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**GENDER IDENTITY OF CHILDREN: A KALEIDOSCOPIC VIEW OF THEIR PARENTS THROUGH
TRANS-G PARENTS BY TRISHA SUGAREK**

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Trisha Sugarek is an author, poet and a playwright living in Savannah, Georgia. Her works include fiction, books of poetry, mystery series and children's books. She has also had the experience of being an actor and director in the theatre for thirty years. Her debut novel was *Women outside the Wall*. Her other works are *The World of Murder* and *Wild Violets*.

The subject of transgender has been a sensitive issue to be talked about. There are many people who accept the third gender and there are also people who completely scorn them. The latter are the ones who usually have the idea that God assigns the gender of each human being and it is not correct, or, rather it is a sin to change one's gender. Adult transgender might take up these conflicts and either take action or ignore it. But then, the transgender off-springs suffer a lot. They are bullied, made fun of and even hit. They take these to their heart and the weak-hearted commits suicide.

Trans-G Parents is a simple and realistic one-act play where a support group of parents of transgender children share their problems with each other. There is no particular leader in the group, they are there for each other only to support and talk about their children who are changing their assigned sex to the other. Amanda and George have their child Joy who refused infant surgery to correct ambiguity of genitalia. Sally and Ben lost their child Charlie to suicide. Vince and Susie has a child, Cade, who has gone through sex reassignment surgery. Tom and Patty are the parents of the girl Ruth who keeps insisting that she is a boy. Richard and Gloria do not understand the concept of gender confusion in their kid Richard Jr. Finally, Allie is a single mother who accepts her child as it wants to be. But later, Maggie, her child, commits suicide.

Scene one begins with Sally sharing her thoughts on how her child committed suicide due to bullying. Charlie was a transitioning boy who was open to his parents about his gender identity. Though Sally and Ben supported Charlie, he could not stand all the bullying and the insults he had to face in his school. This led to his suicide as he hanged himself in his closet. Sally and Ben keep advising the other parents throughout the play as they do not want any more of their children to follow him.

Tom and Patty can be understood as a very orthodox set of people. They believe that God has assigned the gender to people and no one has the right to change it and also, that children are supposed to do whatever their parents say. They claim that children who are insecure about their gender might be mentally ill. Their kid is Ruthie who wants herself to be called as Robbie. Tom and Patty do not even understand how a person can relate to the other gender when certain gender is assigned to them already. They curse their own daughter that she will go to hell if she keeps insisting on turning into a boy. "Why are these kids, these days, walkin' around not knowin if they're boys or girls? Are they mentally ill or what?" (9).

Vince and Susie on the other hand are a broadminded couple. They are the parents of an older child who has already undergone the reassignment surgery. Their son Cade turned into Caitlin. They are happy that Caitlin took such a decision. They describe how they used to admire young Cade running around wearing tutus and girls' clothes. Susie explains to Tom and Patty that kids may not identify themselves with their external genitalia. They need time to sort out their dilemma.

Richard Junior wants his parents Richard and Gloria to call him by the name Riley. Richard Junior starts wearing non gender specific clothes which the parents do not understand. Richard is also like Tom. He wants his son to remain as his son and not as his daughter. The couple has come to the support group to know what is going on with their kid. They do not want Richard Junior to commit suicide as shown in the statistics of transgenders.

Allie is a single mom who accepts her child's decision in changing the gender. She is always supportive of Kyler. She even goes to his school to change his name to Maggie. She gives makeup to her new daughter and blushes while describing this. Though Maggie is going through a lot of bullying, Amanda supports her with all heart. She is proud that Maggie is no more in a state of mental breakdown.

Amanda and George had their child born with an ambiguous genitalia. They did not want to conduct corrective surgery on Joy, because they want their child to decide her gender. Right now, she relates both to boy and girl – playing with dolls and also with trucks. They are waiting for the day when Joy would declare what gender she is really and they are ready to accept any decision she takes. This is the end of scene one.

Scene two begins after a few months. Here, Richard says how furious he was when his son said that he was a girl by heart. Now, because of the support group, he realised that it is no more about him but of his child. He accepts Richard Junior as his daughter, Riley. At the end, Allie comes in. Everyone rushes to embrace her. Maggie was about to get her reassignment surgery. Maggie had a lot of panic attacks. At last, she could not take in all the bullying which eventually ended in her suicide. The play ends with Allie asking God if He can send Maggie back as a girl as she wished. "God couldn't possibly get it wrong a second time, could he? He'll send her back just as a girl like I promised. Won't he?" (27).

Rather than looking at each case individually, it will be better if parents let their children decide their own gender. Influencing impressionable minds might play havoc in their psyche. Freedom to choose what one needs will be the ultimate recognition of their rights. *Trans-G Parents* is based on gender studies which say that sex can be determined by anatomy (male or female), whereas gender is "largely independent of anatomy and is a social construction that is diverse, variable, and dependent on historical circumstances" (147).

Works Cited

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