us in this world. 'Gender' is one of the most important factors that determine the position of an individual in a society. Our mainstream society is built- up with certain norms and aspects that create the boundaries of existence. Religion, caste, creed, color are some of the essentials. Among them, Gender is the most important factor that determines the identity of an individual in the world. When a child is born, the first question asked by everyone is, what category the child belongs to, ' a boy or girl'?

Just like the manufacturing defect of furniture or a house, there are thousands of people live among us who are not perfectly fixed. They have no gender as their own and they belong both to the male and female society. Sometimes they appear

like a well built-up man and sometimes they appear like a woman. They live with body of a man and the appearance of a woman. As a pupa in a cocoon, they struggle inside their body.

They move on with this unmatched body and features. Sometimes they cannot adjust with their feelings and appearance .They struggle deeply in the body of a man, and the feelings of a woman. It is then we realize that the symmetry between mind and body creates a perfect human being. They have a mismatch in voice, appearance and life style. Most of them treat their body like a house which is decorated and well maintained to invite guests.

Julie Anne Peters, in her 'Luna', presents the character Liam, a handsome teenager who realizes that there is a girl in him more than a boy. He wants to be a girl. Inside his shirts, jeans and boots, he is a girl and wants to be a girl. The story is about Regan, a beautiful girl, who is having a brother Liam. At night,, when everyone was sleeping, Liam changes

himself as 'Luna', the girl who he wants to be. He changes his dress, wear costumes, wig and shoes of a girl. In his world, he enjoys his girlhood. But it was not easy to accept the appearance of a girl one day. The parents, neighbors and the school have accepted Liam as a boy. His friends and relatives have seen him as a boy.

Gradually Liam started to appear in his new look. He tried it in shopping- malls where he walked like a girl. Regan was with him. She had to suffer her relationship with Chris, who was deeply in love with her. Regan was always afraid of what would happen if he told others about the secret of Liam. He enjoys his new appearance of a girl and wants to continue in that. Regan realizes that Liam decides to undergo a surgery to confirm his identity as a female. As Liam was the pet in the family, his parents could not tolerate this. They had to face humiliations from society. Liam begins to get depressed with the symmetry of his body. He could not adjust with the girlishness within himself. At night he is a girl and day time, before everyone, a boy.

The world knows him as Liam, the handsome, smart brilliant guy whom many girls in the school have crushes on. Inside, Liam realizes that he is a girl, trapped in a boy's body- a transsexual. His real self is Luna, the girl who adores makeup, clothes, shopping and costume. Regan is the only person who understands the inner conflicts of Liam. Sometimes Liam tries to hurt or kill himself because of his inner conflicts.

At last Liam emerges out from the cocoon. He decides to leave his home. He wants to fix his gender and to live in a world where he wants to live as he likes. One night while everyone was sleeping, Liam asks Regan to go with him to the airport. He was dressed like a girl, Regan saw her sister in Luna. Liam leaves his family, friends and school for undertaking surgery. As he leaves, Regan feels that she has become alone in this world. She thinks about her parents and wonders how to tell him this truth. Then Liam reveals her that their mother knew everything. She was with him from the beginning onwards. But she has requested him not to reveal this truth to Regan and father. Regan was surprised. Liam leaves to Seattle for his surgery, his new life and his future.

Liam is lucky for having a sister like Regan. It was only because of her that she could become what she wants to be. Liam is often teased at school and in family. His father always asked him to be more masculine and a conventional boy. Luna is sometimes a difficult book to read as it explains the pain and inner conflicts of transgender terminology.

Liam is the representative of thousands of transgender people in the world who feel the crisis of gender identity. Being transgender is independent of sexual orientation. They face discrimination in all fields from the mainstream culture. Many of them face discrimination in the work place, schools of from the family. They become depressed and this lead to a tendency of committing suicide. Many of them become sexual workers for making money.

For Liam, it's not good-bye, It's "Hello". It is a new beginning for him; a re-birth. He decides to start his life from the beginning. He creates and determines his gender where the God has failed to fix him.....

### **Conclusion**

Luna is a representative of thousands of transgender people who live among us without realizing their real selves. The fact is that they are isolated from the main stream society and denied all types of rights. We should be ready to open our eyes and accept our fellow- beings who are a part of the earth we belong to.

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