

**FROM PARIAHIZATION TO  
REHUMANIZATION: A STUDY OF I.W  
GREGORIO'S *NONE OF THE ABOVE*  
AND LAXMI TRIPATHI'S *ME HIJRA ME  
LAXMI***

**BY**

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**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
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Gregorio's *None of the Above* and Laxmi Tripathi's *Me  
Hijra Me Laxmi***

By

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## ABSTRACT

**Title: From Pariahzation to Rehumanization: A study of I.W Gregorio's *None of the Above* and Laxmi Tripathi's *Me Hijra Me Laxmi***

The present study is qualitative in nature and aims to investigate the perspectives of pariahzation and rehumanization of transgender individuals. For the critical analysis of these two variables, the research is delimited to two literary texts which are *Me Hijra Me Laxmi* (2015) by Laxmi Narayan Tripathi and *None of the Above* (2015) by I.W Gregorio. The selected literary texts have been approached from two angles. First, the texts have been studied using Daryl. B Hill's theory of Genderism, Transphobia, and Gender Bashing and then the texts have been analyzed using Rianna Oelofsen's stance on Rehumanization. The textual analysis of the texts in the light of Daryl's perspective underlines the marginalization and gender bashing faced by the protagonists, Laxmi and Krissy, in the respective texts while accentuating the ways in which these characters are subjected to pariahzation for not conforming to the normative gender binary. These characters are treated as pariahs of society because of transphobia. Furthermore, as the selected texts also show traces of rehumanization, so by using Oelofsen's stance, the discussion is expanded beyond the domain of pariahzation, and it is concluded that despite being subjected to pariahzation, the two characters Laxmi and Krissy are able to accept their identities other than the gender binary and live their lives as free individuals, thus, challenging the traditional ideas of the gender binary and paving way for a gender diverse society.

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## DEDICATION

I normally dedicate my achievements to my Maa, Baba, Shanu (a cousin-cum-friend), and my sisters Sajeela, Mehwish, Maryam, Shehnila, and Qausain.

**Not this time.**

For my sisters Qausain, Shehnila, Maryam, Mehwish, Sajeela, Maa Baba and Shanu.

Because Qausain is tired of always being named last, just because she is the youngest.

And to Milo and Diana (My furry friends)

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Setting the context

Transgenders have long been unable to identify themselves with one or the other gender of the fixed binary system, thus, making it impossible for the human beings fitting in the gender binary to treat them well. This genderism creates transphobia in the minds of people towards those who do not identify themselves with the binary and consequently, the transgenders experience gender bashing - the non-conforming individuals are subjected to disgust, hatred, or physical violence. Binarism has turned the voices of these individuals invisible and at the same time, this system has oppressed and marginalized them and forced them to choose occupations below human integrity, for example, begging, prostitution, dancing in bars, etc. These individuals are treated as social pariahs. The same phenomenon is highlighted and presented by many scholars in their literary works.

However, with the passage of time the contemporary world is witnessing a change in which the transgenders have started to raise their voice against these atrocities. They have started their journey to contest this transphobia [due to genderism] and make their own identity and place in the contemporary world thus, rehumanizing their existence. The same shift can be seen in the literary texts being produced by the contemporary writers. These texts deal with a redemptive storyline in which the marginalized or othered individual stands as an empowered survivor or an enabled advocate of a certain marginalized community. In redemptive narratives, the negative encounters are superseded by something positive [for instance, self-recognition, becoming empowered, learning lessons, and self-improvement] (Delker et al. 243). The same phenomena can be witnessed in the works of two contemporary writers Laxminarayan Tripathi and I.W Gregorio.

The role of literature has long been a topic of debate. Though some consider that in this contemporary age literature is slowly losing its worth, while others argue that it continues to live as an important part of society. What the writers see and know they turn it into a piece of literature to share with the world. The impacts that literature makes on a society could not be overlooked. It functions to establish a civilized society by developing

tolerant individuals and by altering our societal conduct (Taufiq). Moreover, the concept of art for life's sake presented by Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin has allowed writers to highlight the issues present today. Writers from all over the world use literature as a medium to mirror and interpret society. Furthermore, it is through literature that they expose the historical or contemporary atrocities, evils, injustices, and oppression subjected to people. Writers have also used literature as an instrument to raise others' voices i.e., people who are oppressed and marginalized and are unable to speak for themselves. Correspondingly, Laxminarayan Tripathi and I.W Gregorio are among these writers who have penned down the cruelty committed towards the transgender community while at the same time representing the protagonists of their texts as free individuals.

## **1.2 Description of Important Terms**

Barb J. Burdge in his article *Bending Gender, Ending Gender: Theoretical Foundations for Social Work Practice with the Transgender Community* claims that language possesses the potential to accommodate or expel any individual from the predominant gender definitions. Hence, we need to be able to engage ourselves in discourses where we must be capable to discuss these gender onomastics to lessen the societal ailments like sexism, transphobia/gender phobia, etc. (Burdge 248). Further, it is a known fact that the language related to transgender is still invisible in most of the societies of today's world, even in educational organizations, providing evidence of the anonymity of this group (Finger).

So, to understand some remonstrances faced by transgenders it is necessary to get familiar with some of the terms related to gender. Most of the individuals consider it is adequate to use only two terms for gender but this binary division limits transgenderity (Finger).

### **1.2.1 Sex vs Gender**

The terms sex and gender have long been treated as two interchangeable words and it has been a source of confusion among many. Thus, making the field of study less incomprehensible and explicit. So, it is important to distinguish between the two terms. Sex according to Borna and White is related to the biological/genetical features of an individual whereas the gender is a socially constructed element that is imposed on the two sexes (Borna and White 91-90).

### **1.2.2 Gender Identity**

Gender identity according to Fagot and Leinbach is an empirical self-placement of a person as a man or a woman. It is a categorization of oneself which is expressed and known through the manner of one's behavior. Primarily, the gender identity categorization is expressed in two ways: the anatomical way and the psychological way (Fagot and Leinbach 684). However, gender cannot be binate in which only two divisions (male and female) are present, rather it is considered more diverse. It cannot be decided through genes or physical appearance and cannot be validated or unvalidated by different persons rather it depends on the self-categorization by an individual. Transgender (who do not identify themselves with the assigned sex at the birth) and cisgender (who can identify themselves with the assigned sex at the birth) are two terminologies often use to classify gender identity (Price and Skolnik 663-667).

### **1.2.3 Gender Expression**

Gender expression is different from gender identity which is the self-categorization while gender expression can be described as the way an individual display his/her/zir (a gender-neutral pronoun) self by means of clothes, appearance, stroll, body language etc. Riki Wilchins explains gender expression as the demonstration of an individual as a girl or a boy through material things like clothes, jewelry, shoes etc. and through physical expressions, visual communication, and mannerism (Wilchins 8).

### **1.2.4 Transgender**

Transgender is a blanket term which is often used for people who do not follow the traditional binarism instead more willingly follow the nonconventional standards of gender. These individuals self-chosen gender roles contradict with the sex assigned to them at their birth (Burdge 244).

Hill defines transgender as individuals who deny living up to the traditional standards of gender that are set by the society. According to Hill this umbrella term includes transvestites, transgenderists, pre-, post-, and non- operative trans-sexuals, and intersexuals (Hill 113).

### **1.2.5 Sexual orientation**

Dembroff states sexual orientation is the sentimental, erotic or the physical attraction towards a man or a woman and in some cases, feeling attracted towards both

the genders. It simply implies one's erotic yearning towards the individuals having the same sex as one's [referred to as homosexuals, gays, or lesbians], or different sex [referred to as heterosexuals and straight] and sometimes to both sexes [referred to as bisexuals] (Dembroff 1).

Hall further expounds sexual orientation. He asserts that sexual orientation is established on three aspects which are sensual/erotic appeal, sensual/erotic expression, and sensual/erotic "orientation identity". Sensual/erotic appeal indicates toward the bodily or sentimental interest, sensual/erotic expression points toward the bodily attraction of involvement in sexual ways with the other person and sexual orientation identity indicates an individual's self-identity with respect to the gender towards which they are sexually attracted. However, the term sexual identity is sometimes used interchangeably with the term sexual orientation identity, but this is not always true (Hall 1).

### **1.2.6 Gender Queer**

Gender queer is a term which has been developed between 1995 and 2000. The term is a unification of two words gender and queer and is used to refer to those people who do not comply with the fixed traditional system of gender binary. Rather they choose gender of their own choice. The gender queer individuals may identify themselves as both male and female or they may identify themselves as male and female alternately, and sometimes not identifying with either gender (Kentlyn).

Hailey suggests that it is undeniable to consider gender queer as an identity. She claims that it a way to understand oneself as an individual and in accordance with the world around. Furthermore, according to Hailey there are three ways in which gender queer can be regarded. The first way is as an outsider, which means that gender binary divides the world into two genders while when a person associates oneself with gender queer it puts that individual outside the traditional gender dichotomy. The second way that can be regarded is a fusion of both male and female identities or not, which means a gender queer person can diffuse both identities as one or choose not to opt any identity. The third way is changeable and adaptable which means gender queer individuals are adequate to change (Otis 3).

### **1.2.7 Intersex**

Intersex is a blanket term that is used for the individuals whose sex characteristic fall outside of the traditional sex dichotomy. For instance, these individuals may have a

different set of chromosomes, genitals, and different reproductive organs. Moreover, some intersex traits are visible just after the birth of a baby but in some cases these traits are not visible until puberty or later part of life. The intersex individuals are usually subjected to sex correction surgeries, sometimes with their consent and often without their consent (Intersex 101 Everything you want to know).

Individuals who are born with intersex conditions are variant. They have different bodies, different sexes, and different sexual and physical identities (Carpenter).

### **1.2.8 Hijra**

A hijra is a term which is used in the sub-continent/ South Asian countries for the people who do not identify themselves with the traditional gender dichotomy rather diffuse the two genders or shift between the two. Hijras often consider themselves to be neither female nor male- an idea akin to Western queer gender. The hijras are mostly recognized as the third gendered individuals. The term hijra is usually interpreted as transgender in English (Khan et al. 1).

Goel describes the term Hijra to define the group of people who are identified as male at their birth, but they may choose to live as opposite gender or they may choose to have surgeries [like surgical removal of the male genitalia, breast implant etc.]. Consequently, hijras can be male, female, or can have any identity between these two genders. These individuals on the other hand can be regarded as gays, lesbians, homosexuals, or heterosexuals. Moreover, to become a hijra, it is necessary for an individual to seek guidance of a senior hijra [a guru] (Goel 536-537). This term is also used for intersex individuals and transgender females.

### **1.2.9 Eunuch**

Eunuch is a term which is usually used to refer to a man who has gone through castration but not necessarily. Uncommonly, in old literature the term was also used for men who were not able to perform sexually, or who complied with celibacy. Eunuch who are subjected to castration are not able to perform sexually and this norm of castration date backs to 21<sup>st</sup> century BC, in Sumerian, a city of Lagash (Eunuch).

Nolen defines it as a term which is used for men who go through a chemical, physical or other form of surgery in which the male gonads lose their function. The main function of the eunuch in the Middle East and China was to provide security and work as

an attendant for the women in Harems, or the women related to the kings (Nolen). In this contemporary world the term eunuch is also used to refer to Hijras or Transgenders.

### **1.2.10 Khawaja Sira**

Khawaja Sira is a more respectable term used in the sub-continent, today's South Asia, specifically in Pakistan, to refer to Hijras, transgender individuals and intersex beings. The group of people related to this term are also identified as the Third Gender in the region (Mehtab).

Faris Ahmed Khan asserts Khawaja Sira is a term which is used to indicate those individuals who show ambiguity in their gender identity. Khawaja Sira are individuals who do not conform to the traditional gender binary, and their inclination and manners counter with the male sex associated at birth (Khan).

### **1.2.11 Hermaphrodite**

The word hermaphrodite is derived from Greek language. Hermes in Greek mean God's messenger. It entered English language in late 14<sup>th</sup> century and is used as an alternative for the term intersex (Hermaphrodite Origin and Meaning of Hermaphrodite by Online Etymology Dictionary). However, it is now less used and is usually replaced by the term intersex.

Hermaphrodites are beings with both male and female reproductive organs. These individuals are also referred as intersex, and they have bodily conditions that differ from a standard male and a standard female body. These individuals are classified based on gonadal dissymmetry: Lateral hermaphrodites have one testicle and one ovary, a bilateral consists of a pair of gonads as ovotestis and a unilateral has one gonad function as ovotestis and the second gonad works as either testis or ovary (Duncan et al. 430).

## **1.3 Thesis Statement**

Narratives produced on transgenders aim to explore the pariahzation and discrimination that is experienced by this community. These narratives consider how genderism and transphobia have long been a source of pariahzation of transgenders in the society and stress on how these individuals are victims of severe rejection and identity crisis. Per contra, with the passage of time a shift can be witnessed in the presentation of these individuals, from being subject to pariahzation to becoming survivors or politically informed and privileged individuals. This aspect needs to be studied crucially as it is an

understudied area and it shows a forceful resistance towards the prevailing constructed ideas of gender binary and a resistance towards the notion that individuals who do not conform to this genderism are abnormal, strange, pariahs, or less than human beings. The present study aims to analyze the same phenomenon in I.W Gregorio's *None of the Above* (2015) and Laxmi Narayan Tripathi's memoir *Me Hijra Me Laxmi* (2015), in which the marginalized protagonists reveal themselves as empowered individuals of the society whilst demonstrating an opposition against the constructed genderism and the prevailing beliefs akin to it.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. How are the main characters affected by genderism and transphobia resulting in gender bashing/pariahzation in the selected texts?
2. In what ways are the main characters successful in negotiating rehumanization in their lives and escaping the victim position in the selected texts?

#### **1.5 Delimitation**

So far, a considerable number of texts dealing with transgender stories have been produced but the current study is delimited to I.W Gregorio's *None of the Above* (2015) and Laxmi Narayan Tripathi's *Me Hijra Me Laxmi* (2015). These literary texts are analysed in the light of:

- i. Daryl B. Hill's concept of genderism, transphobia, and gender bashing and,
- ii. Rianna Oelofsen's take on Rehumanization

#### **1.6 Rationale and Significance of the Study**

The narratives produced on the topic of transgenderism need to be studied from a critical perspective. Firstly, because these narratives highlight the stigmatization that is displayed towards transgender individuals and the alienation that forces this community to live an impoverished life in the outskirts of the society while considering their existence a taboo. In addition, these narratives trace various ways in which transgenders encounter physical violence and are deprived of basic human rights while calling into the reader's attention the strict beliefs like genderism that stimulate discriminatory behavior towards the transgender community. This is a crucial topic to be worked on to learn about the stigmatization faced by transgender community. Secondly, with the passage of time a new



aspect of rehumanization can also be witnessed in the narratives produced about transgenders. This deviation from the traditional representation of transgenders in narratives also serves as an essential topic to be studied as it promotes the visibility of transgenders in the society as normal human beings. Thirdly, it has to be mentioned that the nature of the selected texts is different. One of the texts, *Me Laxmi Me Hijra* is a memoir which deals with the real-life events while the other text *None of the Above* is a novel. The current research will also help to give more authenticity of the portrayal concerning marginalization and rehumanization of transgender individual in the fictional work. These three are the primary reasons for the initiation of the current study.

Furthermore, the current study will contribute not only to the existing stock of knowledge in the field of literature, but it is also socially significant as it will enrich the knowledge about genderism, transphobia, and the marginalization of transgender individuals. It will enable the reader to know about the ways in which the transgender community face pariahzation as well as it will also make the reader aware of the reasons which lead to transgender stigmatization. So far, the transgender narratives have been mostly researched on from the othering or marginalization point of view, but the current research deals with the rehumanization aspect of transgenders as well. So, the binary nature of the current research will help the future researchers to study the narratives from a different perspective. As a result, the future researchers will be able to uncover those areas in literature which have not been studied yet.

### **1.7 Brief Introduction of the writer Laxminarayan Tripathi**

Laxmi Narayan Tripathi alias Laxmi is an Indian Hijra/Transgender rights activist. Laxmi also excels her skills as an actor, writer, dancer, choreographer, and motivational speaker in Mumbai. Laxmi is also the Acharya Mahamandaleshwar [a supreme individual who is responsible for setting the rules of an akhada], of Kinnar Akhada. She was born on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1978 in Thane to a traditional Brahman family. She completed her schooling at Beam Paradise School Kopri and achieved an arts degree from Mithibai College Mumbai. Though born as the eldest son of her parents she embraced her identity as a hijra in 1998.

Laxmi is the first Indian Hijra representator of the Asia Pacific in the UN in the year 2008 where she raised the problems faced by sexuality non-conformists. She has also enjoyed her appearances on many TV programs and was also a contestant on the reality

show Big Boss in 2011. She was also a part of the award-winning documentary *Between the Line-India's Third Gender* directed by Thomas Wartmann. Other than excelling in her talent in the field of media she is the author of the memoir *Me Hijra Me Laxmi*. Her other book *Red Lipstick: The Men in my Life* was published in 2016.

### **1.8 *Me Hijra Me Laxmi*: An Overview of the Memoir**

*Me Hijra, Me Laxmi* by Laxmi Narayan Tripathi (Translated by R. Raj Rao and P. G Joshi) is a memoir which is published in 2015. Written from the first person's point of view, the memoir gives us a firsthand account of the experiences faced by Laxmi, when she identifies herself as a Hijra. The beginning chapters of the novel provide us with an insight into Laxmi's early childhood. Being an asthmatic boy and surrounded by some other illnesses Laxmi does not get to enjoy the trivial things in her childhood. The only thing which makes her happy was dancing. However, that too came at a cost, because of her effeminate movements the people start calling her names like chakka and homo. Besides being called names, at the age of seven during her visit to a family wedding she is raped by one of her cousins. This vicious cycle does not stop here, and she is continuously molested, and exploited by the elder male cousins and their friends. After providing a brief detail about her childhood and her short-lived love affairs Laxmi then writes about her dancing career. Laxmi writes that her elder sister, Rukmini, was her first teacher and later Laxmi at standard 8<sup>th</sup> establishes a dance academy named after her mother "Vidya Nritya Niketan". She then meets Deepak Salvi with whom she jointly establishes a dancing academy named Lucky Chap Academy. Laxmi writes it was during this time that Laxmi starts wearing girls' clothes and attends parties as a drag queen.

The turn of events takes place when Laxmi meets hijra Shabina. Laxmi after meeting Shabina realizes that she belongs to the Hijra community. She decides to embrace her identity and visits Lucky Compound at Byculla where all Hijra heads lived. She goes straight to Shabina's guru Lata Nayak and becomes a hijra. She then meets Lata Guru and becomes her chela. However, till this time she manages to keep this a secret from her parents until one day the government of India out-laws homosexuality under section 377 and calls it an unnatural process. A protest erupts and Laxmi also joins it. Laxmi's secret unravels when she gives an interview to an Indian channel zee tv. Soon after that the news of her being a hijra spreads like fire, her mother calls her home. When Laxmi reaches her home, her father lectures Laxmi about ruining their family reputation

while her mother wails, and then they stop talking to her all at once. Laxmi then herself becomes a guru on Tijja, a festival which is celebrated by Hijras in Muharram.

From the later part of the memoir, we learn that Laxmi also becomes a member of the DAI Welfare Society (DWS). Through her meetings with other hijras, she tries to educate them on many sexually transmitted diseases (STD), especially AIDS. In the meantime, her parents decide to marry her off to a girl to treat her madness. However, Laxmi stands against her parents' decision. Laxmi then makes an appearance at the Mumbai District AIDS Control Society (MDACS) which also leaves her audience in awe. She also raises her voice when Mr. R.R Patil announces the closing of the bars, leaving the bar dancers in despair as there was nowhere else for them to go and earn money. Laxmi also participates in the tv show "*the Big fight*" where she speaks for the rights of hijras. After this, she meets Atharva Nair, a student at the tata institute of social sciences. Impressed by his intelligence Laxmi offers him to join DWS and to her surprise he does. As DWS was drawing international attention in 2002 and 2003 Dorothy from Germany visits to make a film named *Between the Lines* on the life of hijras of India. Anita Khemka a real-life photographer plays the central role while Laxmi is cast as the heroine.

Laxmi then realizes that DWS is unable to make big differences for the hijra community, so she resigns from it. Laxmi's quest for transgender rights does not stop here instead she along with Kiran and Atharva forms Astitva which helps them to arrange public meetings and educate hijras about their rights. In May 2007 Laxmi goes to Amsterdam to attend the Netherland's transgender film festival. In the meantime, Susan Oxnor invites Laxmi to Amsterdam as a performer. Laxmi takes some other Hijras along with her to perform. Their performance ends getting a great applause from the audience. This Laxmi writes was one of the proudest moments in her life.

After getting fame from all the international events she also gets invited to United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS). She learns about Thailand's kathoey and meets Kartini Salma of Malaysia-the first transgenders of her country to stand out and speak for transgender rights. Kartini offers Laxmi to become a founder-member of the Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers a foundation that works for the rights of Malaysian, Thailand, Singaporean, Indian, Pakistani, Nepali, and Bangladeshi sex workers and Laxmi accepts the offer.

In the final chapters of the memoir, Laxmi writes about her experience with TV. *Boogie Woogie* was the first show in which she appeared for the first time. She then appears in a few other TV shows. She also works in Thomas Wartman's *Between the Lines*. She then meets Nishita Jain who makes a documentary titled *Slut* on the life of Laxmi. She also gets invited to *Dus ka Dam* a TV show hosted by Salman Khan and later she also participates in *Big Boss*. After the great success in *Big Boss*, she gets invited as a speaker to Gym Khana party where the CEO of the gymkhana Brigadier R K Bose makes her leave the party for her being a hijra. Further Laxmi to debunk the idea that hijras are ugly creatures holds a successful hijras beauty pageant show naming it *The Indian Super Queen Contest*.

In the last part of the memoir, Laxmi shares her efforts to un-stigmatize the hijra community of India. She also establishes a support group named the Maharashtra Trutiya Panthi Sanghata (MTPS) in which she fights for the fundamental rights of the hijras. Laxmi along with her other companions in a meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> November at Sahyadri Guest house also put forward the proposal of having an Aadhaar card, hijra education, and jobs for hijras. The chief minister makes sure their voice will be heard and presents them with certificates of appreciation. Laxmi then ends the memoir with a note that there is still more to do for the rights of transgenders in India as this community is still a pariah in the society.

### **1.9 Brief Introduction of the novelist I.W. Gregorio**

I.W. Gregorio is a general urologist in Philadelphia. Along with being a urologist by profession, she has also marked her name in the field of literature. She did her MD at Yale and her residency at Stanford. During her residency period, Gregorio met an intersex patient who evoked her to produce her masterpiece, *None of the Above* in April 2015. Her novel *None of the Above* was nominated for the Lambda Literary Award 2016 and was enlisted in the 2016 American Library Association Rainbow List. *This is My Brain in Love*, is her second novel which was published in 2020. Currently, she is a member of interACT (Advocates for Intersex Youth). Gregorio is also the founder of We Need Diverse Books. Most of her writings have been published in The Washington Post, Newsweek, San Francisco Chronicle, San Jose Mercury News, New York Daily News, Scientific American, and Journal of General Internal Medicine.

### **1.10 *None of the Above*: An Overview of the Novel**

*None of the Above* by I.W Gregorio is a novel that revolves around the life of a girl named Kristine Lattimer alias Krissy who has recently turned 18. Her life is going pretty well, she has a boyfriend named Sam and two childhood best friends named Vee and Faith. We are introduced to Krissy, Sam, and her friends in the first chapter of the novel. Krissy meets Darren Kowalski at a party and from their conversation it is revealed that after Krissy's mother's death, Darren's mother and Krissy's father have dated for a few months. Moreover, we are also given the information that Vee has set a double date for Krissy and since then it has been five months Sam and Krissy are in a relationship.

After leaving the party Krissy and Sam try to make out for the first time but Krissy could not bear the pain and they had to stop. The thought of not being able to perform sexually worries Krissy and while talking to Vee about it—not giving the details—she asks Vee her gynecologist's number, pretending she just wants to make sure she is not pregnant. Everything in Krissy's life moves smoothly until the next day when she goes to the doctor who reveals that Krissy does not have a uterus instead, she has a pair of gonads. The doctor further explains that Krissy has a genetic syndrome known as Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS) which makes her neither a woman nor a man. The doctor then makes an appointment for Krissy with Dr. Cheng next Monday at 4 p.m. so Krissy and her father might talk to that doctor about the gonadectomy, and the complications related to it. From this revelation onwards Krissy's life starts falling apart. On Monday, Krissy and her father go to see Dr. Cheng. Dr. Cheng explains to them what AIS is and how it works. Dr. Cheng further assures them that they do not need gonadectomy as there is no risk of cancer and she further gives them information about the AIS support groups.

Krissy's father though stressed himself shows support to Krissy. He joins few parents' support groups who have children with AIS and does a lot of research about it. He further encourages Krissy to join one of the support groups and on her father's insistence Krissy emails a girl, named Maggie Blankman, with AIS. During lunch at school, Sam reminds Krissy of Andy Sullivan's hot tub party. When she reaches home, she gets a call from Maggie. Maggie tells Krissy her story that she was only five when her parents found out that she had AIS. Krissy then asks Maggie different questions regarding AIS which Maggie patiently answers.

The party day arrives and Vee picks Krissy to the party. When they reach there Krissy out of fear that her identity will be revealed, and she will again not be able to make out with Sam gets drunk. After a while, she finds herself on a bed with Sam in one of the rooms at Andy Sullivan's. When Sam falls asleep Krissy gets out of the room and sneaks into the washroom where she finds Vee helping the drunk Faith to recover. Krissy in pain tells Vee about her condition. The scene ends there and the next day when Vee does not contact Krissy, she out of curiosity goes to Faith's house. She re-tells Faith that she is intersex as Faith did not know anything about the last night because she was not decent.

On Monday Faith comes to pick Krissy up for school, and Krissy at that moment finds out that her secret is revealed and the whole school including Sam knows about it. In the meantime, a message pops on her cell phone when she opens it, she sees a photoshopped picture of a man with Krissy's face and with the caption Krissy the hermaphrodite. Krissy feels disgusted about Vee's inability to keep a secret. When she reaches school, she tries to talk to Sam and explain the whole thing to him but instead of listening Sam calls Krissy a whore and leaves her while some of the students around her make fun of her by calling her Kristopher.

In the meantime, the whole school comes to know about Krissy's condition. The next day when she goes to school, she finds out that someone has painted the words Stay away faggot on her locker. She feels humiliated. The same day she meets her coach Auerbach who tells Krissy that the other teams have filed a case of cheating on her and demanded an investigation since Krissy has a male condition and she was playing in a girls' team. Coach tells Krissy that she will not be able to participate until things are clear. Krissy comes back home and decides she wants to remove gonads from her body and the surgery is performed. After the surgery, she decides to take a break from the school as she cannot withstand the humiliation anymore. Krissy keeps on spending her days in her room.

Miss Diaz from her school visits her when Krissy stops going to school. Miss Diaz suggests Krissy to get home schooling facility till she feels okay. Miss Diaz then asks Krissy about the community service project which every student has to do. Krissy tells Miss Diaz that she does not want to continue doing it with Vee, Sam, and Bruce rather she wants to opt for a new one. Miss Diaz politely agrees and hands her a list with organizations names from which she can choose one. Meanwhile Dr Cheng suggests Krissy to see Dr LaForte, a psychiatrist, and Krissy starts seeing her.

After going through the list which Miss Diaz had provided, Krissy chooses to volunteer for Caritas Health Clinic as it was far away from the school and only two students Jessica and Darren had volunteered to work there. One day Krissy decides to go to a bar alone. There she meets Josh and in fear that people will recognize her as intersex she tells Josh a fake name. Meanwhile Krissy meets Gretchen—a girl about whom Maggie Blankman once told her about. She meets Gretchen and they become friends instantly. At the same time Krissy tries to adjust in her new life. She feels attracted towards Darren. At the same time Krissy tries to explain things to Sam, but he refuses to listen.

As the novel unfolds Krissy comes to know that Vee never told anyone her secret but rather it was Faith who accidentally told Sam about her condition. Krissy forgives her and apologizes to Vee. Gretchen asks Krissy if she wants to go on a concert with her, Krissy accepts the offer and when she arrives there, she meets Josh who at once recognizes her as Krissy the intersex. Josh then tries to rape her in the meantime Darren arrives who was also there with his friends. A scene is created, and the police arrives. When the matter gets over Darren confesses his feelings for Krissy. He tells her that a person does not fall for someone because of her/his chromosome but a person falls in love with an individual being. Krissy feels happy. In the last chapter of the novel, we learn that Krissy has put herself together. She makes a new Facebook id and adds the people who were nice to her even after knowing that she is an intersex. She then decides to join her school as she was already lacking behind in her studies. The novel ends with Krissy being hopeful that her new life will be a beautiful one.

## **1.11 Chapter Breakdown**

The current research is divided into six chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction: this chapter provides brief background of the study along with thesis statement, research questions, objectives, significance and rationale of the study, delimitation, introduction to the writers, summary of the selected texts and chapter breakdown of the research.

Chapter 2: Review of the literature: this chapter includes the critically reviewed work related to the key terms and the works that have already been carried out on the selected literary texts.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology: this chapter provides information about the research design, research method, research tools and theoretical framework used to carry out the research.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis: Part I-In this chapter the relevant material from the selected texts is analyzed to substantiate the argument presented by Daryl B. Hill in the selected texts.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis: Part II-In this chapter the relevant material from the selected texts is analyzed to substantiate the argument presented by Rianna Oelofsen in the selected texts.

Chapter 6: Conclusion: in this chapter a conclusion is deduced while ratifying the thesis statement and answering the research questions. After that, further recommendations are given to the future researchers with respect to the current study.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

The second chapter of the research scrutinizes the plethora of research produced on transgender issues along with the perception of rehumanization while thoroughly focusing on each one of these elements. Arlene Fink in her book *Conducting Research Literature Reviews: From the Internet to Paper* defines literature review as an organized, systematized, distinct and recreate able technique for analysing, assessing, and incorporating the available work done by other literary scholars and researchers (Fink 3). While reviewing the significance of literature review Aveyard declares that the literature review in any research work is essential since it compiles the available data or works produced on a particular subject matter. In addition to this, literature review helps to find and evaluate different works produced on single research thus making it easy to find various works related to the topic in particular research. Moreover, Aveyard asserts that it also helps finding out the gap that is needed to be researched on (Aveyard 4-5).

The review trilogy of current research subsumes: (1) Pariahzation of Transgenders/Hijras (because of genderism, transphobia, and gender bashing) (2) Rehumanization and (3) Works related to the selected texts. Critical reviews on these key terms have been examined carefully and ordered as suited to the researcher to furnish a well-grounded base to the research.

#### 2.2 Pariahzation of Transgenders/ Hijras

Judith Butler in her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* investigates the gender dichotomy. She remonstrates the fact that sex determines gender. Butler states that the dichotomic division of sex remains unproblematic but it does not refer to the fact that the dichotomic division of gender is also not debatable. She further claims that gender is something that is not dependent on the biology (Butler 9), rather it is dependent on the “cultural meaning” that is associated with individuals (Butler 12). She further claims in her book that the gender binary needs to be debunked to validate other identities and as long as this gender dichotomy will be naturalized it will be complicated for individuals who cannot identify themselves with the gender binary and these individuals will be othered and treated as pariahs (Butler 149). This concern presented by

Butler is authentic since, human beings who do not associate themselves with the fixed gender system are treated as freaks and are looked down upon by gender conforming individuals.

The western society comprises of only two sexes and even its language is bi-gendered states Anne-Fausto Sterling in her article *The Five Sexes* (Sterling 68). This binarism according to Sterling is a flawed system because it is unable to incorporate, or it fails to provide an understanding of other individual beings who belong outside this binarism. Sterling emphasizes on the fact that there are sexualities other than the binary ones and the society, or the culture has named these sexualities intersex. According to Sterling the intersex people should not be just put under one umbrella term of intersex rather there should be three different categories for them according to their bodily conditions. She names the categories as “herms, merms and fermes” (Sterling 69). This suggestion put forward by Sterling will help the intersex individuals to be able to associate with the proposed categories rather than trying to adhere to the fixed binary, which according to my view will help the particular individuals to overcome the trauma of not being able to associate themselves with the fixed binary.

Vijlbrief, Sawitri and Ghorashi study the gender nonbinary narratives of selected individuals using Judith Butler’s idea of dismantling the gender dichotomy. In their study *Transcending the gender binary: Gender non-binary young adults in Amsterdam*, using a qualitative approach they claim that “gender non-binary young people are facing contradictory processes of inclusion and exclusion, and though they are experiencing a growing visibility, they experience stigmatization at the same time” (Vijlbrief, et al. 101). They state that gender binary i.e., being affiliated with masculinity or femininity is one of the main reasons the trans community face identity crisis and it is because of binary gender that they consider themselves pariahs and continuously want a sense of belonging. It is quite right to say that individuals who cannot associate with the two set ideas of gender face exclusion in their lives. These individuals being considered pariahs are excluded from every sphere of life. While on the other hand to be accepted some of the intersex individuals go through life threatening surgeries to be able to fit in the society, thus making the particular individuals to suffer even more.

Davidson and Lee assert that gender is a “social and cultural” belief that explains how a boy, or a girl must act in every aspect of life be it wearing clothes, talking habits, making decisions or etc. They assert that individuals not identifying themselves with the

assigned gender by the society face discrimination and marginalization. The society in which these individuals live take this gender “non-conformity” as unbearable and unsupportable. The marginalization of the individuals not only effects the surrounding environment but also the mental health of an individual. They claim that though gender binary is being dismantled recently but the vilifying of binary nonconformity is still present in today’s world (Lee and Davidson 528-537). It is worth mentioning here that in any society or culture individuals showing signs of gender expression other than the appointed ones are disapproved and prohibited.

Ina Goel elucidates the different elements to consider about gender binary and intersex individuals in her article *Beyond Gender Binarism*. According to her individuals who are born with both genitalia are not included in the gender binary or the gender dichotomy. Right after they are born their parents decide their sex and without considering the health issues operate their bodies. She states that the parents out of guilt decide the sex based on their child’s reproductive potential rather on the child’s health. Later in life most of these individuals who have gone through genital surgeries are unable to recognize oneself with one of the imposed genders from the gender dichotomy thus thinking of themselves as social pariahs. Goel further emphasizes that assigning the sex should not be based on the reproductive or societal norms rather it should also incorporate the health issues of individuals who do not imply to gender binary (Goel 77-78). It can be indicated that the absence of the freedom of choosing one’s own gender identity leads to further problems for the gender non-conformists. As choosing the gender identity is totally based on the choice of a particular individual hence, the imposition of any gender on an individual can be condemned.

Furthermore, a quantitative analysis titled *Transphobic Hate Crime in European Union* carried on by Dr. Lewis Turner and his companions reveals that trans individuals are thrice more prone to gender based violence in comparison to the violence inflicted on gays and lesbians. While being more vulnerable to violence the trans individuals find it hard to highlight their issues and raise a voice for their rights under the ensign LGBT. In addition to this according to the research the transwomen are more likely to face violence than the transmen based on the reason that transwomen are recognized more as trans than men. Hence creating a violence vulnerable environment for the transwomen. However, this does not eliminate the fact that transmen are also subjected to violence and thus an examination of violence perpetrated towards transmen should also be carried out. The

research further suggests that there should be more work done to recognize the violence and hatred crimes that are based on transphobia (Turner et al. 29-30). Moreover, it can be agreed that individuals who go through surgeries to get accepted by the society are not at once acknowledged rather these individuals are tagged as people having unnatural or unconventional genders.

A national transgender discrimination survey held in U.S comprising of 6,450 gender diverse participants resulted that these individuals were subject to marginalization and social isolation thus, treating them as social pariahs of the society. As per this report the transgender individuals face discrimination in every aspect of their lives be it education, basic health rights or career opportunities. Starting from their childhood these individuals face rejection by their parents for not conforming to the fixed traditional gender binary and the gender roles associated with these genders. Further these individuals are also subject to social exclusion for not fulfilling the normative gender roles and not being able to associate themselves with the traditional genderism. The report claims that these individuals because of their ambiguous gender identity and ambiguity in their gender performativity experience discrimination as well as physical and mental atrocities (Grant et al. 2). Clearly, it can be argued from the discussion that individuals with a different gender identity and showing a different gender expression other than the ideal ones are subjected to physical, mental, and emotional stigmatization.

Erni considers the transgender rights' breach and the sexual violence towards transgenders that takes place in the prisons of Hong Kong. While being subjected to earn income through immoral means these individuals also face marginalization in the prisons where no proper documentation of their rights is present leading to the inhumane treatment of these individuals in such correction institutions. Furthermore, Erni claims that the transwomen face more marginalization than the transmen in the prisons and in addition to this these individuals face humiliation in the prisons such as they must go through gender identity tests where their clothes are stripped off and forcing them to indulge in sexual activities. This highlights the absence of policies to protect transgender prisoners' rights, thus creating another space where gender essentialism subjects the transgenders to pariahzation (Erni 154-155). Here, it will not be incorrect to mention that trans people are deprived from the basic rights of education and earning thus forcing them to choose immoral acts like stealing, and prostitution to live, which makes them criminals and thus, it further leads to their inhumane treatment in the moral institutions.

Furthermore, the alienation and marginalization faced by transgender individuals not only by the society but also by their families has a severe effect on the health of transgenders claim Yadegarfard and his fellow researchers. In the article *Family Rejection, Social Isolation, and Loneliness as Predictors of Negative Health Outcomes (Depression, Suicidal Ideation, and Sexual Risk Behavior) Among Thai Male-to-Female Transgender Adolescents* the researchers while carrying out a quantitative analysis assert that the loneliness factor is more in transgender adolescents as compared to the cisgender adolescents. The major elements which contribute to the loneliness factors are social exclusion, rejection by their families and treating them as pariahs. This in return force the transgender individuals to seek comfort through engaging in drugs and alcohol thus making them prone to diseases like HIV. The researchers conclude in their analysis that the social exclusion and the rejection faced by the family are the major causes of negative health in transgender adolescents (Yadegarfard et al. 359-361). This revelation by Yadegarfard and his fellow researchers can be deemed as an emphasizes on the pariahzation of transgender individuals which negatively effects not only the mental health of the trans individuals, but it also puts their health and lives into risk.

Dr. Gentry while reviewing the status of transgender individuals in U.S in his paper *Social Inequality and Marginalization of Transgender Individuals* assert that this community faces alienation and marginalization in many aspects of life. They are deprived from basic health rights, education, right to earn through respectable ways and are treated with inequality. Trans individuals, mostly transwomen, go through such atrocities. Dr. Gentry claims race is among one of the factors that add up to this pariahzation. It serves as a major cause of this alienation and marginalization. Gentry proposes that this marginalization can be ended if trans individuals are taken as normal human beings rather than considering their gender, race, sexual inclination etc. Further he suggests that while working for trans rights, the atrocities face by trans women should be kept in mind as this specific subgroup is the most alienated group in the patriarchal society (Gentry 126-127). The revelations by Dr Gentry regarding the pariahzation of transgenders is acceptable however, not only transwomen but transmen are also subjected to atrocities and are also treated as pariahs when they try to associate themselves with the chosen gender.

Danon while critically analyzing the life of intersex people in Israel concludes that the specific community faces the similar alienation and marginalization. They are treated not more than pariahs of the society. While most of the times these individuals are

subjected to physical torture but in his article, Danon has talked about the mental torture and trauma which the individuals go through, and this torture or trauma is imposed through forcing them to keep their so-called abnormal identity a secret. The secret burdens an intersex's mind with stress, depression and the individuals are traumatized. Danon further claims that the burden of not only keeping a secret but also going through secret surgeries to fix their bodies creates a sense of alienation towards their bodies and the individuals themselves consider their bodies strange and odd. However, these individuals being unable to hide their bodily conditions are subjected to further pain, mental stress, and depression (Danon 11). It can be agreed that being an intersex makes an individual prone to different physical atrocities while considering the physical atrocities a primary issue the mental health or the mental trauma which the intersex individual face is given a secondary importance. However, it is also necessary to give this matter an equal importance.

Elizabeth Reis finds it problematic to refer to intersex condition as a disorder of sex development. The reason which Reis presents while considering the phrase problematic is that the word disorder creates an idea that the genitalia of a particular individual has not developed properly or has developed poorly thus does not function properly and which leads to the idea that the genitals need to be repaired. While on the other hand Reis asserts that these genitals unquestionably do not need any repair surgeries or hormonal procedures. Reis in her article suggests that instead of referring to the intersex condition as a disorder of sex development it must be referred as "divergence of sex development". This change of the word will help the intersex individuals to feel less freakish and will help the families and medical organizations to look at the individuals from a less negative perspective (Reis 539-541). It will be quite right to say that associating the anatomy of genitals with some disorder will force in thinking of them as something to be corrected. Hence, instead of considering those genitals to be abnormal they should be referred as differently developed genitals.

"Postgenderism is an extrapolation of ways that technology is eroding the biological, psychological and social role of gender, and an argument for why the erosion of binary gender will be liberatory" (Dvorsky and Hughes), claim Dvorsky and Hughes in their research article *Postgenderism: Beyond the Gender Binary*. In this article they explain the matter that in this world of technology gender binary will no longer negatively impact the individuals as it does. The technologies will enable people to reproduce being

a man or a woman and artificial wombs will be made to produce babies. Thus, this will result in the fact that the gender binary will no longer be a threat to the individuals' chosen identities rather the individuals will be able to choose the gender of their own choice. The gender identity will no longer be based on gender dichotomy. However, I as a researcher do not agree with the proposed stance as the science is already able to transform a man into a woman and vice versa but still these trans women and trans men face stigmatization and are excluded from the society while treating them as pariahs.

Raina writes that the intersex individuals are neither categorized as male nor as female and they have long been encountering societal rejection and desertion. According to him these individuals are not only rejected by the society but by their families as well which leads them to face "identity crisis" (Raina 829). Raina takes help of the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* by Arundhati Roy to highlight the miseries faced by these individuals in real life. He asserts that these intersex individuals are living their lives trying to fit in, in the socially constructed gender dichotomy by associating with one or the other gender or they live their lives being marginalized by the society. They because of their obscure gender are isolated and dream of a "Khuwabgah" where every human being can live freely (Raina 837). The stance presented by Raina can be agreed with since, it highlights the pariahzation faced by the transgender community. The trans individuals in fact time and again go through existential crisis for not being able to correspond to the gender binary.

### **2.3 Rehumanization**

Corrias in his article discusses the concept of Rehumanization with reference to Duch's case- S 21. Duch was the manager of Tuol Sleng Prison where under his supervision several hate crimes, atrocities and violence was committed against the Cambodian prisoners. Corrias describes his acts as something beyond humanity. What he has done is dehumanization but at the same time he asserts the stance that what Duch did was out of fear of being killed by his superiors. He puts forward the question that whether it is possible that the Rehumanization of Duch may occur as his acts were something imposed on him by his seniors. Corrias emphasizes on the question that does Rehumanization of Duch is possible after committing the atrocities to other human beings and if rehumanized is he useful for the future humanity? (Corrias 360-362). The process of rehumanization can be sometimes considered a crucial one. Here the rehumanization of Duch can be considered impossible since he has committed some brutal actions.

However, it can be inferred that despite being a perpetrator of atrocities the process of rehumanization can be attained if Duch achieves an ability to think individually with his own conscience that the reality of the other is constructed by his superiors rather than being real.

Moreover, the problem with U.S war movies and war movies in general is that they glorify the soldiers as heroes while encouraging the existence of wars. The concept of war along with the characters of soldiers are romanticized and portrayed in a heroic way states Kelly Wilz. In addition to this Kelly Wilz stresses on the stance that in wars the enemy is dehumanized by creating ideas that best fit in the national interest of the country. The same phenomenon has been represented in many movies where the othering and dehumanization of the enemy occurs. However, Wilz has used Kenneth Bruke's stance of consubstantiality and Linda Hutcheon's idea of oscillation to critically analyze the movies *Jarhead*. Wilz concludes her analysis by remarking that *Jarhead* deviates from the conforming ideas of war movies while trying to rehumanize the soldiers and the enemies. Swofford the main character shows rebelliousness towards the dehumanizing training given to them while reconsidering the manipulative ideas thus paving a way towards the process of rehumanization (Wilz 581-609). It can be agreed that war is indeed often romanticized. The bloodshed and killing is often portrayed as something essential to fight the dehumanized enemy and the ideas are constructed which assure wars are necessary and are naturally occurring events.

Laura Rediehs claims that in these changing times we are heading towards a world where the economic bodies are subjecting the "workers" and the "consumers" to dehumanization. The workers are paid less and threatened to be replaced if they ask for an increase in their pays. While the consumers are dehumanized in the way that they are not able to differentiate between the real needs and the fictional needs. Redieh asserts that the economic bodies feed into the customer's mind the needs and thus the customer ends up spending the hard-earned money on the fictional needs. She further suggests that the process of Rehumanization is keeping the human beings and their real need in the top priority. And to achieve this Rehumanization the economic bodies need to be debunked and have to keep under control this complex system (Rediehs). This stance presented by Rediehs can be considered a critique on the capitalist society where realities are constructed while keeping in the mind the products produced instead of keeping in the



mind the consumer's needs and in order to alter this phenomenon the process of rehumanization is evident.

Dehumanization of a rival is the most atrocious aspect of a conflict between two groups or more claims Saguy and his co researchers. According to them it is evident that if a group person inflicts harm on the member of another group the second group can be subjected to severe process of dehumanization for condoning the violence. Saguy and his co researchers performed an experiment by handing Israeli- Jews information about the Palestinians is to be helped or not by their group and the result was that there was a greater sign of humanization. But when the same thing was done by a third person the result was opposite and "the rehumanization effect was not obtained". They emphasize that dehumanization is not restricted to the morality. They further claim that "the rehumanization of the out-group as a result of awareness of in-group help might also be a result of normative influence" (Saguy et al. 551-558). It must be mentioned here that it will not be wrong to say that the process of dehumanization occurs because of lack of morality. It is the moral values which differentiate the wrong from the right. However, the morality is constructed differently in different societies which may affect the de- and rehumanization process.

Ableism is one of the major factors that contribute to the prejudice behavior shown towards the minority groups in the world claim Karschney and Shaffner. They further argue that despite ableism showing signs in all over the world retaining the minority group to disgust this phenomenon has long been ignored by the psychologist. Ableism according to the researchers create a sense of prejudice as aforementioned and thus as a result lead to the dehumanization of the minority groups. They assert that there is a direct relation between ableism and disgust, or in other words the two variables are directly proportional to each other. Ableism usually targets groups or people with disabilities. The researchers to understand the dehumanization and the element of rehumanization took a sample of one hundred and fifty participants. The research analyzed the data and concluded the finding that the first and foremost step to intervene ableism and creating a dehumanization free environment was to create a barrier in the elements which shows signs of disgust towards people with disabilities (Karschney and Shaffner). Thus, ableism can be considered one of the main factors which promotes or paves way for dehumanization. It enables privileged people to look down upon people with special needs.

Lilles in her research *Rehumanizing the Terrorist: Comparing the Depiction of Terrorists in Academic Theory and Contemporary Fiction* sets a counter argument which rehumanizes the dehumanized idea of the terrorists. Lilles carries out her research on five noted texts published in different times and draws an analysis of the antagonists. While discussing the academic theory on terrorism and terrorist the researcher puts forward her stance that fiction works on a different dimension. She asserts while comparing the representation of terrorists in the academia and fictional narratives that the fiction highlights the factors that force an individual to become a terrorist. Furthermore, it deals with the motives that were behind the process of an individual becoming a terrorist. By reflecting the realities that were behind the making of a terrorist the readers can empathize with the character thus elevating its position from a dehumanized to a rehumanized position (Lilles). It needs to be mentioned here that when a fiction is highlighting the events which forces a character to become a terrorist, the text at the same time also sheds light on the alternate life choices which the character could have made instead of becoming a terrorist. So, it will be valid to infer that the researcher Lilles while analyzing one idea has totally missed the other notion.

Mona Baker studies the negative generalization of the outlanders by the political organizations in her paper. Her focus of attention revolves mainly around three main gambits which are emigrant(s)/immigrant(s), refugee(s) and exile(s). Baker takes help of both the printed and online sources to carry out the research while keeping in mind Foucault's idea of discourse and power. Baker proclaims that the left-wing politics is affected by the right-wing politics. The terms mentioned above are usually linked with negative aspects such as the term refugee is often linked with refugee crisis presenting a dehumanized idea of the refugees. These terms are time-to-time linked with concepts that represents them as problematic. While pointing out this problem Baker considers some Greek translated texts such as *Thucydides' The Peloponnesian War* and *Herodotus's Histories* to reconsider these dehumanized concepts and to bring out them in a more rehumanized way (Baker 1-2). The role of power and discourse cannot be ignored. It is through discourse one can construct the positive and negative image of a particular group or of an individual. So, the stance presented by Baker cannot be denied.

Transgender individuals due to their non-normative gender, experience marginalization in society claims Kanwal. She states that dehumanization of the gender non confirmative individuals is because of the very fact that they are considered less than

human beings. They are stigmatized for not conforming to gender binary and subsequently they suffer from verbal as well as physical abuse. These individuals because of this stigmatization and marginalization struggle to get the basic human rights and an identity of their own in the society. Kanwal stresses on the fact that this transphobia is the main cause of gender bashing. According to her the feelings of hate towards these individuals have caused them to suffer and experience marginalization and oppression. Through this marginalization the intersex individuals are considered less than human beings and as a result it becomes easier for the normal individuals to commit hate crimes against them. However, she states that this dehumanization of the transgender individuals is now being converted to Rehumanization and for this Rehumanization she proposes that it is essential to make these individuals realize their true worth in the society and in broader term in the world (Kanwal 949-961). Here it can be agreed that the rehumanization process of transgenders is necessary to raise them from the victim position to an empowered position in society.

Asadi and Hamdi state while critically analyzing Chinua Achebe's three major works *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *Arrow of God* (1964), and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). The process of rehumanization as per the researchers' stance could not be achieved until and unless the individuals have gone through the process of dehumanization and in Achebe's works the true picture of the colonized being dehumanized by the colonizers has been depicted. Asadi and Hamdi discuss the dehumanization that was inflicted on the colonized individuals by means of violence subjected towards the colonized by colonizers, expropriation of the lands of the local people by the colonizers, while leading the indigenous people to live their lives in a constant state of poverty thus forcing them to exist in slave like position. Moreover, the researchers posit that this dehumanization to be replaced by rehumanization. The researchers assume that it must be countered and to counter this dehumanization while rehumanizing the colonizer, the colonized must overthrow the disruptive colonizer and annihilate and render the colonial weight in the selected texts (Asadi and Hamdi 105-106). It can be assumed from the discussion that the dehumanization can occur in many ways. It is not necessary that the phenomenon of dehumanization can only be witnessed in wars or can only be reflected in powerful discourses produced. Rather it will not be wrong to say that dehumanization also works overtly for instance, the exploitation of someone's land and resources. Moreover, the

process of rehumanization in such cases is possible by taking the necessary steps against the dehumanizing forces.

Schumann and Walton while discussing the victimization of an individual question whether it is possible to self-rehumanize or not. They create a stance by positing a situation where an individual is hurt or mistreated by another individual in other words the individual is dehumanized. The dehumanization face by the individual is then followed by two possible outcomes either the dehumanized individual takes revenge, or the dehumanized individual forgives the other person and restore the humanistic trait. The researchers claim that the victims of dehumanization who forgive the perpetrators show a greater level of rehumanization while on the other hand the victims who chose to take revenge showed a lesser sign of humanness and experienced low levels of rehumanization (Schumann and Walton). It can be inferred from the discussion that human beings thinking ability helps a person to rehumanize or dehumanize. Therefore, it can be deemed that self rehumanization is attainable.

## **2.4 Works related to the Selected Texts**

### **2.4.1 *None of the Above***

*None of the Above* is a novel which enlightens its readers with a very rare kind of intersex condition. This condition impacts only two to five persons per ten thousand people, and it is known as Complete Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (CAIS). Klan states that these intersex conditions are not new, and it does not make an intersex person exceptional being but the fact these conditions are unknown is because the intersex community is considered gender minority and is often invisible to the world. According to Klan this novel highlights the matter that how society expects a male and a female to act in way based on a set of rules while alienating those who are not distinguished as one or the other. This novel helps the readers to question the gender dichotomy present in the society (Klan) while making us aware of the ways in which intersex individuals are stigmatized through the character of Krissy.

Laura writes *None of the Above* by I.W Gregorio is a novel that is about the maltreating of the protagonist named Kristin Lattimer whose identity is on question. Though it does not explain some incidents clearly like the sexual assault which Kristin Lattimer or Krissy suffers from but, overall, it is a very important and a mind-altering novel which gives a lot of information about the life an intersex individual (Review: None

of the Above by I. W. Gregorio"). Furthermore, it must be noted that the novel not only treats the topic of pariahization of transgender individuals rather it also highlights how these individuals can become empowered.

Carpenter Morgan describes the novel as a heartwarming, genuine, and an admiring story of an intersex character who is suffering from an intersex condition called Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS). He states that the reason I.W Gregorio can explain this condition very clearly and acutely in her novel is because before writing the novel she has communicated with different intersex individuals with this condition, and she has conferred to different intersex organizations. Gregorio according to Carpenter has disclosed a true picture of oppression faced by intersex athlete women (Morgan).

Eden Grey praises I.W Gregorio for finely executing her expertise as a physician all through the novel. Gregorio has explained the medical conditions, surgeries, medications in a very simple manner which makes it very easy for the reader to understand them properly and easily. It is a literary fictional text which tells the reader a lot about intersex physical conditions as well as the mental conditions which an intersex individual goes through because of the societal standards of genderism. Grey describes it as a very well written 21<sup>st</sup> century novel by a writer who has an excellent grip on the conditions of intersex individuals (Grey). It will also be correct to state that the novel has incorporated the different negative ideas or stereotypes that are connected to transgenders while at the same time the novel debunks these negative ideas and stereotypes.

Jamie claims *None of the Above* is a novel which compels a reader to re-think and investigate the set ideas about intersex people. She further asserts that the novel sheds light and educates the readers on the topic of intersexuality. In addition to it the novel creates an awareness about self-identity, highlighting the fact that a person can withstand in the society without associating oneself with the fixed standards. Furthermore, the novel advances diverse voices i.e., it encourages diverse identities. Jamie concludes with the statement that the novel *None of the Above* by Gregorio is a re-readable and appreciable work ("Book Talk: *None of the Above* by I.W. Gregorio"). It must be added here that the novel not only educates the reader about the transgender individuals, but it also educates the reader about different terms like gender, sex, alienation and rehumanization etc.

Tiff calls *None of the Above* a thought-provoking novel which elucidates how it is like to be a person who is something between a girl and a boy. Gregorio has very well

explained the condition of Kristin that it leaves impossible for the reader to empathize with the character. Gregorio's precise writing style makes it easy for the readers to know about the Kristin's intersex condition in a very easy way. Tiff further states that it is a book that challenges one's own idea of gender that has been long taught to us right from the beginning of the world. The book emphasizes that gender is not binary rather it is a spectrum thus changing the whole concept of binary gender (Just a Girl Review: *None of the Above* by I.W Gregorio). While at the same time it makes the reader aware of the ways in which the transgender individuals face social exclusion and pariahzation and at the same time it highlights the ways in which the particular individual can be rehumanized.

#### **2.4.2 *Me Laxmi Me Hijra***

Abirami takes help of the concept of trauma to study the memoir *Me Hijra Me Laxmi*. In his research paper Abirami highlights the aspect that how transgenders/Hijras also known as the third gender or eunuch go through different kind of traumas in their lives. The researcher emphasizes on the point that individuals belonging to the third gender face adverse situations and brutalities in their life as compared to those who belong to the traditional gender binary or the gender dichotomy. He further claims that this suffering does not only affects the individuals belonging to third gender socially, but also emotionally and psychologically (Abirami 104-113). Since the eunuch or hijras are not only alienated by the society but also disowned by their families so it will not be wrong to say that these individuals do face emotional as well as psychological trauma.

Similarly, Kavitha a research scholar, while analyzing the memoir *Me Hijra Me Laxmi*, claims that transgenders experience gender identity disorder for not being able to associate themselves with the gender dichotomy. These individuals live their lives in confusion. Kavitha further asserts that the transgenders suffer from Gender dysphoria throughout their lives. They face discrimination for things like cross-dressing, sex reassignment surgeries etc. These individuals according to Kavitha are not only considered odd by the society but they themselves are facing continuous confusion. Their whole life is surrounded by traumas of not being able to fit into the society (Kavitha 108-113). As the protagonist of the memoir is cat called and time and again referred to as a person bringing shame to the family. So, it has to be mentioned here that this behavior of the people results in forcing the protagonist to think that she is suffering from a problem or is abnormal, thus, leading the protagonist to face identity crisis.

Chowdhury and Bhattacharjee consider Butler's theory of performativity along with Ruth Vanit and Saleem Kidwai's concept of Queer love, and Nivedita Menon's concept of Queer Identity to study the memoir *Me Hijra Me Laxmi*. The scholars argue that this memoir is critical contribution to the Indian society to realize that whether the governmental policies on the queer identities are being accepted in the general society or not. They further discuss that the struggles of being accepted as a separate normal gender are still prevailing in the society or not. However, the scholars conclude that the queer individuals or the eunuchs are still struggling with their identity to be accepted (Chowdhury and Bhattacharjee 16-24). It is to be agreed here that the transgender individuals are still facing marginalization in the Indian society as well as all around the world. The individuals are treated as pariahs for not being able to adhere to the fixed gender system.

Livya inspects the importance of dance as art in a society. She claims that art plays an important role in any society. It creates an environment which incorporates acceptance towards change, difference, and negotiates shift in peoples' perspective. Livya scrutinizes the character of Laxmi Narayan Tripathi and proclaims that dance plays a very important role in the life of Laxmi. The researcher claims that despite Laxmi being alienated by her family and friends she finds peace in dancing. Laxmi tries to negotiate solace in her through this hobby. Livya highlights in her research that despite Hijras having a sacred position in India these individuals are not given due respect and are considered unworthy and dirty. When Laxmi identified herself as hijra she also faced the same hate and disgust. Livya claims that it was through her love of dance and her practice of it that she was able to make herself a part of society. Through her dancing skills Livya concludes that she made her place in the society and stood as a role model for other hijras of the country (Varghese 443-445). However, the researcher, Livya, misses the contrasting aspect that although dancing did help Laxmi to become an empowered individual but at the same time this form of gender expression by Laxmi also resulted in the marginalization of the protagonist.

Ishrat Jahan carries out a comparative analysis of the two texts *Me Hijra Me Laxmi: An autobiography of Laxmi Narayan Tripathi* and *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*. She analyzes the life of main characters, Laxmi and Revathi, of the texts. Jahan discusses in her work that the set traditional gender system consists of two genders only which are male and female. All human beings are categorized as either male or female and those

individuals who do not fit into this category are discriminated and othered. The same issue is reflected in the texts, the characters are unable to associate themselves with the set standards fall into the dilemma of to be or not to be. However, both the characters as per Jahan's analysis end up having different fates. Laxmi escapes her victim position while Revathi continues to live as a victim (Jahan 2010-2012). The comparative analysis by the researcher indicates and emphasizes that the gender queer individuals face marginalization, so it will be evident to assert here that the transgender individuals are treated as pariahs in any society by gender binary conformists. However, the consequences of the stigmatization can be different for different individuals.

## **2.5 Minding the Gap**

Transgender novels are usually analysed from a point of view which deals with traumas that the characters face, the discrimination and the alienation, the quest for identity and the typical stereotypes that are attached to them. There is a great obsession among the research scholars to study the plight and pain of the transgender community. However, it is also important to look at the narratives from a different angle. The same obsession of analysing the transgender struggles can be seen in the articles produced on the memoir *Me Hijra Me Laxmi*. Despite being a redemptive narration, meaning that it is not only emphasizing on the struggles but also highlighting a forceful resistance towards the gender binary and accepting the identity of a Hijra, the memoir is still not been researched on from this angle. While on the other hand the novel *None of the Above* despite dealing with such a crucial issue has not been researched on from any angle. So, in order to fulfill this gap, I as a researcher has analysed the selected texts from pariahzation as well as rehumanization perspective in the light of Hill's and Oelofsen's concepts of Genderism, transphobia, and gender bashing and rehumanization respectively.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The preceding chapter dealt with definitions of key terms along with various research produced on transgender marginalization and focused on the disparities faced by transgender individuals in their daily life, as well as how genderism becomes one of the main root causes of pariahzation of the particular community. It also analyzed different views on gender bashing thus reviewing how these individuals are subject to various blatant discriminations based on their identities. The previous chapter also incorporated the aspect of transphobia analyzed by different scholars in their works while inferring how this phenomenon adds up to the pariahzation of transgender individuals. Furthermore, the concept of rehumanization anatomized by different scholars has also been discussed in the previous chapter. The discussion in the previous chapter insinuates it is evident that the transgender community ought to face challenges in the present world. The current chapter however discusses the approach, method, and theoretical framework.

#### **3.1 Qualitative Approach**

Corbin and Strauss suggest that qualitative research deals with the events, happenings, attitudes, feelings, and lives of people. Along with-it qualitative research also deals with on existing/existed campaigns, state interplay, and cultural phenomenon. They further claim that qualitative analysis is a non-numerical/ non-arithmetical explanation of the unsorted knowledge that is later organized and interpreted in accordance with the [selected] theoretical framework (Strauss and Corbin 11). For this reason, qualitative research is suitable to answer what and how queries (Creswell and Poth xx). Therefore, the current study used qualitative approach to carry out the research. Since the research was solely based on analysis of the quotes from the selected text so no graphs, tables, bars, pie charts or numbers were used.

#### **3.2 Research Method**

Gabriel Griffin in his book *Research Methods for English Studies* gives liberty to the researcher for choosing his/her own methods and techniques with respect to the intended research to carry out the study (Griffin 3). So, the research method that I used to accentuate the theoretical concepts of Daryl B. Hill and Oelofsen in the selected texts *None of the Above* and *Me Hijra Me Laxmi* was textual analysis, presented by Catherine

Belsey. According to Belsey textual analysis focuses on understanding something out of a particular text. The interpretations in the textual analysis come from the readers side and are no more at the writer's disposal (Griffin 164). To perform textual analysis, first a detailed reading was given to the selected literary texts through the lens of the preselected theories while highlighting the quotations, words and phrases that were related to the selected theories. The selected texts were given another read to make sure that no important point was remained unnoticed. The relevant material was then analysed in accordance with the selected theoretical framework and a conclusion was made.

### **3.3 Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical framework delineates the ideas, concepts, and the approaches on the ground of which an individual carries out research. It helps the researcher to create a sound base with which a particular stance can be developed, challenged, or proved. The fundamental of a theoretical framework is to analyze the phenomenon which exist around us but remain unexplored in the human environment thus, making it possible to comprehend the phenomenon as well as to make use of the knowledge productively and efficaciously (Sacred Heart University, 2020). The present study incorporates Daryll B. Hill's theory of genderism, transphobia, and gender bashing and Rianna Oelofsen's stance on rehumanization as theoretical framework.

#### **3.3.1 Daryl B. Hill concept of Genderism, Transphobia and Gender Bashing**

Hill asserts that animosity towards a minority group and prejudice towards a major community increase the risk of pariahzation of that certain minority group and according to him transgender community is one of these minority groups. Hill describes transgender as a populace denying conforming to the social standards of genderism. According to Hill transgender is an umbrella term which is used to direct to different identities who do not conform to the traditional gender binary. These identities include "transvestites"[those individuals who often love to dress to as the other gender]; "transgenderists"[those individual who have spent a good amount their life time in opposite gender]; "pre-, post-, and non-operative transexuals" [those who decide to go undergo permanent biological surgeries to change their gender permanently]; and "intersexuals" [those who are born with both male and female genetic/hormonal features] (Hill 113). The transgender individuals according to Hill face discrimination in their day to day lives because they are

unable to comply with the set standard of the society. The transgender individuals as stated by Hill are subject to injustice, hostility, and physical, mental, and emotional assault.

According to Daryl B. Hill transgender community has long been subjected to extensive marginalization, antipathy, alienation, and physical and verbal assault (Hill 114). Hill focuses on three main concepts that result in transgender pariahzation and discrimination. The three concepts according to him are genderism, transphobia, and gender bashing.

1. Genderism: Hill states that “sexism” is an ideology that has long been proved to be harmful for women in the world. It has subjected women to suffer from different derogatory attitudes. He proclaims that the idea of sexism and suffering is “parallel” to genderism. According to Hill genderism is established idea that builds up an unfavourable or anti attitude towards individuals that do not identify themselves with the standard gender binary or are unable to adhere to the gender or sex associated to them at their birth. According to him our culture takes gender to evaluate living individuals and the individulas who do not conform to this binary are considered strange, odd, and abnormal. Likewise, the transgender community is considered less than human beings and are demoralized and downgraded by traditional gender conforming individuals. Hill asserts that the prevailing system of genderism in the world is the confirmation of the presence of transgender pariahzation in any society (Hill 119).
2. Transphobia: transphobia is expansion of the word “homophobia” according to Hill. The term transphobia as stated by Hill is best defined by Wilchins who states that it is a disgust or animosity that is subjected towards the idea of changing biological features. Moreover, while some consider transphobia a disgust or “fear” of various genders others call it genderphobia. Hill defines transphobia as “the motivating force for negative reactions to transgendered people that involve fear and disgust in the observer”. It “is often more an intrapsychic or interpersonal phenomenon” which is exhibited in the distaste of someone being a transgender or disgust on knowing an individual being a transgender or encountering a transgender individual (Hill 119-120). According to him gender phobia/transphobia is present in our institutional and cultural ideology which results in the subjugation of transgender community thus belittling and demeaning them.

3. Gender Bashing: Hill asserts that “gender bashing denotes [to] the harassment, abuse, or assault of gender and sex nonconformists”. He further states it is the “behaviour” that is displayed towards transgenders (Hill 120). The calling of names like “faggot”, “dyke” (chakka, in-between, more common in South Asia) is because of the reason that they are unable to identify themselves with the set gender standards of the society. This results in inhumane and malicious treatment of the transgender community. He further asserts that because it is less likely that transgenders report these atrocities the transgenders are at higher risk to face stigmatization and sexual, emotional, or physical assault.

Hill claims that “Genderism provides the negative cultural attitude; transphobia fuels the attitude with fear, disgust, and hatred; and gender bashing is the violent expression of these beliefs. Although genderism and transphobia often result in covert expressions of discrimination and antipathy, gender bashing is an overt expression of hostility” (Hill 120).

### **3.3.2 Rianna Oelofsen’s concept of Rehumanization**

Oelofsen states that “by asserting the other as a subject” like oneself [we are] “able to overcome the stereotypes” [associated with any individual or a community] (Oelofsen 187). She further suggests that the process of individuation is also important to rehumanize while keeping in focus certain features of self and the other. The differences according to Oelofsen are present between the individuals but these differences according to her should not be inferred as the other being “not fully human” (Oelofsen 183). In addition to this Oelofsen claims that “imagination” is the core of rehumanization (Oelofsen 183). As stated by her imagination can help in the process of rehumanization by confronting the various aspects of pariahzation like demonizing the other. Engaging in the real dialogue with the other also plays a vital role in rehumanization as per Oelofsen’s assertion, since it helps a person to not think of other as an “ideal” being—a person not existing in reality or a being who is unable “to make her/his own decisions” (Oelofsen 183).

Furthermore, Oelofsen also suggests that looking into the fact the other has many aspects that are in accordance with the aspects present in self also permit novel ways of confabulation. Additionally, this will help to realize that the other “demonstrates different ways of being human” (Oelofsen 184). Moreover, involving in the other’s world is also an important aspect of rehumanization, as per Oelofsen’s claims it allows an individual to

see in the other the ability to transform or as simply put, the other is capable of change (Oelofsen 184). In addition to this, Oelofsen states that the ways in which an individual is treated would also help in changing the idea about that particular being. This change in perception according to Oelofsen will result in the righteous behavior or mode of conduct towards the other, while helping to see “the other as human” (Oelofsen 184). Another aspect which must be considered is the realization of the fact that the idea of the other is rather constructed than being real.

In addition to this, according to Oelofsen the process of Rehumanization incorporates that the individual who is attempting to “rehumanize” demands to interrogate ones “own historical situation, and more or less how and why it is that one holds [that particular] position in the society” (Oelofsen 187). Moreover, “it involves an investigation of [ones] relations to the other, and how [one] might be perceived by the other. If this conflicts with your perception of yourself, it is necessary to investigate why the other might have these perceptions (Oelofsen 186). It also “involves understanding that the conflict is part of a complex and organic social situation. In order to understand the complexity of the social situation, one needs to examine the situation which gave rise to the dehumanization”/pariahzation (Oelofsen 187) thus to rehumanize it is necessary to investigate why an individual holds that particular position in a society and to realize that conflict is a part of social situation.

## CHAPTER 4

### PARIAHS OF THE EAST AND WEST: UNWANTED AND UNWELCOMED PEOPLE

The society for many years has marginalized and subjected the people to pariahzation who do not conform to the status quo of the society. Transgender individuals being akin to this group are continually treated as less than human beings, relegated to a marginal position, brutalized, bullied, maltreated, disrespected, and inhumanely dilapidated by almost all the societies. Be it a Hijra from Bangladesh, a Khawaja Sirah from Pakistan, a Kinnar from India, a Kathoy from Thailand, a Laanch from Kashmir, or a transgender from United States of America or from any other zone in the world they encounter prejudice in each aspect of their life. These individuals are even withdrawn from a respectable living, education and employment which ultimately forces them to earn their living through immoral means usually dancing in bars, sex working, begging for money and even stealing. Transgender persons are not only alienated by the society but most of them are also abandoned by their own families and are subject to social exclusion thus making them social pariahs. The same phenomenon can be traced in the lives of the two protagonists in the selected texts *Me Hijra Me Laxmi* by Laxmi Narayan Tripathi and *None of the Above* by I.W Gregorio.

#### **4.1 Laxmi: A Hijra from the East**

Hijra, the third gender, or more commonly referred as transgenders are considered grotesque in any society for not being able to identify themselves with the set standards of gender dichotomy. Forced to live at the margins of the society these gender queer individuals are subjected to physical, social, and mental abuse. Being a stigmatized community the hijras are forced to live in impoverished psychological and sentimental conditions (Mal 79-80). This genderism (or more commonly known as gender binary) reinforces negative behavior, bias attitude, alienation and pariahzation towards the people who manifest identities which are non-conforming to the gender binary.

Correspondingly, in the memoir we can witness several incidents in which the protagonist, Laxmi Tripathi, is subjected to pariahzation. Laxmi herself bespeaks about the pariah behavior of the gender conformists towards the gender non-conformists. Laxmi while expressing her feelings about the treatment of Hijras writes that, “To many men and

women, we were extraterrestrials” (Laxmi 121). The word extraterrestrial according to Cambridge dictionary means “a creature” who does not belong to the earth (Extraterrestrial). Thus, indicating to the fact that hijras are considered beings or creatures that do not harmonize with the set gender ideals therefore, not belonging to any society. It is because of this sense of alienation the transgenders are dealt with a pessimistic approach.

For hijras as Laxmi states “...the world was hostile... and saw them as a menace, the way rats and cockroaches are thought of as a menace...” (Laxmi 62). Laxmi emphasizes, there is a widespread disgust for hijras among the gender conformists. They are treated as equals to the most despised creatures in the world like rats and cockroaches. These individuals face an apprehensive and reluctant attitude from the so-called perfect gendered people. Hijras are frowned upon and are treated as foreign beings. As per Hill’s claim all living individuals are evaluated on the basis of the genderism (Hill 119) and as a result the traditional gendered people often stigmatize and marginalize the transgender individuals. They look upon hijras with disapproval and contempt. Individuals are fearful and hesitant in interacting with hijras “given a choice, [they] would avoid engaging with us [i.e., hijras]” (Laxmi 53) thus, limiting their presence as pariahs in society. Hijras, despite being human beings, are often socially and culturally excluded based on the fact that they have an ambivalent gender, or their gender expression is contrary to what is considered normal in the society. Laxmi stresses on the same idea that hijras face discrimination and hate for being different as well as their presence is considered a threat to the gender binary conformists.

What can more be observed in the memoir is that despite being identified as a boy by the society and her family Laxmi loved to dance. As mentioned earlier in the summary of the text Laxmi as a child suffered from various diseases. So, to find solace in her life she chose dancing as her hobby. Hill proclaims that genderism is materialized through cultural dogma (Hill 119). Moreover, the idea held as a standard in many societies [and cultures] is that dancing is feminine hence should be performed only by the female gender, or the pansy boys who are more often known as the weaklings (Risner 2). The very phenomenon is witnessed in Laxmi’s life. Even though dancing was helping Laxmi to battle with her diseases, but on the other hand, the only thing which the society or so-called culture witnessing was that a boy was playing the role of a girl, or it can be inferred that the social gender roles associated with Laxmi were not being fulfilled by her. As a

result, Laxmi “was teased. People began to call me [her] a homo and a chakka...” (Laxmi 4) and “...it was my [Laxmi’s] dancing, complete with my [her] feminine movements of the waist, that contributed to my [Laxmi] being thought of as effeminate” (Laxmi 23) and it was at the age of seven when Laxmi “was first sexually exploited” (Laxmi 5). Here it has to be noted that Homo and Chakka are two among many derogatory terms used by the gender conformist for the gender variant people. Thus, Laxmi was being degraded, for bringing about her gender expression, by the people surrounding her as well as for not complying with the inflexible gender binary roles.

Genderism creates a platform where people only think in two possible ways i.e., only two opposing genders exist in the society, the male gender, and the female gender and specific roles are attributed to each gender accordingly. This ideology constructs a notion that all the people who do not fall into these two categories of male and female and who are unable to perform these restricted roles are “anomalies” as asserted by Hill (Hill 119). Hence, in the memoir when Laxmi realizes that she likes to dance while wearing female attires despite having a male body and having a sexual orientation i.e., being always more attracted towards boys instead of being attracted to girls, opposed to the ideal set sexual orientation, different questions raise in her mind regarding her own normality and about her gender identity. In 5<sup>th</sup> standard with Sangita auntie’s suggestion Laxmi goes to Maheshwari Udyaan to meet Ashok Row Kavi, a journalist, to learn about her identity. Laxmi asks him that, “I am effeminate, and people tease me. I am also sexually attracted to men. Why am I not like everyone else? Am I abnormal?” (Laxmi 11). This dictates the idea that Laxmi conceptualized herself as an abnormal being or an anomaly for being a gender queer and not fulfilling the standards of binary society.

Moreover, in the memoir it is noticeable that the orthodox Lata guru despite being a Hijra herself advances the fixed binary system. Lata guru who was Laxmi’s first guru forces Laxmi to live with the hijras. Lata guru states to Laxmi that “live with us Hijras and not with your birth family” (Laxmi 72). According to Lata Guru hijras have no right to live with their families as normal human beings. The hijras as stated by Lata must live together in their own communities as they “are neither male nor female” (Laxmi 72). Lata guru points towards the idea that since hijras or khwaja sirahs cannot properly associate themselves with the binary they cannot live a normal life with their families. It can be implied that in Lata’s stance the gender diverse individuals have not right to live with their families because according to Lata “your birth family may make you do things that are



forbidden to us [i.e., Transgenders]” (Laxmi 72). This statement of Lata Guru points towards the notion that transgenders living with the gender binary individuals lack the favorable circumstances for the gender expression. Though it may seem from the third reference of this paragraph that Lata guru is advocating the free gender expression of Hijras. However, it is to be noticed that Lata is advocating a more exclusive society than an inclusive one thus promoting the traditional binary system.

In the mid part of the memoir Laxmi realizes that she is neither a boy nor a girl. Rather she is a Hijra, a person who do not reconcile with orthodox male and female dichotomy instead blend or keep on changing between the two (Khan et al. 1). These individuals, who are gender non-conformist, Hill states are viewed as unworthy and bizarre (Hill 119). The very reason serves as a fear in the mind of Laxmi that her family will consider her unworthy, so she does not tell her family that she has become a hijra. Laxmi writes “My parents knew none of this. And are sure to have thrown me out of the house if they got wind of what I was up to” (Laxmi 29). Only the things which are deemed as unworthy are thrown out of a house and in Laxmi’s case it was her. Even in the later part of the memoir when Laxmi’s parents come to know about her reality, they act as if it was a bizarre decision of Laxmi and decide not to accept their eldest son’s identity as a hijra. They continue to treat her like a boy. For them the world consisted of only two opposite poles male and female. Therefore, Laxmi was not able to live with her own identity in the house. Laxmi writes, “I wear shirts and trousers at home. I cannot afford to wear a sari” (Laxmi 44). Sari is a traditional attire worn by the hijras in India, but Laxmi was not allowed to wear Saris in her house and due to the fear of being thrown out of her home she decided not to wear it.

Gender taxonomy often leads to the misconceptions about the hijras. Unable to think out of the fixed beliefs of genderism people tend to think that the individuals who relate to the identities other than male and female, often known as gender diverse people, have mental illnesses and are often scorned at. Different treatments are forced upon them to compel these individuals to become part of the binarism (Hill 117). The aspect of one’s gender is linked to the biological sex that was assigned to them at the time of birth. In Laxmi’s case she was assigned a male gender at her birth and was treated as one by everyone around her. When Laxmi realizes that she is a hijra and decides to live her life with her new identity her parents assume as per Hill’s posit that Laxmi might be suffering from a mental problem or some “madness” (Laxmi 59). So, they devise marriage as a

treatment of this madness. Laxmi writes “My parents... thought that the cure of my madness was marriage” (Laxmi 59) and they even find a girl for her.

Furthermore, when her parents come to know about her decision, they keep on commenting on her mental state. Laxmi states the “verbal diarrhea” (Laxmi 48) did not stop here. Laxmi’s family keeps on asking “why you have to do this? Tell us what your problem is” (Laxmi 48). They think and decipher that her decision, as stated by Hill (Hill 117) was a result of some problem. They interrogate Laxmi in order to understand the problem which has caused her to take such a decision. Laxmi’s parents even offer her money to pursue her interest in the field of dancing against living as a hijra. They, thinking from only the one set perspective of genderism, again and again try to make Laxmi realize that she is an educated person and thus Laxmi must retreat from her decision which in their understanding was because of some problem or madness. Laxmi’s parents force her “to get it out of your[her] system” (Laxmi 48), and in her parents’ view opting a hijra identity would never prove good for her. Here it is evident that her parents could not accept the fact that an educated person can also be a hijra or a Khawaja sira rather they linked it with the idea that an educated person, like Laxmi, cannot be a hijra and her realization of being one is only a consequence of a madness or a problem.

Genderism according to Hill at times functions in illusive ways like false information and obtuseness about the gender variants (Hill 119). Myths about transgender individuals can be considered as false information created because of genderism. “Myths are stereotypes” regarding any person “based on essentialism exaggerated, causing prejudices, biases, and self-fulfilling prophecies”. Hijra identity is usually surrounded by different myths and because of believing in these myths the individuals may develop a negative attitude towards hijras which results in prejudices against them (Jami and Jamal 60-73). One of such myths is highlighted by Laxmi in the memoir. As the hijras are considered neither male nor female and they are judged and considered to be foreign creatures, people think that “... the funeral of a hijra is performed late at night and she is beaten with slippers. The unearthly hour is chosen, it is said, so that none should witness the funeral” (Laxmi 158). This stereotype is a direct response of the approach that transgender individuals do not fall into the bipartite categorization thus, ultimately leading to the construction of the negative assumptions about the particular group. This ignorance about hijras as stated by Hill often ends in the pariahzation, marginalization and alienation of the transgender community (Hill 119).

Attitudes have functional objectives. Human beings adhere to those attitudes and accept the things which are parallel to their norms while feel threatened towards those which are not. Gender determination is an important factor as it declares how a person with a particular gender must be treated and it connects with the basic beliefs of people while gender diversity is considered a threat to these beliefs (Jami and Kamal 152). Genderism and transphobia are primarily the pessimistic and antagonistic approach towards gender diverse people. Transphobia as posited by Hill is the horror, distress or revulsion in the gender conforming person when encountering a transgender or discovering someone's identity as a transgender (Hill 119-120) because it challenges the fixed beliefs of gender conforming individuals.

While we discussed that genderism provided the basis of negative attitude and negative impact on Laxmi's life, another aspect which needs to be discussed here is transphobia. In the memoir when Laxmi confesses to some of her close friends about her new identity as a hijra believing that she will get support from them, she is treated beyond her imagination. Laxmi writes, "I shared it with a couple of intimate friends who were shocked beyond belief... some said, why have you brought this hell upon yourself? Others were so pissed that they stopped talking to me" (Laxmi 45). This attitude of disgust and awe clearly points to the fact that Laxmi's friends were transphobic and believed that only two genders exist. Laxmi "was hurt by the attitude of my [her] friends" (Laxmi 45) still they did not approve of her in her new identity rather were disturbed and outraged.

Similarly, when Laxmi's family came to know about her identity they acted in the same way. Her mother "began to beat her breasts and wail loudly, as if there was a death in the family" (Laxmi 47). This again determines how the people around Laxmi were transphobic and were unable to accept her identity as a hijra. They alienated her emotionally and, in some cases, physically as well, as mentioned in the previous paragraph that one of her friends stopped talking to her. She was treated as a pariah. Furthermore, Laxmi was lectured by her father for bringing bad name to the Brahman family and instead of supporting her decision they wailed and blamed her for spoiling the family's image. As Laxmi states, her father said, "Didn't you think of our self-respect?" (Laxmi 48). This proves as evidence that Laxmi's family and friends' attitude of disgust and fear towards her identity was because of the fear of gender diversity. They were unable to accept any identity beyond the traditional dichotomy.

Moreover, when a Hijra is born in a house, the house falls under a state of gloominess and melancholy. The cisgender family/ society is unable to accept the born individual because of the non-normative gender he/she has. As Reddy states people usually hide the identities of these children considering they will lose their “izzat” (respect) or their family name will be spoiled (Reddy 188). This transphobia can be witnessed in Laxmi’s life. When her identity is revealed to her parents the same transphobic attitude is observed. At first her parents shout at her and then stop talking to her all along probably because her sister’s- in laws taunted her for having a Hijra as a brother. Her parents continuously disapprove her decision announcing that “what you [Laxmi] have done is so damaging that we will have to hang our heads in shame” (Laxmi 48). Likewise, her younger brother Shashi move around in shame. Laxmi states it was displeasing for her family, after all “supermen are okay as long as they are born to others. No one wants supermen in their own homes” (Laxmi 49). Here Laxmi uses superman as an alternate word for hijra. As superman is an odd individual or a freak who do not conform to the normal set standard of being a human, similarly, being a hijra means a person is an odd or a freak, thus there is a constant fear in people towards such individuals and the same phenomenon can be witnessed in Laxmi’s family. This revulsion and horror (Hill 119-120) exhibited by Laxmi’s family is a direct result of transphobia as concluded by Hill.

Additionally, Laxmi while participating in a TV show *Such ka Samna* had to answer different questions asked by the host of the show. On asking the question “... did you avoid going out with your parents for the fear that it would humiliate them? I [Laxmi] answered ‘yes’ (Laxmi 122). This fear of humiliation can be inferred as a result of transphobia. Since Laxmi had a firsthand experience of how her parents reacted on Laxmi being a hijra, Laxmi knew that her parents would feel humiliated for being related to a hijra. The transphobic attitudes of the people often increase with the notion that “...the public often think of us [hijras] as troublemakers” (Laxmi 53) and, and thus they choose not to engage or associate themselves with hijras in any manner. Laxmi further points out that along with considering hijras the troublemakers they also consider that “...only the wretched of the earth became hijras” (Laxmi 45) which again reflects the mentality that only those people who are unworthy, despicable or are bad become hijras thus promoting the phobia towards these individuals.

The behavior which takes place because of genderism and transphobia in the memoir is gender bashing. As Hill suggests it is the badgering, maltreatment, exploitation, and molestation of agender/bigender individuals (Hill 121). This gender bashing is witnessed all over the world. It varies between barbaric behavior, cisgender bullying, physically attacking, inflicting severe mental or physical pain to abduction, and even murdering (Homophobic and transphobic violence). Laxmi along with other hijras from her community also had to face such instances of harassment, bullying and even murder of one of the hijras in the memoir. When one of the hijras Subhadra is murdered the police instead of catching the murderer kept on teasing Laxmi and other hijras “and looked at us with suspicion and bias” (Laxmi 54). Despite of the fact that Laxmi requested them to treat the hijras as human beings and equal to other people the police kept on bullying them with biased questions and counter questions. They had to go to the police station every other day and as Laxmi states the “bureaucratic harassment followed” them each day (Laxmi 55). However, the police shut the case without capturing the murderers as if “a hijra’s...murder didn’t seem to matter to anyone” (Laxmi 57).

Nonbinary individuals according to Hill also come across institutional violence (Hill 117) and in Laxmi’s case her own family was the one inflicting violence on her. From trying to cure her madness as discussed before to being treated as a pariah she was also subjected to physical abuse by her mother. After being revealed as a hijra her family started othering her. They secluded and marginalized her. She was subjected to alienation by her family members. Her younger brother Shashi felt ashamed of her while her mother kept on crying for days without talking to Laxmi. She kept on acting as if Laxmi has committed an unpardonable sin. And one day Laxmi writes out of a fit of anger her mother “sheared off some of my [Laxmi’s] hair” (Laxmi 50). This physical attack by her mother and ripping off Laxmi’s few hairs represents the violent or gender bashing and this type of violence as per Hill’s assertion is incited because of genderism and transphobia.

Moreover, it can be noticed that the bullying, harassment, and physical attack on Laxmi (and murder of Subhadra) was executed by gender conforming individuals, those individuals who consider themselves to be able while thinking of transgenders as less than human beings or individuals with disabilities. This idea of ableism fuels the violence/harassment (Orr) and “overt expression of hostility” (Hill 120). Correspondingly when Laxmi went to one of the Bombay Gymkhana parties, she was bullied and demeaned because of her identity. When she entered the party, initially she was warmly welcomed by

the women. Ajay and Parvesh, who were the organizers, also greeted her. Everything was fine until when the dinner started. While Laxmi was having her dinner Ajay came and told Laxmi as per instructions of Brigadier R.K Bose (the owner of the gymkhana) she has to leave the party at once because according to the club rules people like Laxmi who do not adhere to the social division of gender were not allowed to enter the gymkhana, she “was not even allowed to finish [her] food” (Laxmi 129). This expression of intimidation was a direct result of transphobia as suggested by Hill.

Hijras being deprived of the basic rights are forced to earn their living by adopting lifeworks that are labeled as works below human integrity. As Laxmi expresses “we abuse Hijras... without realizing that the things they can do in order to survive can be counted on the fingers of one hand- begging, singing, dancing and sex work” (Laxmi 110). Commercial sex or prostitution among these is the most common type of these lifeworks. The hijras condemned to earn through immoral means are further subject to inhumanity and atrocities. The Nayaks (leaders) “arbitrate against the use of condoms by hijras because condoms put off clients” (Laxmi 58) which leaves the hijras exposed to sexually transmitted diseases (STD) and life-threatening fatal diseases like HIV AIDS. Hijras are not allowed to practice the basic lifesaving necessities. Thus, highlighting the matter that these individuals are not treated fairly. Hijras despite being humans are treated inhumanely and their lives are considered unimportant. Moreover, Laxmi states that ... “the government’s anti-AIDS programmes were hardly directed at the hijras...” (Laxmi 62). This indicates that the physical health of hijras was not only ignored by the Nayaks but was also neglected by the government and as a consequence the individuals were subjected to the physical and health abuse.

#### **4.2 Kristin Lattimer: An Intersex from the West**

Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome or more commonly referred as AIS constitute a group of people whose genitalia or chromosomal features are neither completely male nor completely female. Individuals with AIS comprise of both male and female bodily/chromosomal features, and it is the most common type of intersex condition. (Alderson et al. 83). From the definition of AIS, it is evident that people with AIS do not fulfil the set criteria of belonging to any gender in the traditional gender binary system. Hence, as a result these individuals face anxiety and stress (Alderson et al. 91-92), accompanied by them being degraded and subjected to pariahzation by other people.

Kristin Lattimer or Krissy the protagonist of the novel faces the same circumstances in the novel *None of the Above*. The very moment when Krissy realizes that “life was a multiple-choice test with two answers: Male or Female. and I [Krissy] was none of the above (Gregorio 35), her life starts falling apart. When Krissy first knows about the fact that her sex is incongruous with the gender assigned to her at her birth, she herself falls in a sense of denial due the omnipresence of genderism in our society and “ignorance of the transgender community” as per Hill’s assertion (Hill 119). The words that Krissy uses to describe her feelings when she comes to know about her condition are “empty, dazed, and numb” (Gregorio 30). All the three words denote to her pessimistic approach towards being a gender non-conformist. This sheds light on the fact that Krissy herself was shackled in the chains of dichotomous gender system. Furthermore, the news of her being an intersex also serves as a source of distress to her father when he first learns about it. Krissy states when her father heard the news a number of expressions went through his face and then he “just looked empty. Shattered” (Gregorio 28) which again refers to the fact that his father was also over casted by genderism and both Krissy and her father after learning about Krissy’s condition were overwhelmed.

In addition, it can be witnessed in the first half of the novel that as a consequence of Krissy’s fixed belief in the traditional bi construction of gender she fails to accept the identity which did not fall into any of the two categories. Krissy expresses that “the fear that things would never be okay again overcame me, and I sobbed alone (Gregorio 28). Krissy wailed in melancholy and suffered from personal distress. “I almost started crying right then. Can you make me into a girl? I thought. Tell me that I don’t have balls (Gregorio 35). Her question can you make into a girl and her concern on having a male body organ in a female body can be inferred as the occupancy of genderism in the society and as a result in the minds of the people that does not allow human beings to think out of the normative gender system and accept the gender in any other form, other than male and female. The same phenomenon can be traced in Krissy’s behavior, she could not accept her new identity. For Krissy the real world consisted of two genders only and there was no space for people like her who did not fall in any of the two categories. Krissy while having a conversation on gender with Gretchen states that gender “matters because we live in the real world” (Gregorio 133) and for Krissy the real world was constructed on the basis of bi polarity, either a person in the real world can be a boy or a girl and the people who deviate from these two categories do not have any place in this world. As

Krissy asserts that this is a world for normal people belonging to normal gender and in this world "... there wasn't space for me [her]" (Gregorio 114).

Barb J. Burdge claims, gender is a social construct that exercises power over each person in a society (Burdge 243), while this social construct according to Hill, defines the way an individual is treated and judged (Hill 119). After being revealed as an intersex the people around Krissy start treating her in a different way which Krissy refers to as a "difficult scary life change" (Gregorio 37). Now people looked at her with anger or pity (Gregorio 131) while other times she was subject of the whispers (Gregorio 160). Furthermore, Sam, her boyfriend, who was once in love with her, breaks up with Krissy, and blocks her on Facebook after learning about her intersex condition. Krissy states, "I'd been blocked. We were officially over" (Gregorio 94). It is obvious from this incident that the treatment of Sam towards Krissy changed the moment he realized that Krissy does not belong to the set standards of gender binary, thus making Krissy a pariah. Similarly on the other hand, Krissy faces pariahzation in the field of sports as well. Krissy who was one of the best runners in her school team was banned from running. Her coach Auerbach was accused of "of cheating" and "an investigation" was demanded (Gregorio 76) for having a girl with male body parts in her team and as a result Krissy was prohibited for a year from running for her team. These attacks and treatment of transgender individuals like Krissy faced, Jack Turban indicates add up to their pariahzation (Turban).

"Being laughed at once was bad. Twice was unbearable. My face flushed and I could barely breath from the humiliation" (Gregorio 58) states Krissy. When Krissy tells her best friend Vee about her condition Vee takes it as some kind of joke and when Krissy insists that it is the truth Vee tensely chuckles. It has to be highlighted here that Vee would not have felt tensed and giggled if Krissy had told her that she was a girl or a boy but since she was something in between the two, that provided a reason to be giggled at. This behavior of Vee towards her was something not normal. The fear in Krissy for not being treated normally is reflected in the quote where Krissy asks Vee, "Promise me you're not going to treat me like a freak" (Gregorio 59). The fear of how she will be treated is a result of the prevailing social construction of gender in the society as per Hill's assertion. Similarly, her Aunt Carla's behavior changes towards her. She now starts looking at Krissy with pity. Aunt Carla instead of treating her usually compares Krissy's life to "a horrible nightmare" (Gregorio 38). The change in attitudes and the fear of being



considered a freak shows the presence of genderism in the life of Krissy and other characters in the novel.

In addition to this, Hill argues that people who are unable to associate themselves with the conventional genderism are looked upon as “anomalies” and hence are reckoned as “less worthy and not normal” (Hill 119). Same was the case with Krissy. She was now looked upon as a freak by some of the individuals around her. For instance, when Krissy again meets Josh, a boy whom she had met once in a bar, he instantly recognizes Krissy as the girl from her sister’s athletic event, who has been banned from playing for being an intersex. Josh spitefully refers to Krissy as a freak, spitting the words saying “what the fuck kind of freak are you? (Gregorio 174) which suggests that Krissy was an anomaly for Josh. Furthermore, when Josh creates a scene and people gather around them, he not only looks down upon Krissy for not being a traditional male or a female but also “with an evil smile” (Gregorio 178) suggests that only a freak can date a freak like Krissy. For being treated as a freak Krissy herself wishes in the novel, while talking to Gretchen, that she would have preferred if her parents had told her that she has a tumor in her uterus and thus is not able to have her periods or get pregnant. In this way Krissy suggests that she would have felt “less like a monster” (Gregorio 131) because of her ambivalent gender.

Furthermore, in a large portion of the novel it can be observed that Krissy also encounters transphobia because of genderism. Hill asserts that transphobia is a “fear of personal acquaintances being transgendered or revulsion on learning one is transgendered or meeting a transgender person” (Hill 120) since these individuals are unimaginable and preposterous within the gender dichotomy (Aguirre-Sánchez-Beato 9). As Krissy states, “the rules may have changed, but people still are afraid of the Other” (Gregorio 128). As we investigate Krissy’s case, she herself experiences internalize transphobia along with several people being transphobic to her on learning that she is an intersex. Walter Bockting describes internalize transphobia as distress with one’s own identity as a transgender because of attributing oneself with gender dichotomy (Bockting). Krissy shows revulsion to her diagnosis. She says “saying the word [hermaphrodite] out loud gave me the creeps. It made me sound like a bug, or something that belonged in a rock collection (Gregorio 30).

In the same way Sam also shows revulsion to Krissy by constantly telling her to “stay away” from him” (Gregorio 97). The guy who once showered Krissy with love and compassion now treated her with hate and disgust. Sam even avoided having any kind of

conversation with Krissy. He after knowing the bodily condition of Krissy considered her a source of shame and disgrace. While on the other hand Krissy opts for the gonadectomy thinking “what I [she] had done for Sam” (Gregorio 95) would change Sam’s attitude towards her. According to Krissy removing the male parts would make Sam treat her in a better way and would make him love her again. However, nothing changes, and Sam avoids her. For Sam Krissy’s gender was still ambivalent, and her gender expression did not match with her bodily conditions. Krissy was a queer and a freak for him. When Krissy musters up the courage and goes to Sam’s house to clear things between Sam and her after the surgery, Sam reluctantly talks to her and refuses stating, “maybe someone else can” (Gregorio 100) have a relationship with a person with ambiguous gender “but not me” (Gregorio 100).

Another aspect of transphobia according to Hill is to show “fear and disgust” (Hill 119) against gender nonconformists. Disgust and transphobia correlate as per John’s view (Stuart) and Sam in the same way was disgusted by Krissy’s presence when Krissy comes to his home to sort things out. Instead of treating her normally like any other human being Sam blurted “What the hell are you doing here?” (Gregorio 98) showing the fact that he was disgusted from her presence. Another important factor which needs to be discussed here is the self-disgust which Krissy feels because of the internalize transphobia. It is often observed that individuals with a different identity other than male and female often shows signs of hate or disgust towards themselves or others which according to Bockting is referred to “as vertical and horizontal internalize transphobia respectively” (Bockting). Krissy experienced vertical internalize transphobia and as result while looking her reflection in the mirror she tore off the bikini which she was wearing and “felt disgusted” (Gregorio 49) with herself.

Hill posits that a sense of “inferior status” (Hill 122) is created in the gender non-conformist individuals because of transphobia which is referred by some as minority stress. This phenomenon was evident in Krissy’s character. For instance, Sam’s friends made fun of Sam for dating a transgender while Krissy on the other hand considers this humiliation as a consequence of her being an intersex. She impulsively blames herself for it. “I would never be able to take back his humiliation or restore his ruined reputation” (Gregorio 97). Moreover, it is evident from her action of going through a gonadectomy, a risky surgery, that she considered herself less worthy or inferior as an intersex and wanted to remove any signs of being intersex, while at the same time to make her place in Sam’s

life again. Simona Geordano subsumes that, individuals belonging to gender non-conformists' community may suffer from "internalized" inimical practice (Geordano 6) thus, the individuals being subject to culpability, disgrace, sense of being inferior, hopelessness and drug addiction. Akin to this despite being dumped by Sam and being mistreated by the others, she repeatedly reminded herself that "Maybe I [she] was a glutton for punishment" (Gregorio 72).

Another aspect which Hill has delineated is that transphobic expressions "assault transgendered person's self-concept, identity and thoughts" (Hill 122). The individuals because of transphobia face adverse physical and mental effects, like depression while, attempting suicide being the most common effect (Arayasirikul et al. 2629). We find in the novel that Krissy's behavior inferred the same consequence of transphobia. She starts having strange dreams. Sigmund Freud states dreams are the fabricated from the experiences of the real world (Freud 44). Krissy "dreamed that I [she] was eight, and an evil witch has transformed me [her] into a beast that was part girl, part bear (Gregorio 60). This dream symbolizes her new known reality, which was that of a half girl, which in her dream she sees as girl part, and a half boy, which she loathes and sees in her dream as a part bear.

Krissy's thoughts on the other hand were also assailed. When she tries to think about going back to school instead of imagining the normal routine of a school day, she sees herself being bullied by the people. Krissy states "as I pictured myself walking into the cafeteria, Bruce appeared. And he did more than stare. He taunted and got some of his buddies to follow me into the hall as I fled. He cornered me in a stairway, pushed me up against the wall. And unzipped my jeans as I flailed ..." (Gregorio 170). This manifests the fact that as a result of facing transphobic expressions her thoughts were broken. While going through such thoughts she also went into depression and had to seek help from a psychiatrist meanwhile she spent her days "Longing for the past. Dreading the future. And drifting in the present like a ship lost at sea" (Gregorio 73).

The transphobia also led to gender bashing in the novel. Hill defines gender bashing as "violent expression of beliefs" (Hill 120) that are based on the genderism and transphobia. Kristin M Jacquin defines violence as "an act of physical force that causes or is intended to cause harm. The damage inflicted by violence may be physical, psychological, or both." (Jacquin). Moreover, World report on violence and health (WRVH) asserts that violence can be imposed in four ways: physical; sexual; and

psychological attack; and deprivation. It further assumes that violence can be further subdivided into three categories with respect to the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. These three sub-divisions are: “self-directed violence; interpersonal violence; and collective violence” (WHO). In the novel all three types of violence can be witnessed. The first type of violence that is self-directed violence can be observed in the novel. Since from the discussion above it is evident that Krissy was suffering from internal transphobia so it will not be wrong to state that Krissy at times in the novel was herself the perpetrator and the victim. She felt disgusted from herself when she was unable to associate herself with the set traditional gender dichotomy. She keeps on calling herself the “glutton for punishment” (Gregorio 72) and considers herself a “freak” (Gregorio 114). As a result, it affects her psychologically and ultimately, she has to see a psychiatrist. However, the bashing does not stop here, Krissy also tries to commit suicide by coming in front of a car but is saved by Darren. When she realizes that she was about to end her life she tries to console by lying to herself that “I hadn’t actually tried to kill myself” (Gregorio 81). For her she thinks it “would be easier if I [she] could go to sleep and never wake up” (Gregorio 81).

The second type of violence which Krissy experiences in the novel is the interpersonal violence which an individual meets from the family or the intimate partner. In Krissy’s case she faces the interpersonal violence from her boyfriend Sam. Although Sam does not physically attack her, but he verbally abuses her which effects Krissy psychologically. Sam when comes to know about Krissy’s condition denies keeping any relation with her. When Krissy tries to explain everything to him, he shouts at her and calls her “homo” (Gregorio 67), which is derogatory term used to demean the individuals whose sexuality/gender is opposite to the set standards of the society. Sam further verbally attacks her by calling Krissy a “fucking man-whore” (Gregorio 67). These psychological attacks from Sam shatters Krissy and ultimately creates a sense of inferiority in her. Thus, in order to associate herself with the dichotomy she undergoes gonadectomy while ignoring the risks that came with the surgery. However, even after the surgery Sam denies being in the relationship with Krissy.

In addition to this, Krissy also experiences the third type of violence i.e., the collective violence. The collective violence deals with a large number of people inflicting physical or mental violence on an individual and in Krissy’s case her school fellows bullied her for being an intersex. When Krissy’s identity as an intersex is revealed her

school fellows paint her locker with a dirty green color stating “STaY aWaY TRaNNY FaGGOT” (Gregorio 75). Moreover, when Krissy in her classroom asks for a bathroom pass, the boys make fun of her questioning, “Is that for the girls’ bathroom or the boys’?” (Gregorio 82). In addition to this, someone on Facebook tags her in an edited photo of hers with penis attached between her legs very skillfully. She out of fear for another edited picture “couldn’t check my [her] email or ... phone” (Gregorio 71). Krissy does not only experience such psychologically attacks, but the school management also deprives her from playing in the school team because of her ambiguous gender. Coach Auerbach tells Krissy that the other teams have filed a case against her for cheating and they have demanded an interrogation since Krissy does not belong to the standard female gender and hence the school “can’t allow you [Krissy] to run until...things [are] straightened out” (Gregorio 76). This gender bashing was a result of transphobia as posited by Hill.

Hill further asserts that “gender nonconformity...put a person at higher risk [of violence] because perpetrators perceive such people as less likely to resist or report a violent attack” (Hill 121). In the novel it can be assumed that Josh played the part of perpetrator who attacked Krissy physically and considered that she will less likely resist the physical abuse. In the later part of the novel when Krissy goes to a club with her friend Gretchen, she meets Josh there who at once recognizes her as the girl with ambiguous gender. Josh then tries to physically abuse her. Josh forcefully grabs her wrist and starts tearing her clothes while ripping her skirt. He then grabs her waist with his thick fingers (Gregorio 174) and asks her “Where’s your dick?” (Gregorio 175). Krissy tries to resist this physical abuse and cries for help, but Josh shushes her at once warning that all the people in the club will come know about her identity which silences Krissy. This incident in the novel points towards Hill’s posit that the transgender victims who are subject to gender bashing are attacked because they are less likely to report.

The above discussion reflects that pariahzation of transgender characters can be traced in the selected texts. Both characters Laxmi and Krissy from time-to-time experience alienation and marginalization based on the reason that they are unable to conform to the normative genderism. These protagonists because of their gender diversity are socially excluded and treated as pariahs. Laxmi Narayan Tripathi faces family and friends’ rejection when she identifies herself as a Hijra while on the other hand Krissy is bullied by other characters like her school mates in the novel for being an intersex. In addition to this, Laxmi is raped for being effeminate while Josh attempts to rape Krissy

for having an ambiguous gender. Similarly, both characters experience mental and emotional violence. It is evident from the discussion above that both these characters were unable to fulfill the expectations of the traditional gender system hence diverting from the fixed idea of being male and female. This nonconformity possessed by the main characters of the selected texts also highlights the phenomenon of transphobia retained by other characters in the selected texts. It has to be noted that Krissy herself experienced transphobia. This transphobia persistent in the characters of both texts lead to gender bashing like some characters in *Me Hijra Me Laxmi* despise and neglect Laxmi after learning her decision of identifying herself as a hijra while in one of the incidents discussed above her mother also attacks her physically. More incidents like this take place in the memoir. Similarly, when we investigate Krissy's life, she is not only cat called by people around her, but she is also considered a freak and a whore. Besides this, more incidents of transphobia and gender bashing can be witnessed in the novel and are discussed above. To sum up, it can be concluded that Daryl B.Hills concept of genderism, transphobia, and gender bashing can be traced in the selected texts. These selected texts are marked with the pariahzation faced by both main characters Laxmi Narayan Tripathi and Kristine Lattimer for not conforming to gender binary.

## CHAPTER 5

### BUILDING A VOICE UP FROM RUINS: REHUMANIZATION

In the first portion of the data analysis, I talked mainly about the process of pariahization of transgender individuals while keeping in view Daryl B. Hills proposed idea of genderism, transphobia, and gender bashing. This analysis provided an insight to the atrocities that are committed towards the transgender individuals. Moreover, the discussion provided in the previous chapter delineated the different ways in which these individuals are subjected to pariahization. However, since the main aim of the current research is to study the selected narratives from a different aspect i.e., rehumanization so this chapter will solely focus on the prospect of the rehumanization of the protagonists in the selected texts *Me Hijra Me Laxmi* and *None of the Above* whilst considering Oelofsen's stance on rehumanization.

#### **5.1 Rehumanization of Laxmi Narayan Tripathi**

The gender non-binary individuals must not be plainly deemed as the victims of genderism rather the discourses produced on these individuals can be studied from a perspective which defies the repressive binary system (Sam). In the same way the memoir *Me Hijra Me Laxmi* reflects a different angle which sheds light on the rehumanization aspect of the transgender protagonists. Oelofsen claims, to rehumanize "individuation has to occur while taking certain features of self and other into account" (Oelofsen 183). Individuation can be defined as achieving an awareness about self as an individual being and having a different identification while consciously living as a human being. Jung describes individuation as the mechanism of self-recognition and "becoming one's own self" (Jung 181). Correspondingly, Laxmi while facing atrocities on one hand because of being different than the gender conforming people made her own identity as a hijra and lived her life standing against the bullies and created the life she wanted. The moment she realizes she is "not abnormal" (Laxmi 12), she starts looking at things from a different perspective. Despite being bullied by the people around her, Laxmi constantly thinks about how she wants to be identified as. She states, "the more I thought about it the more I was convinced" (Laxmi 40). She had the awareness about who she was and how she wanted to be identified as. Laxmi writes, "my desire to become hijra was intense. Then

what am I waiting for, I asked myself...I become a Hijra” (Laxmi 41-42). Laxmi took the very first step of rehumanization by accepting who she was and how she wanted to be identified as an individual. She decided to become her own self. When she realized that she was not abnormal meaning that she had her own identity while being a human being like others she took her first step towards rehumanization and became a Hijra.

Realization of having a self-respect is the foremost step towards the process of individuation. It allows people to overcome the concerns of not being equal to other individuals as well as to become independent human beings with their own identity. Laxmi says, “the one thing I learned... was that in order to be respected by others, one had to first respect oneself” (Laxmi 25). This clearly indicates that Laxmi learned and believed in the idea of self-respect which created a path for her towards the process of individuation and the recognition of self as a human being with a different identity. This allowed Laxmi to realize that the “...identity crisis I [Laxmi] was experiencing, I [Laxmi] needed to be comforted myself [herself]” (Laxmi 32). The recognition of identity crisis that Laxmi was going through and the realization that she needed to be comforted fuels the process of individuation. Laxmi not only identifies the identity crisis she was going through rather she also understands that she needs to be respected by her own self, and that she needs to be satisfied with who she is. It has to be noted here that Laxmi despite being stigmatized was able to reflect the possible ways in which she could achieve self-awareness and individuation for the process of rehumanization.

Furthermore, Laxmi “started wearing my [her] sexuality on my [her] sleeves... sometimes I [Laxmi] picked courage and landed on campus in female attire...” (Laxmi 30). She realized “that everyone had the right to live as they wanted” (Laxmi 34). From this excerpt, it can be inferred that Laxmi not only became aware of her identity rather she also started to express it openly. Laxmi’s gender expression was no more kept a secret by her instead she started owning it. She started performing the roles which she wanted to, in contrast to the roles that society imposed on and associated to her. Laxmi realized that she “couldn’t fulfil these expectations” (Laxmi 37) which society and culture had enforced upon her, and she has lived her life without being part of the socially constructed gender binary. This change in her personality refers to the process of self-recognition. She recognized her identity as different from the male identity which was associated to her on her birth. Besides this she also became conscious of the fact that she could openly reject the imposed identity and consciously exercise her own individuality.



Laxmi writes “I knew I” (Laxmi 37) which indicates that Laxmi gained a clearer awareness of self. Laxmi knew she “did not feel like a man” (Laxmi 37). While it is evident from the discussion in chapter five that Laxmi faced marginalization and was considered a social pariah, she despite this existential crisis acknowledged and advocated her hijra identity and reintegrated it in her life while taking drastic decisions like challenging the stereotypical gender division. The process of individuation involves recognizing and respecting the notion that each human being is a unique individual with their own path and identity. They make their decisions consciously recognizing who they are. The same phenomenon can be seen in Laxmi’s life she questions her identity that whether she falls into the category of male or female. She says she thought and decided that she “... was a woman, and the world must see me as such. I decided to become a hijra” (Laxmi 40). This suggests that Laxmi despite being bashed became clear in her mind about who she was and what she wanted to be and consciously became her own self.

The process of individuation as asserted by Oelofsen takes certain features of self into account. It is the process of investigating self and knowing the reality about who an individual is and where he/she stands with a separate identity. In the memoir Laxmi accomplishes the same notion. She concludes that “historically, hijras are respected in Uttar Pradesh.... (Laxmi 48) and “began to realize that the hijras were a culturally rich sub-sect” (Laxmi 39). In order to know where she stood, she learned about the hijra community. She concluded that the hijra community was considered respectable in Uttar Pradesh and it is culturally affluent. Laxmi also states that “God loves the hijra community and has created a special place for it outside the man-woman frame (Laxmi 40). It can be inferred from these quotations that Laxmi’s acknowledgement of her identity as a hijra brought peace in her life. She approved of her identity and confirmed that gender binary is a social construct and God Himself has created hijras outside the male-female frame. Following this realization Laxmi writes “I was proud to be a part of the [hijra] community” (Laxmi 51). And she was proud that she “was hijra” (Laxmi 52).

Oelofsen further asserts that to rehumanize one must see that people “demonstrate[s] different ways of being human” (Oelofsen 184). Usually transgenders/hijras as discussed in the previous chapter are treated less than human beings or they are considered freaks, and monsters for not being able to conform to the set standards of gender binary. However, to overcome these essentialist views one must realize that there are different ways of being a human as directed by Oelofsen. Similarly,

in the memoir Laxmi accepted what she felt inside and identified herself as a hijra. Laxmi writes, “When I became a hijra, a great burden was lifted off my head. I felt relaxed. I was now neither a man nor a woman. I was a hijra. I had my own identity. No longer did I feel like an alien (Laxmi 43). Laxmi realized the fact that there are not only two ways of being a human rather she can be a hijra and at the same time can be a human being. That is why she no longer felt like an alien or a freak as people consider them to be. As stated, gender non-conforming are human beings (Winter), whose identities do not comply with the orthodox gender order (Delliswararao and Hangsing 16). Laxmi showed the people around her another way of being a human, who was other than being a man or a woman.

“I had to be faithful to myself. I was not born to be a man” (Laxmi 60) says Laxmi in her memoir. It is to be noted here that Laxmi accepted the reality that she was not a man. No matter what her family and society considered her she had to remain faithful to her own self and approve herself for being a hijra. So, while applying for a visa she wanted her gender to be mentioned as a hijra. Laxmi writes “I wanted it to refer to me as a hijra, and a hijra alone (Laxmi 78). There is another incident in the novel where Laxmi strongly emphasizes on her being a hijra. Laxmi attends the program *Such ka Samna* in which she is asked different questions regarding her life and life choices by the host of the show. When asked the question that “If the last wish of your parents is that you live the life, not of a hijra, but of a man, would you comply?” I said ‘no’ (Laxmi 123). This asserts that Laxmi was clear about who she was and even her parents’ wishes would not affect her choice of condemning the binary gender. This emphasize that Laxmi recognized herself as a hijra and debunked the idea that any individual who do not fit into the gender dichotomy is not a normal human being, rather the individual can live as a hijra. This again demonstrates the notion that there are different ways of being a human.

Moreover, in the memoir we can observe that after identifying herself as a hijra, despite being bashed by her family and the people around her Laxmi started to work for her community. She became a transgender activist. She went to different T.V shows, and *Big Boss* was among these shows. *Big Boss* is an Indian reality show where different people are made to live in a single house, and they had to perform different tasks. And the person who can make it to the end wins. When Laxmi was called for the show, she had the option to go as a person or a transgender activist. She chose to join the show as a transgender activist. She writes, “I wanted to use the show as a platform to make viewers aware that hijras are normal people, just like them. We’re not extraterrestrials. We have

emotions, just like ordinary human beings, and are perhaps more sensitive than them” (Laxmi 125). Additionally, Oelofsen claims that rehumanization engage people “to see that the other is just like me in many respects” (Oelofsen 184). This thing can be witnessed in Laxmi’s effort to make people aware of the transgender community by joining the show as a transgender activist. Laxmi wanted to make people aware of the fact that the hijras are human beings just like them. “I think, seeing me laugh, cry, eat, drink, and bicker like everyone else during the shoot, made people realize that we hijras are ordinary mortals like them. We do not exist in a rarefied realm” (Laxmi 127). They have the same emotions, and they feel the same pain. Just the way Shylock stated in *The Merchant of Venice* “If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?” (Shakespeare 99).

Oelofsen states that the “types of treatment also change [the] perception” (Oelofsen 184). Cherry states perceptions are opinions that we make about people established on the ideas that we get from them (Cherry). In Laxmi’s case it is the type of self-treatment that changed the people’s perception about her. Instead of victimizing herself she stood as an independent person. She never begged for anyone’s favors or mercy despite being treated inhumanely. She felt that she is an important individual of the society and as a result emerged as one. Laxmi treated herself as an “independent human being who follows her own inclinations” (Laxmi 70). Thus, as a result it changed people’s perception about Laxmi, who they once thought of as an individual with disability and was ruining her family’s reputation. Laxmi even had conflicts with other hijra members of the DWS organization who neglected their duties while making excuses based on their identity. But contrary to their view Laxmi treated herself as a part of the mainstream society. Similarly, when Dorothy visited them from Germany to make a movie on Hijras of India she casted Anita Khemka who was a professional photographer to play the lead role in her movie *Between the Lines*. Laxmi arranged a meeting with Anita and realized that Anita was looking at the hijras as others and wanted to represent them as exotic and even orient. To which Laxmi writes “I find such exoticism and orientalism repulsive because it ‘others’ us” (Laxmi 71). This highlights the fact that Laxmi treated herself as an individual who was not “other” rather she was a part of the society in which she was living. This self-treatment as being a human like others resulted in her being humanly treated by the people around her.

Likewise, Oelofsen further states “the recognition of [self] as human results in ethical treatment by others (Oelofsen 184). The same phenomenon can be observed in the memoir. When Laxmi revealed her identity as a hijra in the beginning chapter she was not only subjected to pariahzation by the society but her own family alienated her, as already discussed in the previous chapter. But as Laxmi treated herself just like any other individual of the society, she was treated ethically by the people around her. For instance, her father’s attitude changed towards her, and he accepted her in the family. Laxmi’s father stated while giving answer to question in the TV show *Such ka Samna* that he is Laxmi’s father and Laxmi “is my responsibility” (Laxmi 123). In addition to this Laxmi herself writes “I... have been accepted by my family. This is rare in a culture where deviant sexuality is enough for parents to disown their offspring (Laxmi 168). Instead of keeping on victimizing herself and being bullied by the people she made her own identity as a Hijra, which changed the people’s perception about her and thus treated her humanely.

The change in perceptions also help in debunking the stereotypes about a specific community and according to Oelofsen “overcoming stereotypes” (Oelofsen 183) is an important part of rehumanization. The most popular stereotypes about hijras are that hijras in a society are usually treated with disgust. In some places dogs are considered better than hijras. They are not worthy of respect and are considered filthy. They are not worthy of doing anything other than sex working and begging (Jami and Jamal 62). But this stereotyping was unrugged when being a chairman of DWS society she was invited to a workshop on Proposal Development at Vashi. She had to give a presentation there. With the help of some fellows, she made her presentation, and the time came when she had to present it. The moment she started presenting, all the people there were startled to see a hijra in such a respectable place and “their stereotypes about hijras were dismantled” (Laxmi 63). Not only this Laxmi also represented her country at the United Nations meanwhile again dismantling the stereotypes about hijras. As aforementioned hijras are looked at with disgust and considered disrespectful but as Laxmi stood for herself these typical stereotypes came to an end and people started looking at her with respect. When she went on the show *Big Boss* Salman Khan and Sanjay Dutt who were the host of the show “always referred to me [Laxmi] as Laxmiji”. “Ji” is a term which is used to show respect to the people (Laxmi 126). By dismantling the stereotypes Laxmi rehumanized herself as suggested by Oelofsen.

Lastly, Oelofsen states that “the recognition of autonomy is important as a rehumanizing strategy” (Oelofsen 185). Autonomy is derived from a Greek word *auto* which means ‘self’ and *nomos* which mean ‘rule’ or ‘governance’. However, the word *autonomy* has several interpretations. It refers to different features such as “self-rule, self-determination, self-knowledge, individuality, and independence” (Agich 267). In the memoir Laxmi recognized her own autonomy as an independent, individual human being who is able and has a right to self-rule. When Laxmi was asked the question in the show *Such ka Samna* that ‘If the last wish of your [Laxmi’s] parents is that you [she] live the life, not of a hijra, but of a man, would you [she] comply?’ I [she] said ‘no’ (Laxmi 123). Laxmi determined what she as an individual wanted to be. She became an autonomous being and made her own decision and stuck to it despite facing outrageous behavior from the people around her. “People laughed at me once, but today I have the last laugh... but over time, the timid, shy Laxminarayan of old, faded out of existence, and the Laxmi you see before you, aggressive, ready to fight the world, stood in his place” (Laxmi 169).

Laxmi does not “regret my [her] decision to become a hijra (Laxmi 169) rather she feels proud of her new identity. Laxmi writes that during her childhood she always felt inferiority complex for being different and not subscribing to the expected male roles “... but now I [Laxmi] have a superiority complex. (Laxmi 169) which points towards the evidence of self-independence. Since Laxmi was able to throw off the shackles of genderism, she did not regret being a hijra rather felt superiority in it. Likewise, Laxmi asserts that hijras like other human beings have potential to do anything given a proper platform. She states “the hijras have potential” (Laxmi 161) and in order to realize this potential the people around hijras should support them without any discrimination. This can be inferred as the realization of individuality and independence by Laxmi which allowed her to look at the hijra community as equals to other human beings with a capability to do anything. And in order to show this potential “for the first time, a hijra beauty pageant was being organized in India” (Laxmi 132). Laxmi says “hijras, who averted the gaze of others because of a deep and abiding inferiority complex, would now be walking the ramp!” (Laxmi 133). This excerpt from the memoir serves as an example of independence, individuality, and self-determination of hijras particularly Laxmi.

## 5.2 Rehumanization of Kristin Lattimer

From the discussion in the previous chapter, it is evident that Krissy had to face internal and external challenges in coping with her new identity. She was demeaned and belittled for her ambivalent gender. However, it can be argued that the character of Kristin Lattimer also develops as an individual being with her own identity at the end of the novel. At the same time, it is also ostensive as we analyze the novel that the protagonist, Krissy, was helped by other characters in the novel to escape the victim position and rehumanize. Though Krissy was subject to pariahization by some of the characters like her school fellows, Sam, Josh, and her being stopped by the school from participating in sports but on the other hand she was helped by other characters like her father, Darren, and Gretchen to accept her new identity.

“They say the best hurdlers learn to compartmentalize. They break down each race into its components, and when they perfect the little things, the big picture comes together naturally” (Gregorio 33). In the novel *None of the Above* the same thing can be traced in the character of Krissy. She regardless of being excluded as a pariah, bullied, and marginalized as discussed in the previous chapter learns to stand up as a person with her own identity and individuality. Just as a hurdler breaks down the race into its components while perfecting the little things to get the bigger reward at the end of the race Krissy also step by step with the help of some loving and understanding people around her was capable of going against the odds and incorporated the process of rehumanization in her life. The different ways in which she achieved rehumanization are discussed below.

Oelofsen claims that “imagination can play a role in rehumanizing the other, through enabling an overcoming of indifference to the other’s pain and plights” (Oelofsen 183). The element of imagination can be linked to the character of Aunt Carla in the novel who occasionally in the novel tries to connect with what Krissy was going through. With the help of her imagination Aunt Carla remained empathetic towards Krissy. For instance, when Aunt Carla came to Krissy’s house after knowing the news. She feels sorry for Krissy. “Poor, poor Krissy” (Gregorio 38), states Aunt Carla. It can be argued that the empathy that she felt for her was because of the process of imagination which Aunt Carla was going through and which was enabling Aunt Carla to understand Krissy’s plight and pain. Additionally, Pelaprat and Cole proffer that it is through the process of imagination that one is able to fix and unite the disintegrated, inadequate ordeals and bring to light the substantial picture (Pelaprat and Cole 2011, p.399). Aunt Carla as aforementioned was

performing the same role. In the novel Aunt Carla makes sure that the disintegrated life of Krissy also sees the substantial picture of her life. Aunt Carla reminds Krissy that Krissy is a strong girl, and Krissy must remember that “we’ll love you no matter what. Remember when you were little and your dad always said that he’d love you forever and ever, until the sun fades?” (Gregorio 39).

Dr LaForte Krissy’s psychiatrist is another character who played an important role in helping Krissy rehumanize. After going through all the turmoil and mental trauma Krissy agrees on visiting a psychiatrist. On her sessions with Dr LaForte Krissy learns about different concepts related to Krissy’s diagnosis and being a trans. Dr LaForte listens patiently to what Krissy talks about and calmly answers her all questions and responses with the realization that it “must have been so hard for you [Krissy]” (Gregorio 124). He made her realize that regardless of being surrounded by people who marginalized her and considered her a pariah “there are people who care about you [her]. And you are truly not alone” (Gregorio 125). These people according to Dr LaForte loved her regardless of what gender she had and helped her overcome the trauma which she experienced as a result of stigmatization. Furthermore, Dr LaForte encouraged Krissy to contact people with her condition. He made her understand that “no one is going to relate to you [Krissy] better than someone who has lived through your [Krissy’s] diagnosis” (Gregorio 125). According to him the individuals with AIS condition would be more understanding towards the pain and plight of Krissy. Thus, helping her to overcome the discrimination she faced and rehumanize.

Another aspect which helps in rehumanizing is “engaging the other in real dialogue, which would undermine the perception of her as an ‘ideal’ of any kind, or as not able to make her own decisions” (Oelofsen 183). Krissy’s father from the beginning till the end of the novel can be seen engaging in real dialogue with Krissy. Despite of he himself being devastated on the particular discovery, he tried his best to get knowledge about the androgen insensitivity syndrome or AIS condition and kept on encouraging Krissy to engage herself in real dialogue with him. Krissy’s father did not think of her as a freak, and he did not limit Krissy’s existence as a pariah Krissy’s father found some research groups on the internet regarding AIS. He himself joined the support groups of parents who had children with AIS and also suggested Krissy to join these groups. After joining a support group Krissy exclaims “It turned out that my dad was right. The internet was hope” (Gregorio 42). Furthermore, Krissy’s father permitted Krissy to make her own decisions. When

Krissy decided to go through gonadectomy and when the nurse brought her the consent form Krissy “without even glancing at my [her] dad, I [she] signed my [her] name” (Gregorio 86). Krissy made her stance clear to her father that she wanted to go through the surgery and her father respected her decision.

Correspondingly, it is through genuine dialogue that one sets aside the judgement and assumptions about the other thus creating a “reciprocal relation” (Banathy and Jenlink 6). Krissy and her father through genuine dialogue were able to create a reciprocal relation. From the discussion in the above paragraph, it is evident that it was through dialogue that her father was trying to bring Krissy out of the victim position. Furthermore, when Krissy decides to take a break from the school, he again respects her decision and does not force any opinion or decision on her. Through engaging in dialogue, he sees Krissy as an independent individual capable of making her own choices. For instance, when in the mid part of the novel after going through the surgery Krissy decides to take leave from the school her father again respects her decision. When Krissy says, “I don’t think I can go to school today” (Gregorio 90) and “No more doctors. Please?” (Gregorio 90), her father understands and accepts by saying “Okay” (Gregorio 90).

“The rehumanization process is able to allow for difference, but without the inference that difference equals not fully human. This is possible through focusing on similarities and overcoming stereotypes” Oelofsen claims (Oelofsen 183). Stereotypes refer to over exaggeration of ideas about a particular group or individual. The stereotypes are stern in nature and sometimes portray a negative image of a group or an individual (Marx and Ko 2). When Hill’s stance of gender bashing was being discussed in the previous chapter it was indisputable and transparent that the individuals like Sam, Josh, and other school fellows they were seeing the differences between them and Krissy. Thus, these characters were unable to recognize Krissy as fully human rather they were inferring her to be less than a human being and were calling her derogatory names like whore, faggot, and freak. Despite this some other characters in the novel focused on the similarities and treated her as a human being like them rather focusing on Krissy’s inability to associate herself with the fixed gender binary.

For instance, Jessica Riley one of her classmates when came to know about her condition instead of focusing on the differences she focused on the similarities. When Jessica came to know that Krissy because of her intersex condition would never be able to get pregnant, instead of acting in the typical way or calling her names Jessica said “...to



be honest, I'm a bit jealous of you" (Gregorio 121), because Krissy would never have to "stress about getting period, or about getting pregnant" (Gregorio 121). She further suggested Krissy that Krissy can always adopt a child if she wanted one, the same way Jessica's parents adopted her younger sister, Becky. While suggesting Krissy about adopting a child in the future if Krissy ever wanted to have one Jessica says, she does not want to "sound insensitive" (Gregorio 121), pointing out that Jessica believed Krissy was a normal human being just like her. The only difference between the two was one i.e., Jessica was having a uterus thus making her potential for giving birth while the other i.e., Krissy did not have a uterus, rather she has gonads, resulting in her not being able to give birth. Despite knowing this fact Jessica instead of demeaning Krissy and calling her a weird being treated Krissy like she would treat any person who conforms to gender binary.

The concept of dimorphism has divided people into two main groups i.e., male, and female and Anne Fausto-Sterling asserts that this dimorphism is an ideal belief. It suggests "the extreme ends of a spectrum of possible body types" (Fausto-Sterling 76) and these extreme ends are both natural and normal. However, this concept of dimorphism cannot be applied to all the human beings (Zeiminska 179) thus affirming Oelofsen's stance that individuals "demonstrates different ways of being human beings" (Oelofsen 184), which according to her is another vital aspect of rehumanization. In the novel the same objective was taught to Krissy to rehumanize her existence. For instance, Dr Cheng tells Krissy that "Gender identity is one's internal sense of whether they're male or female. It often correlates to one's external sex, but not always; that's what being transgender is" (Gregorio 37). Here Dr. Cheng implies that it is not necessary that one's internal sense of being male or female should always align with the external sex thus confirming that dimorphism is only a constructed idea and there are many other possibilities that exist other than only being male or female. Further, Dr. Cheng assures Krissy that most of the individuals with "AIS live perfectly normal life" (Gregorio 38) referring that just the way male and female bodies are different from each other, and it does not make any gender less than a human being in the same way having an AIS condition does not make an individual a pariah rather it is another way of being a human.

Furthermore, Krissy's doubt about not being a normal human being and unable to associate herself with the female gender were answered by Gretchen, Krissy's new friend from AIS support group. Gretchen asserted that it is not necessary to have a uterus to be a woman because then "What about women who have hysterectomies? Or mastectomies?"

(Gregorio 131). Thus, suggesting Krissy that it is not right to associate such physical characteristics with being a female or a male rather, it must be understood that being a woman or a man can be demonstrated in different ways. Moreover, Gretchen states “Gender is a totally social construct” (Gregorio 133), subsuming that the only two genders which are considered normal is also a socially constructed idea and this social construction of gender deprives people who do not conform to its fixed male and female division. Hence suggesting and proffering the stance that there are also other ways of being a human, other than being a male and female. As Renata Zeiminska asserts that the presence of intersex individuals is a counter argument against the idea of dimorphism [and its ideality]. Further being an intersex is not being odd or is not ataxia rather it demonstrates multiplicity (Zeiminska 182), or it can be claimed that the presence of intersex highlights that there are different ways of being a human.

The process of rehumanization also involves “the recognition of the other as human” which results in “the ethical treatment of” other (Oelofsen 184). Ethics is described as educating oneself with what is fair and what is bad and then performing the fair action (Krishnamurthy 3). Miss Diaz Krissy’s school teacher demonstrates the ethical treatment towards Krissy which helps her to rehumanize. When someone bullies Krissy by posting a photoshopped picture of her on Facebook Miss Diaz tells Krissy she has made sure to contact the photoshop company to find out who is the culprit. When Krissy tries to stop her from investigation out of the fear that her father will come to know about the whole situation, Miss Diaz states “there’s a fine line between pranking and bullying” (Gregorio 110). Miss Diaz here is very clear about what is wrong and what is right and recognizes Krissy as a human thus she is making sure that the person who has crossed the limits and behaved in an unethical way with Krissy should be punished. She further empathizes with Krissy realizing that Krissy will not be able to join the school so early after being bullied and stigmatized so Miss Diaz offers her a home tuition until she feels okay and ready to join the school again. This reflects the ethical treatment of Krissy by Miss Diaz.

In the same way when Krissy stops going to the school, she gets messages by some of her school mates. Roshanda wishes her good health and “hopes you [Krissy] comes back soon” (Gregorio 139) in a private message. Tamara Leffard, a student teacher, writes a heartwarming post on her Facebook wall stating, “hopes to see you [Krissy] next year” (Gregorio 139) during the vacation season. While Peggy Shah, Krissy’s Lab friend, sends

a message saying she misses her and wishes her to “get well soon” (Gregorio 139). These examples highlight the fact that among the bullies there were some people around her who did not adhere to the fixed genderism and deemed Krissy to be a freak or a faggot for not complying to this fixed system. These individuals rather recognized Krissy as a human being who in every aspect was equal to them. They treated Krissy in an ethical and respectable way. This treatment made Krissy realize and forced her to not think of her as some kind of wretched being but to accept the reality that she was a normal human being just like all the other characters in the novel. As a result, Krissy was able to rehumanize.

Darren, who was her school fellow and whose mother had once dated Krissy’s father is among the most important people in the novel who played a significant role in the process of rehumanization of Krissy. Even after knowing the AIS condition of Krissy, he treated her the way he used to do before her condition was known, without looking for the differences and degrading her. He helped Krissy with the lectures she missed from school for being absent. Instead of pitying her or following the typical stereotypes like intersex people are not allowed to study he treated her warmly. Furthermore, instead of being sorry for her, Darren had normal conversations with Krissy. When they were having a conversation Krissy states, “for the first time in what seemed like years, I cracked a smile” (Gregorio 103). Krissy in spite of going through hard times, while talking to Darren, was able to laugh again. Darren treated Krissy humanely without any discrimination and even fell in love with her to. This for Krissy served as a surprise who thought that only a person conforming to the binary gender is capable of being loved and adored. This idea present in Krissy’s mind was changed by Darren stating that “you fall for the person not their chromosomes” (Gregorio 182). And in the end of the novel, it can be witnessed that Krissy became contented with her life which she states, “was beautiful” (Gregorio 184).

In chapter 4 the discussion concluded that both characters Laxmi and Krissy in the selected texts were subject to pariahization. While on the other hand it is necessary to consider that Laxmi and Krissy despite being bullied, marginalized, and alienated accepted their identities as Hijra and an intersex respectively. The above discussion sheds light on the fact that the discriminated characters of the selected texts broke the vicious cycle of genderism leading to transphobia and gender bashing while raising their voices through accepting their new identities and not conforming to the traditional gender binary. Krissy and Laxmi refused to remain invisible in the society and emerged in the public

sphere with their own individuality. These individuals rehumanized themselves with self-help (in Laxmi's case) and with the help of other characters (in Krissy's case). The two characters not only made a place in their respective societies but also challenged the idea of gender binary i.e., only two genders male and female can exist in a society. Furthermore, it is also evident from the above discussion that the transgenders are normal human beings despite not conforming to the set standards of the society. Summing up the above discussion it can be asserted that individuals other than male and female can also exist in a society as normal human beings with their own identity. This rehumanization of the two pariahs hint towards a more inclusive society where gender diversity is not considered a taboo.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“Gender is not sane. It's not sane to call a rainbow black and white”.

(Kate Bornstein)

The textual analysis and the exposition of the selected texts have delineated the undivulged vistas of pariahzation and rehumanization epitomized in these texts. The two vistas of pariahzation and rehumanization have been brought to the light to validate the thesis statement as well as to answer the research questions which initiated the current study.

In order to study the aforementioned phenomena, I selected the narratives *None of the Above* (2015) and *Me Hijra Me Laxmi* (2015) by I.W. Gregorio and Laxminarayan Tripathi respectively. Gregorio's *None of the Above* highlights the life changing story of an intersex character while Laxmi's memoir *Me Hijra Me Laxmi* deals with the story of Laxmi herself as a hijra. Both the textual artifacts deal with characters who from being pariahs of a society, rehumanize as individuals with their own identity.

#### **6.1 Writing in contrast to fixed representations: Corroboration of the Thesis Statement**

The thesis statement has been corroborated through the textual analysis and interpretation of the selected narratives. It has been ratified that both the textual narratives bring to the limelight the pariahzation and rehumanization aspect of the gender non-conformists. Both characters Laxminarayan Tripathi and Kristin Lattimer go through the process of pariahzation and ultimately in the later part of the texts they rehumanize themselves. However, the process of pariahzation and rehumanization in the selected texts were different for both characters. In the memoir Laxmi faced gender bashing not only from the society but also from her parents. Laxmi was not only stigmatized by the society, but her parents also treated her as a pariah after knowing that she has become a hijra. Further it is important to mention here that Laxmi's attitude towards transphobia and gender bashing was resilient. She embraced her own identity as a hijra and faced gender bashing and transphobia dauntlessly. Despite of being called names and sexually exploited because of her effeminate gestures Laxmi still managed to create her place in the society as a hijra. Her positive outlook towards the life helped her to earn respect in the society.

Laxmi did not confine herself to the set standards of the society and its ideas about the hijras rather she herself created her place in the society as a person who do not conform to the traditional gender binary.

While on the other hand Krissy's attitude towards the fact that she was an intersex was totally opposite. She found herself in a state of total shock when she came to know that she is an intersex. Krissy like Laxmi also faced transphobia and gender bashing because of genderism. But in her case her father, aunt, her teachers, friends, and some of her school fellows helped her to rehumanize. Though she was also bullied by some people around her because of her ambiguous gender but most of the people in her social circle behaved in an understanding way. Another thing which should be mentioned is that Krissy herself was transphobic. She suffered from external as well as internal transphobia. She considered herself less worthy and in order to associate with the female gender she went through the surgery without considering the risks. However, her father, her close friends, her teachers, and other people with AIS served as a medium to help her rehumanize and in the last part of the novel Krissy is able to accept her identity which was beyond the confined idea of gender binary.

Thus, it is evident from the discussion that both the aspects were present in the selected narratives. Furthermore, it is necessary to study both these aspects because it helps to redefine and challenge the fixed binary system of gender and sexuality, while reflecting that the non-conformists are humans with their own identity, and they are present everywhere among us. It also enables to think beyond dimorphism and challenge the idea of cisgenderism while asserting that being a transgender is not a disorder rather it is an identity.

## **6.2 Explanation of the Research Questions**

With the help of textual analysis of the selected texts all the research questions have been answered. The first research question aimed on exploring how the individuals were affected by genderism, transphobia, and gender bashing. The analysis revealed that both the characters Laxmi and Krissy were not only subject to mental suffering, but both were also physically abused for not conforming to the set genders. Laxmi was called chakka while Krissy was called tranny faggot. Laxmi had to face transphobia from the society and even from her parents while Krissy did not only face external transphobia, but she

was also a victim of internal transphobia. In addition to this both the characters were subject to physical abuse. Laxmi was sexually exploited while Josh tried to rape Krissy.

The second question focused on how successful the individuals were in negotiating rehumanization in their lives. The process of rehumanization was different for both characters. Laxmi did not seek help from any other individual around her to rehumanize while Krissy who faced internal transphobia had to take help of other characters in the novel to rehumanize. Laxmi realized her worth and status in the mid part of the memoir where she started to show her sexuality by cross dressing and raising voice for hijra rights. Despite being treated as a pariah by her own family she did not lose hope and believed in herself. She advocated the fact that people who do not conform to the traditional gender binary are also human beings with same feelings and needs. While Krissy on the other hand was unable to rehumanize by herself because she was suffering from internal transphobia. She had to seek help from other people around her. For instance, her father, the members of AIS group on internet, Darren, and her friends. Krissy's process of rehumanization took place in the final chapters of the novel where she realized she has to start her life all over again with her new identity and with hope she expected it to be a beautiful one. To sum up, it is evident to declare that both the characters were successful to negotiate rehumanization in their lives.

### **6.3 Locality of the Research in the Current Circumstances**

In the contemporary world where challenging the fixed standards of gender binary is becoming more evident the research becomes substantial in the context of concurrent circumstances. All the stances prove to be pertinent to the contemporaneous society. Genderism is still prevalent today and people who are unable to associate themselves with this heteronormative system are considered pariahs. These individuals for being different are demeaned and stigmatized. Most of the people are still transphobic, they feel disgust towards people who are gender non-conformists and ultimately this transphobia leads to gender bashing.

However, with this pariahization and marginalization taking place, there are some increasing numbers of people who have started accepting identities other than being male and female. Transgender people have started to raise voice for their rights. Transgenders from all around the world are being accepted as human beings with different identities. Though there is still much to do to debunk the set standards of gender binary, a change

can be witnessed in the contemporary age. Therefore, the current research proves to be important since it remains remarkably pertinent to the contemporary age.

## 6.4 Recommendations

As a result of delimited study of the research, there are various other elements to consider that have not been researched on or have been only referred to. Nevertheless, these aspects would make a thought-provoking extension to the constituents and subject matter of the research. For instance, a comparative study of the texts can be carried out while critically analyzing that with emerging times how the situations and conditions faced by the transgenders of the East (orient) and the West (occident) are different from each other. An analysis of the major characters of the texts other than the protagonists can be carried out while studying the difference in their attitudes towards gender diversity.

Furthermore, it can be studied that to what extent the fictional text produced on transgenders is successful in depicting the marginalization and pariahization faced by the protagonist of the novel and how successful the novel is to promote gender fluidity as compared to the memoir which is based on real life situations. Similarly, a comparative analysis can be carried out between the texts and movies produced on transgenders. For instance, a comparative analysis can be carried out between the memoir *Me Laxmi Me Hijra* and a movie named *Boys Don't Cry* (1999) to check how far is the movie successful in portraying the life of a transgender.



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