

REALISTIC OUTLOOK IN JULIE ANNE PETERS' *LUNA***R. CHRISTINA****ADITANAR COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE. TIRUCHENDUR.****THOOTHUKUDI. TAMIL NADU.****ABSTRACT:**

The term “Realism” which means the quality of a person who understands what is real and possible in a particular situation and is able to deal with problems in an effective and practical way. The people do whatever they want to lead a real life. In the novel *Luna*, the author Julie Anne Peters is an American writer pictures Liam as a boy who attempts to represent his subject matter truthfully in his life as a transgender. The main characters of this novel are Regan and her brother Liam. Though Reagan lead an unrealistic life because of hiding the secret of her brother about his transgender identity but Liam decided to live his real life as Luna. Realism sometimes called ad naturalism in the arts. Even though one person hide their real self to others but their nature behavior expose to outside world unknowingly so, because of their nature the true self will exhibit to the world. The character Liam who is first introduced as a boy tries hard to represent him as a boy but his nature as a transgender has displayed to the world so we can say that realism is based on naturalism. This paper focuses on the struggles of a transgender who is ready to face the real herself which is inside that helps her to shape her identity and cost of her dignity.

KEYWORDS: Realism, Self identity, character development, realistic character.

This paper tries to emphasize the realistic outlook of the character Luna. The realism plays a predominant role in every aspect of human life. Though they hide their character which is unknown to others in any case the true nature will expose to others. So stop hiding your true self and expose your true nature which is inside. In this novel, Liam hide his transgender identity and tries hard to represent him as boy because of the expectations of family, friends and other people. The story is about the brother of Regan

named Liam and his transformation into a beautiful lady named Lia Marie and later changes into Luna, who then known as a transgender pioneer. Luna was born as a male but there is a half woman living inside him which expose only at night time. Liam's only support is his sister Regan who let her brother to expose the half women into a real life. This paper discusses the realism within the character , thus in depicting the real life of Luna as a trans women. we can see more of realism is based on naturalism. Luna when she decided to live as a trans women she became truthful to herself internally and externally. Realism in her life which changes her totally as a new trans women. That makes her to expose her true identity to the world. Based on the theory of Gender identity by Ghosh in the article of *Sexuality: Gender Identity*.

“Gender identity is defined a personal conception of one self as a male or female (or rarely both or neither). This concept is intimately related the concept of gender role, which is defined as the outward manifestations of personality that reflect the gender identity”

Liam tries hard to portrait him as a boy. He feels pathetic for not living his real life which he is longing to live.

“When people look at me, they don't see the real me. They can't see the real me because I look like this.”

“No one will ever know the person I am inside. The true me. The girl, the woman. All they see is this... this nothing.”(JAP 20).

The above quote explains the uncomfortable life of Liam. He is not happy to live a fake life as a boy and he considers what the other see as Liam is nothing. He want to live as Luna which is inside her. The line “The true me”(JAP 20) Which represents her life should be a real life. “Everyday, the same old thing. Hiding, lying, holding her in. It's too hard. I can't do it.”(JAP 20). This line indicates Liam who is unable to show his realistic character because of the fear of society. He is hiding himself from the people and can't show his true identity. On exposing as Liam his true identity is shattered. The word realism determines

“real” in everybody’s life. Likewise Liam wants his life to be real. When we are true to ourselves our life will be authentic. Liam is happy when he is true to himself as Luna because the character Luna which signifies the real herself inside and outside. One of the incidents which shows the real nature of Liam to his friends.

“Liam’s nails also bear traces of old polish in the cuticles. Please, I pray, don’t let Shannon notice.

Next to on me, Carmen’s watching Liam, an old expression her face.

I want him to go –now. Just go.

Shannon finishes with Liam ‘s right hand. He blows on his finger nails like a girl. Like he’s done it a million times. God.”(JAP 43).

The above lines indicate the natural behavior of Liam which exhibit for the first time to the real world. Liam hides his real herself as Luna but his nature reveals the true identity to the realistic world. The above explained scenerio which depicts the true nature of Luna which was hidden inside Liam that shows the character of a women.

“Boy by the day, girl by night. Except, he was a girl all the time, inside. It was hardwired into his brain, he said, the way intelligence or memory is. His body betrayed him. The way people viewed Liam, as a boy, meant he had to play to their expectations. Dress the part. Act the role. And Liam was good at it, expert. He’d had all those years of practice. It had to be horrible, though, day after day, seeing all around him what he wanted so desperately to be and never could.”(JAP 51).

The above quote represents one of the characteristics of realism i.e., the realistic character reveals at night when there is a reflection of moonlight. As her true identity expose only at night so Liam changes her name from Lia Marie to Luna. From the line “he had to play to their expectations” it shows that in order to fulfill the expectation of others who are surrounded by him. Liam is hiding his reality to the surroundings. It

feels hard to Liam internally and externally. Regan who is hiding the secret of Liam there is a contradiction on both the character. Luna pursue the life of realism but Regan who live in imaginary world dreaming with conscious mind and think about past and present.

“First thing I see are the pill bottles. A row lined up neatly along the

Edge of his bookshelf. They’ re Mom’s; they have to be. I’m thirteen

And I already know my mom’s a popper.

But that’s not what freaks me. The bottles are all empty...

His voice is faint, but it’s a voice. I run toward it, to the closet.

I can’t do it, Liam says. I can’t even do it. I can’t do anything right.

I’m wrong. All wrong.” (JAP 66-67).

The above quote which explains the struggle of being trans woman. As Luna she is able to live her own life with her real herself. But to fulfill her father’s expectations she can’t express her reality to others because of the differences in her body. Luna could not act as in the role of Liam and also live as Luna. She became scared to face the reality of life. This fear moves her to attempt suicide. “ Lia Marie? I stand in the doorway. You can use my room to dress in from now on, whenever you want.”(JAP 68). This line indicates Luna. Though suicide attempt is bad character because of the attempt Regan help Liam and also came to know about the problem of Liam. Regan asks Liam to use her room and supports him for his desire which brings happiness to Liam. The transwoman struggles a lot in order to pursue their own life. Liam thought that he is the only person who has differences in his body so that he is unable to exhibit his real himself but things may change after learning about a another transwoman with all differences in Liam. “Liam said, We ‘re not all so gifted. I just want to blend in and look. Liam got all excited. I found these testimonials from TG’s who’re transitioning. What they’re going through it’s me, exactly me, same as me.”(JAP 70). This line pictures the happiness of Luna. When she came to know that many transgender like her who is surviving and living their own life as TG. Luna decided to remake herself with the help of Teri Lynn who is a TG.

Luna for the first time Liam with the boldness asks Regan for shopping. “You just want to dress in public? I asked, trying to sound nonchalant, inching away from her. Yes I want to be me.”(JAP 76). This above lines explain about Luna that she want to wear woman clothes in public and face the reality of her life. Luna is ready to accept the reality but Regan is unable to go with Luna because of her brother’s differences. Later, Regan has accepted to go with Luna for shopping at night time. Luna is courageous to face this world as a transwoman and excited too. Though she is ready to face, she has a loss of steady and boldness. “She was stiff, taut, and wired. She kept walking faster and faster.”(JAP 90). This line describes the attitude of Luna who is not steady rushing on seeing the society because everybody is gawking at her. After moving to the house Luna is mood out that she want to be displayed as a real to the outside world but it is not happening because of the unacceptance of the people regarding transwoman in every country still the people did not considering the transwoman as a normal human beings like others their look and way of behavior may change on seeing on them. We treat them differently but they are talented and bold enough to survive in this world. Regan and Luna again went shopping for second time. This time Luna is strong and steady. Even though many has pointed out at her and whispered about her but she did not care about others there is drastic change in Luna internally and externally.

“Luna is bolder this time out.....

When Liam talked about the cost of transitioning is this what he

Meant? Because this was more than I could bear. This costing him his

Dignity.”(JAP 115-116).

The above quote indicates Luna and her character development. When everybody look disgust upon her, Luna reveals her true identity and face the reality of her life as a normal girl. This shows the real attitude which is inside in Liam. Luna notices all the surroundings who are gawking, teasing, whispering about her appearance. She rejects all the negativity. Luna pictures as girl to the outside world is inside in her and faces the world with boldness and courage. In *kirkus Review* there is a starred review regarding the realism it states

that, “Groundbreaking, finely tuned realism about a transgendered teen...Peters writes her characters with care and complexity.”(2004,p.256).

To the end of the novel, Liam decided to go to Seattle to transform into an eternal woman by leaving his family, and also her loving sister Megan. She moves to Seattle for living her own true life there and to face the reality of her true identity.

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