

# **TRANSCENDING STEREOTYPES: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF GENDER IDENTITY THEORY AND IT' S IMPLICATIONS FOR TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS**

*Dissertation*

*Submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfilment of the requirement for  
The award of Degree of Master of Arts in English Language and Literature*

**By**

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled **Transcending Stereotypes: A Comprehensive Analysis of Gender Identity Theory and Its Implications for Transgender Individuals** is a bonafide record of research done by **IRFANA P I** (Register Number AIAVMEG008), has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Fellowship or other similar title.

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Place: P.Vemballur

**Irfana P I**

Date:



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## **Chapter:1**

### **Introduction to Transgender Studies**

Transgender studies is a multidisciplinary field that explores issues related to gender identity and expression, and the experiences of individuals who identify as transgender. It encompasses a wide range of topics, including the social, cultural, psychological, legal, medical, economic, and historical aspects of transgender identities. The field of transgender studies emerged in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, as transgender people became more visible and began advocating for their rights. Scholars from a diverse range of disciplines, including sociology, psychology, anthropology, history, and cultural studies, have contributed to the development of this field. Some of the key topics explored in transgender studies include the experiences of transgender individuals in various contexts, such as healthcare, education. Researchers also examine the ways in which transgender identities intersect with other social categories, such as race, class, and disability.

Transgender theory refers to a range of perspectives and ideas that explore the experiences, identities, and social realities of transgender people. This theoretical framework includes academic, activist, and personal perspectives that address issues such as gender identity, biological sex, gender expression, sexuality, and social institutions. Transgender theory challenges the binary gender system that assumes only two distinct genders, male and female.

Transgender theory also explores the ways in which society constructs gender norms, and how these norms can be oppressive and limiting for transgender people. It seeks to promote social justice and create spaces where transgender people can live authentically and freely. Overall, transgender theory plays an important role in advancing

understanding and awareness of transgender issues and supporting the rights and dignity of transgender people.

Transgender theory seeks to understand and explore the experiences, identities, and social movements of individuals who do not identify with the gender assigned to them at birth. It acknowledges that gender is a socially constructed concept that is intertwined with complex power dynamics, including sexism, cissexism, and heteronormativity. Transgender theory also recognizes the importance of intersectionality, which considers how multiple aspects of identity, such as race, class, and disability, intersect to shape people's experiences.

One of the central concepts in transgender theory is gender dysphoria, which refers to the distress or discomfort that individuals may feel when their gender identity does not match their sex assigned at birth. This can lead to different modes of gender expression, such as transitioning, which involves changing one's name, pronouns, clothing, and/or undergoing medical procedures such as hormone therapy or surgery to affirm one's gender identity.

Transgender theory also intersects with queer theory and feminist theory, both of which explore the Heteronormativity and patriarchy with one critically analyzing how it enforces rigid gender norms and the other unmasking a system of oppression where men hold the power, commonly traced back to the historical subjugation of women. It highlights the importance of creating safe and affirming spaces for the transgender community and advocating for their rights and acceptance.

The essay "The Empire Strikes Back: A Post transsexual Manifesto," written by transgender woman Sandy Stone in reaction to the divisive book "The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male" in 1987, has been credited as a revolution in gender studies. Scholars in the sometimes contentious area of transgender studies contend

that the way trans bodies are epistemologically central to the study is what distinguishes it as a distinct discipline.

This project aims to contribute to addressing the gap in research on transgender studies through exploring the experiences and perspectives of transgender individuals on gender identity and transition. The project's goal is to produce new information and understanding about the opinions and experiences of transgender people. The results can help advance transgender studies and guide the creation of policies and programmes that will enhance the welfare and support of the transgender people. Additionally, the endeavour can encourage a greater appreciation for and acceptance of transgender people and help lessen discrimination and stigma.

Transgender theory is a complex and multidimensional field of study that seeks to understand and explore the experiences, identities, and social, cultural, and political implications of individuals who do not conform to traditional gender norms and roles. It is based on the premise that gender is a social construct that is influenced by a variety of factors, including biology, culture, history, and individual agency. This theory also recognizes the intersectionality of gender with other social identities such as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and ability, and highlights the importance of understanding and addressing these intersections in order to support and empower transgender individuals and communities.

One of the advantages of transgender theory is that it challenges traditional understandings of gender as a binary system that divides people into male and female based on biological sex. Transgender theory recognizes that gender is a complex and fluid concept that is influenced by a variety of factors, including culture, history, and personal experience.

Transgender theory also promotes social justice by advocating for the rights of transgender individuals, including access to healthcare, legal protections from discrimination, and social acceptance. By recognizing the unique experiences of transgender individuals and providing them with a platform to express their voices, transgender theory empowers individuals to assert their identities.

Transgender individuals are people whose gender identity, expression, or behavior differs from the expectations or norms associated with their sex assigned at birth. Transgender studies examines the experiences of these individuals, including the challenges they face, the discrimination and marginalization they may experience, and the ways in which they negotiate their gender identity and expression within various social and cultural contexts.

Transgender studies also explores the intersections of gender identity, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and disability, and how these factors impact transgender individuals' experiences and identities. The field includes research on the history of transgender people, the political and legal struggles for transgender rights and recognition, and the social and cultural representations of transgender people in media and popular culture. Transgender studies is currently an emerging field of study with a growing body of literature, research, and scholarship. It is seen as a crucial discipline for understanding and creating social change around transgender issues, and for empowering transgender individuals and their communities.

Through this project, we expect to contribute to a more nuanced and informed understanding of transgender theory, both within academic and broader communities. Through this project, we aim to challenge common misconceptions and stereotypes about transgender individuals, provide clarity on key concepts, and promote understanding and respect for the diverse experiences of gender identity and expression.

Transgender is a term used to describe individuals whose gender identity and expression do not conform to societal and cultural norms associated with their sex assigned at birth. This study aims to explore the theoretical perspectives on transgender and the societal impacts of the transgender community.

The primary objective of this research is to examine the following aspects of transgender theories:

- Understanding of gender identity and gender expression
- Theories explaining the causes of transgender identity
- Theoretical models of social acceptance of transgender individuals
- Theory of minority stress
- Theoretical perspectives on transgender mental health
- Socio-cultural and legal implications of the transgender experience

Transgender theory holds that gender is not a fixed, binary construct, but rather a fluid and multifaceted concept that is shaped by social norms and cultural expectations. Transgender individuals reject the gender assigned to them at birth and identify with a different gender. They may undergo medical interventions, such as hormone therapy and surgery, to bring their physical appearance more in line with their gender identity.

Transgender theory has played a significant role in shaping public policy around issues such as healthcare, education, and workplace discrimination. It has also been influential in raising awareness about the struggles and experiences of transgender individuals and the need for greater acceptance and social justice.

The main aim of transgender studies is to understand and examine the social, psychological, and medical experiences of people who identify as transgender. It seeks to investigate the factors that contribute to gender identity and gender expression and to explore the impact of societal and cultural norms on transgender individuals. The fight for

equality and social justice for transgender people is another important problem.

Transgender studies are essential in understanding the socio-political contexts that perpetuate transphobia, discrimination and violence against transgender individuals. By studying their experiences and voices, researchers can make recommendations to policymakers to create policies and laws that support transgender rights and safety.

Transgender people face unique challenges when it comes to accessing healthcare services and navigating the healthcare system. Transgender studies can help identify areas where healthcare services need to improve and provide insights into how healthcare providers can better serve the needs of the transgender community. It can also help to reduce stigma and improve their mental and physical health outcomes.

The transgender community has gained more visibility and recognition in recent years, and as a result, the need for academic research and studies about their experiences and perspectives has become a necessity. Transgender studies allow for a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances of gender identity, expression and embodiment that is often ignored in traditional gender studies. Transgender studies examine the intersection of gender identity, race, class, and sexual orientation. It is concerned not only with understanding transgender people's experiences but also with analyzing how these experiences intersect with other forms of oppression.

Transgender studies focus on how individuals experience their gender identity and how it shapes their sense of self. It looks at the challenges faced by transgender people in terms of acceptance, recognition, and validation. Transgender studies examine the various social, economic, and political systems that shape the lives of transgender individuals. It takes into account the impact of gender norms, legal frameworks, and institutional policies on the experiences of transgender people. Transgender studies prioritize working with transgender people to ensure their voices and experiences are

represented in research. It focuses on centering the experiences of transgender individuals and promoting their well-being and rights.

Overall, transgender studies use interdisciplinary approaches to examine gender identity, the lived experiences of transgender individuals, and social, political, and institutional systems that impact their lives. This research is expected to contribute to knowledge advancement by exploring different perspectives on transgender theory. The study will summarize the most common theoretical concepts within the field and highlight the paucity of empirical evidence in some areas. Moreover, this study will provide a foundation for developing evidence-based interventions that can promote social acceptance and mental wellbeing among transgender individual.



**Chapter :2**  
**Transformative Narratives: exploring**  
**Transgender Theory Elements In “We Are Not**  
**The Others: Life of A Transgender Artist”**

I speak

Because we need to be heard,

I write

Because we need to be understood,

I dare

Because we need to survive.

-Kalki Subramaniam

Indian activist, artist, entrepreneur, poet, performer, and motivational speaker Kalki Subramaniam is well-known for her identity as a transgender person. Through its powerful and cutting-edge artistic endeavours, the Sahodari Foundation, which Kalki created, supports the Indian transgender community. In the Indian state of Tamilnadu, she was born in the charming town of Pollachi. As an ardent advocate for transgender rights in India, Kalki is well recognised for her tireless campaigning. A million or more pupils have heard her speak. She was a well-known defender of the legal rights of transgender people and one of the organisers behind the historic victory in 2014 when the Indian Supreme Court finally recognised the transgender community’s civil rights in the country.

Kalki Subramaniam’s book ‘We are not Others’ is an autobiographical narrative of a transgender person’s transition and struggles in a society where transgender people are discriminated against and marginalized. The book revolves around the author’s life as an activist, using art to spread awareness about transgender rights and the struggles that come with it.

At the beginning of the book, Kalki talks about her childhood years, growing up in a conservative South Indian Brahmin family where gender roles were strictly defined. She describes how she felt a sense of disconnect with her body from a young age and how this feeling intensified as she grew up. Kalki describes how she struggled with her identity as a transgender person in a society where there was a lack of awareness. She speaks about how society's rigid gender binary system made it difficult for her to come out as transgender.

The author then goes on to describe her journey of self-discovery and acceptance as a transgender person. She talks about how she learned to embrace her identity, despite facing societal pressure to conform. Kalki also opens up about the challenges she faced, including the struggles of transition and finding acceptance within her family and society.

Throughout the book, Kalki elaborates on the various ways in which society marginalizes and discriminates against transgender people. She writes about the violence and harassment that transgender people face and the emotional and mental toll it takes on them. Kalki also provides insight into how the lack of legal recognition of transgender people impacts their ability to access basic rights and services such as healthcare and education.

Kalki's story is not just about her individual struggles and triumphs but also about the larger movement for transgender rights in India. She describes her activism work and how she became a recognized voice for the transgender community. Her work with various NGOs and advocacy groups helped her bring attention to the issues facing transgender people and helped change mindsets and policies.

Throughout the book, Kalki emphasizes the importance of art and storytelling in creating awareness about transgender issues. She speaks about the power of art as a tool

for social change and uses her own life experiences to explore themes such as gender, identity, and social justice.

Overall, 'We are not Others' is a powerful and inspiring story of one woman's journey towards self-acceptance and her contributions towards social change. Kalki's story brings much-needed attention to the long-standing neglect of the transgender community in India and the urgent need for legal recognition and social acceptance. Through her book and her activism work, Kalki has become a voice for the transgender community in India, paving the way for future generations of transgender people to live with dignity and respect.

In her book 'We are not Others', Kalki Subramaniam shares her experiences as a transgender person in a deeply patriarchal and heteronormative society. Throughout the book, she describes the difficult situation she faced due to the societal stigma towards transgender people and the prevalent ignorance and discrimination that she had to deal with.

One of the biggest challenges that Kalki faced was her struggle to come out as transgender in a society where gender conformity was strictly enforced and where being different was not accepted. Kalki expresses how the society's rigid gender binary system made it difficult for her to come out as transgender and embrace her identity. The societal pressure to conform to traditional gender roles and behaviors left her feeling isolated and ashamed of her identity.

The stigma attached to being a transgender person made it difficult for her to find acceptance within her own family. Kalki shares the story of how her father initially rejected her when she came out to him as transgender and how that affected her emotionally. Her struggles with her own family's acceptance of her identity give an insight into the larger societal context that transgender people experience in India.

She explains that this lack of recognition not only affects transgender people's ability to access basic rights and services but also leaves them open to discrimination and violence. Kalki speaks about her own experience of being denied the opportunity to apply for government jobs and how she had to advocate for the inclusion of transgender persons in state and national policies and schemes.

She speaks about the physical, verbal, and emotional abuse that transgender people often experience, and how this affects their mental health. Kalki herself has been a target of such abuse, including being attacked and beaten by a group of men while walking down a street. She describes how these incidents made her feel vulnerable and exposed.

In conclusion, Kalki's experiences as a transgender activist in 'We are not Others' provide a glimpse into the difficult situation that transgender persons face in India. The societal stigma towards transgender persons, the lack of legal recognition, and the risk of discrimination and violence make it a challenging situation for them. However, Kalki's work as an activist and advocate for transgender rights shows that with the help of a supportive community and their own strength, transgender persons can overcome these challenges and create a safer and more accepting society for themselves and future generations.

In conclusion, "We Are Not Others: The Life of a Transgender Artist" by Kalki Subramaniam presents several elements of transgender theory, including gender identity, expression, and performance, intersectionality and multiple identities, and institutional oppression. The book is a powerful tool, providing readers with an insight into the diverse experiences of transgender individuals and encouraging a society that fosters equality and acceptance.

She argues that transgender identity is a core aspect of a person's identity that should be respected and validated, rather than stigmatized or ignored. This message is important because it challenges prevailing societal norms and prejudices that marginalize and discriminate against transgender people. By promoting acceptance and understanding of transgender identity, Kalki calls for a more inclusive and diverse society that values and embraces all forms of gender expression.

Secondly, Kalki stresses that being transgender is not a choice, but a biological reality. She argues that transgender individuals should not be pathologized or treated as deviant for their gender identity. This message is important because it challenges the notion that transgender identity is a mental disorder or a lifestyle choice. By advocating for the acceptance of transgender identity as a natural aspect of human diversity, Kalki promotes a more holistic understanding of gender that acknowledges the complexity and fluidity of gender expression.

Thirdly, Kalki highlights the importance of intersectionality in understanding and combating oppression faced by transgender people. She argues that transgender people who also belong to other marginalized groups, such as people of color or people with disabilities, face compounded forms of discrimination and violence. This message is important because it emphasizes the need to address multiple forms of oppression in order to create a more just and equitable society. By promoting intersectional activism, Kalki challenges the siloed approach to social justice that often overlooks the experiences of those who face multiple forms of discrimination.

Fourthly, Kalki emphasizes that transphobia is a systemic issue that is embedded in social structures and institutions. She argues that discrimination against transgender individuals is not just a matter of individual prejudice, but also a result of the ways in which society is structured. This message is important because it encourages a critical

analysis of how power and privilege operate in society. By highlighting how transphobia is perpetuated through social and institutional norms, Kalki calls for structural change to create a more inclusive and equitable society.

Fifthly, Kalki advocates for healthcare services that cater to the specific needs of transgender people, including access to hormone therapy and surgeries. This message is important because it highlights the critical need for healthcare that is accessible and affirming for transgender individuals. By advocating for healthcare policies that prioritize transgender health, Kalki calls for a more compassionate and equitable healthcare system.

Finally, Kalki emphasizes the importance of solidarity and collective action in fighting for transgender rights and social justice more broadly. She argues that individual advocacy is important, but that lasting change can only be achieved through collective action and collaboration. This message is important because it encourages a sense of community and shared responsibility in working towards a more just and equitable society. By promoting solidarity, Kalki underscores the importance of working together in pursuit of a common goal.

It is okay to be black, brown or white.

What is not okay is being judgment and

Inhuman about it.

-Kalki Subramaniam

Kalki shares her struggle with gender identity and how she dealt with it in a society that often judges and discriminates against transgender individuals. She talks about how she was rejected by her family and society but found support from a few allies who helped her in her journey of self-discovery. The book also highlights the activism work Kalki has done for the transgender community in India. She speaks about the

campaigns and projects she has initiated to create awareness and provide a platform for transgender voices to be heard.

Look at the men who crave for us. If we are desirable for lust, why not love? Said priya, one of her friend, a trans woman. She always desired to have a husband, children, and a big band of in-laws. Shunned away by her own biological family because of her coming out as a trans, she now lives alone struggling for a livelihood, struggling for a dignified place in society. For most transgender women like her, marital life is often just a dream which never becomes a reality. In 2009, when a mainstream matrimonial website rejected her profile, she started a matrimony website for transgender women. When she launched a Thirunangai Transgender Matrimonial Website, with just six profiles of transwomen, they were flooded with 2,000 marriage proposals. These proposals were pouring in from all around the world, but mostly from India, it was the world's first matrimonial website for trans women.

In conclusion, "We Are Not Others: The Life of a Transgender Artist" by Kalki Subramaniam presents several elements of transgender theory, including gender identity, expression, and performance, intersectionality and multiple identities, and institutional oppression. The book is a powerful tool, providing readers with an insight into the diverse experiences of transgender individuals and encouraging a society that fosters equality and acceptance. Through her personal experiences and activism, Subramaniam emphasizes the need for continuous efforts to create a more equitable and inclusive society. Subramaniam's book gives a powerful voice to the often-marginalized transgender community. By sharing her own narrative and that of other transgender individuals, she provides a platform for their stories to be heard and understood. In doing so, "We Are Not Others" advocates for empowering transgender individuals, allowing them to reclaim

their identity and self-worth, and creating a positive self-image among themselves and society.

“We Are Not Others” is an empathetic portrayal of transgender individuals, enabling readers to understand the emotional struggles they face. It prompts readers to acknowledge and appreciate the different journeys and challenges transgender individuals navigate while striving for self-acceptance and societal recognition. Through this understanding, the book promotes empathy and compassion, dismantling barriers that prevent the development of inclusive and accepting communities.

Kalki Subramaniam’s term “artivism” combines her dual identity as a transgender woman and an artist, emphasizing the intersection between activism and art. “We Are Not Others” inspires current generations to use art as a means of activism, promoting social change and advocating for marginalized communities. By sharing her experiences as an activist, Subramaniam encourages readers to explore and utilize various forms of art to challenge societal norms, promote equality, and depict social justice issues.

The book showcases the resilience and personal triumphs of transgender individuals in the face of adversity. Kalki Subramaniam’s life story, alongside those shared in the book, provides hope and inspiration to those who may be struggling with their identities. The narratives celebrate the achievements of transgender individuals, emphasizing their capacity for growth, empowerment, and success, ultimately promoting self-acceptance and inspiring others to embrace their authentic selves.

“We Are Not Others: Life of a Transgender Artist” by Kalki Subramaniam is an essential literary work in the current generation. By raising awareness, challenging stereotypes, promoting empathy, and inspiring activism, Subramaniam’s book strives to create a more inclusive and accepting society. It serves as an empowering and enlightening resource for all individuals, fostering a deeper understanding and



appreciation of transgender individuals and their struggles, ultimately encouraging the embrace of diversity in all its forms.

Kalki Subramaniam's memoir reveals her struggle with self-realization and acceptance of her transgender identity. Growing up in a society that predominantly adheres to traditional gender norms, she experiences confusion and inner turmoil as she tries to conform to societal expectations. This struggle highlights the difficulties many transgender individuals face in understanding and accepting their true selves in a society that often stigmatizes or denies their existence.

The memoir sheds light on the social stigma and discrimination faced by transgender individuals in Indian society. Kalki narrates instances of bullying, rejection, and verbal abuse, which she encountered from an early age due to her non-conforming gender identity. These experiences expose the deeply entrenched biases and prejudices that transgender individuals often confront, causing them immense emotional distress and hindering their social integration.

Kalki's memoir also explores the complexities of family dynamics and the challenges she faced in gaining acceptance from her own family. The author chronicles the initial disapproval and disbelief she encountered from her loved ones after disclosing her true gender identity. The struggle to bridge the gap between familial expectations and personal authenticity is a central theme in the book, highlighting the hurdles faced by transgender individuals in seeking acceptance and understanding within their own homes.

As Kalki Subramaniam enters educational institutions and professional settings, she encounters various obstacles due to her transgender identity. The memoir depicts instances of bullying, discrimination, and exclusion from classmates, teachers, and colleagues. These experiences highlight the systemic barriers faced by transgender

individuals in accessing education and employment opportunities, further exacerbating their sense of marginalization and limiting their overall societal progress.

The memoir delves into the legal and healthcare disparities faced by transgender individuals in India and globally. Kalki discusses the struggle to legally change her gender marker and secure identification documents that reflect her true gender identity. Additionally, she sheds light on the lack of appropriate healthcare services tailored to the specific needs of transgender individuals, further exacerbating their vulnerability and impeding their access to quality healthcare.

The difficulties faced by Kalki Subramaniam ultimately fuel her activism and advocacy efforts. Through her personal story and the narrative of other transgender individuals, she sheds light on the injustices and challenges faced by the community. The memoir serves as a platform to educate society about the rights and needs of transgender individuals, empowering them to use their voices and fight for equality, acceptance, and legal reforms.

“We Are Not Others: Life of a Transgender Activist” offers a poignant insight into the gender difficulties experienced by Kalki Subramaniam and other transgender individuals. From self-realization and acceptance to facing social stigma, discrimination, and legal battles, the memoir uncovers the multifaceted challenges faced by transgender people. By shedding light on these difficulties, Kalki Subramaniam encourages empathy, understanding, and advocacy for the broader transgender community, ultimately leading to a more inclusive and accepting society.

Transgender theory also sheds light on the discrimination and marginalization faced by transgender individuals. Subramanyam’s memoir vividly portrays the various challenges she encounters, such as societal stigma, lack of legal recognition, and limited access to healthcare and employment opportunities. By incorporating these experiences,

the author raises awareness about the systemic barriers that transgender individuals face, urging readers to question and challenge the existing social structures that perpetuate discrimination.

In conclusion, transgender theory provides a framework for understanding and analyzing the experiences of transgender individuals. It emphasizes the fluidity of gender, challenges societal norms and expectations, and highlights the discrimination and marginalization faced by transgender individuals. By incorporating transgender theory into discussions and narratives, such as in “We Are Not Others: Life of a Transgender Artist” by Kalki Subramanyam, we can gain a deeper understanding of the struggles and triumphs of transgender individuals and work towards creating a more inclusive and accepting society.

In conclusion, “We Are Not Others: Life of a Transgender Artist” by Kalki Subramanyam is a powerful memoir that sheds light on the experiences of a transgender individual in contemporary society. Through her personal journey, Subramanyam challenges societal norms and expectations, highlights the discrimination faced by transgender individuals, and advocates for transgender rights through activism. By incorporating transgender theory into her narrative, Subramanyam effectively raises awareness about the struggles and triumphs of transgender individuals and emphasizes the need for social acceptance and inclusivity. Her memoir serves as an important contribution to the ongoing dialogue surrounding transgender rights and the fight for equality.

“We Are Not Others: Life of a Transgender Artist” by Kalki Subramanyam is a memoir that delves into the life and experiences of a transgender individual, offering a unique perspective on the challenges faced by this marginalized community.

Subramanyam’s personal journey serves as a powerful testament to the resilience and

strength of transgender individuals, while her activism effectively challenges societal norms and advocates for transgender rights. This essay aims to explore the conclusion of the memoir, highlighting its impact and significance in the ongoing fight for transgender equality.

Throughout the memoir, Subramanyam's personal experiences highlight the immense resilience and strength of transgender individuals. From her struggles with gender dysphoria to the discrimination and marginalization she faced, Subramanyam's journey is a testament to the courage it takes to live authentically in a society that often rejects and stigmatizes transgender individuals. The conclusion of the memoir emphasizes the importance of recognizing and celebrating this resilience, as it serves as a source of inspiration for others facing similar challenges.

Subramanyam's activism, a combination of art and activism, plays a central role in her journey and the conclusion of the memoir. Through her art, she effectively challenges societal norms and stereotypes, shedding light on the experiences and struggles of transgender individuals. The conclusion of the memoir highlights the transformative power of activism, as it serves as a catalyst for change and a means of advocating for transgender rights. Subramanyam's activism not only raises awareness but also fosters empathy and understanding, ultimately paving the way for a more inclusive and accepting society.

The conclusion of "We Are Not Others" highlights the urgent need for advocacy and activism in the fight for transgender rights. Subramanyam's memoir serves as a powerful tool for raising awareness about the challenges faced by transgender individuals and the importance of creating a more equitable society. The conclusion emphasizes the need for legal protections, healthcare access, and social acceptance for transgender

individuals. Subramanyam's activism and personal journey inspire readers to become allies and advocates, actively working towards a more inclusive and accepting world.

"We Are Not Others: Life of a Transgender Activist" by Kalki Subramanyam is a highly impactful memoir that sheds light on the experiences of transgender individuals and the fight for equality. The conclusion of the memoir emphasizes the resilience and strength of transgender individuals, the transformative power of activism, the need to challenge societal norms, and the importance of advocacy for transgender rights. Subramanyam's memoir serves as a call to action, inspiring readers to actively work towards creating a more inclusive and accepting society. In conclusion, "We Are Not Others" is a must-read for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of the transgender experience and the ongoing fight for equality.

### **Chapter :3**

## **“A Memoir of Gender Identity: The Brave And Insightful Journeys Of ‘Once A Girl, Always A Boy’**

**By Jo Ivester “**

Jo Ivester grew up in a politically engaged household. She was ten years old when her father uprooted their family from Boston, Massachusetts and relocated them to an all-black community in the Mississippi Delta, where they became embroiled in the civil rights struggle. Jo is determined to promote equal rights for everybody because of her experience. Her best-selling, award-winning novel *The Outskirts of Hope* (She Writes Press, April 2015), which chronicles her family’s time in Mississippi, has prompted her to give countless speeches on racial issues. She expanded her focus to include educating people about the transgender population in recent years, and she currently sits on the board of Equality Texas, a non-profit organisation dedicated to LGBTQ rights. Jo likes to go skiing, beach walking, and swing dancing with her husband when she’s not concentrating on her family, her writing, or her advocacy work. In Texas’s capital, Austin, she resides.

Written primarily from Jeremy Ivester’s video logs of his transition journey, *Once a Girl, Always a Boy: A Family Memoir of a Transgender Journey* is the story of one family’s experience with having a family member transition. His parents, siblings, and other family members provide commentary and reflections throughout the book. It should be emphasised that the preface explains the choice to refer to Jeremy’s earlier years of existence before he identified as a man, including Jeremy’s approval of the move. The transgender guy Jeremy Ivester is the protagonist. He wore boy’s attire and kept his hair short. He was referred to as a tomboy. It was his name for himself. His parents speculated that he might be a lesbian by high school.

He questioned his sexuality at the age of twenty. He had his breasts surgically removed when he was twenty-three. He started taking the hormones that would make his voice quieter and grow a beard a year later, and he also revealed his new name and pronouns. *Once a Girl, Always a Boy* chronicles Jeremy's life from his early years to his coming-out and eventual emergence as a transgender. This is not only Jeremy's story, but also the story of his family as a whole, told from various viewpoints, including those of the siblings who found it difficult to comprehend the brother they had once mistaken for a sister and the parents who eventually supported him in his fight against discrimination.

He preferred short haircuts, masculine attire, and football, where he excelled despite being the only player on the pitch who was mistaken for a female. His gender nonconformity grew more obvious in the middle of adolescent courting culture, upsetting his blissful tomboy lifestyle and causing him to be excluded by classmates. Jeremy used Google searches to connect the term "asexual" to his consistently unsuccessful dates and lack of interest in either sex.

The emotional participation of every family member in Emily's shift towards both an outward and an inner manifestation of masculinity is demonstrated to be a crucial component in the family's ability to cope. Jo Ivester's *Once a Girl, Always a Guy* has interesting points of view. I was able to relate to each character as the plot developed thanks to hearing the story from so many different perspectives. I also felt that this made it easier for me to view the situation objectively as a whole than if Jo had only told the story from her own point of view.

*Once a Girl, always a Boy* is a masterfully written tale of the early years of a transgender child and the family who supported him throughout. In this open and emotional piece, Ivester deftly incorporates the contributions of her husband, Jeremy's siblings, his sister-in-law, and his video accounts. This narrative enlightens the reader to

the fact that a transgender child's experience of puberty makes it even more soul-altering. Jeremy Ivester's choice to collaborate with his mother on this narrative really impressed me. In the same way that his parents' support and involvement in Transgender rights offer parents a splendid example of how to learn about and support something that might seem so out of the ordinary—even though it seems to make so much sense—his openness in this work is a wonderful gift for future transgender and gender-questioning children.

The author of *Once a Girl, always a Boy: A Family Memoir of a Transgender Journey* tells a beautiful and moving story that is further enhanced by the images she offers. I had a profound and amazing reading experience while reading this book since I got to know the Ivester family via their words. It is very strongly advised. His parents suspected he might be a lesbian when he showed no interest in flirting. He questioned his sexuality at the age of twenty. He had his breasts surgically removed when he was twenty-three. He started taking the hormones that would make his voice quieter and grow a beard a year later, and he also announced his new name and pronouns.

I didn't understand why the mother wrote it rather than Jeremy. My first impression was that she was trying to capitalise on his narrative. Also, without doing any advance investigation, I was concerned that she might have written the story if Jeremy hadn't passed away. I gave the book a chance. And I came to the conclusion that I was mostly mistaken. Despite the fact that the novel is obviously about the entire family, Jeremy is given adequate representation.

*Once a girl, always a Boy* is a memoir written by Jo Ivester about her transgender son, Jeremy. The book explores the challenges and triumphs of growing up transgender in the 1980s and 1990s in a conservative Texas community. The memoir begins with Jo's recollection of the day Jeremy was born, and how she had always assumed he would grow up to be a girl. Older, he began to express his discomfort with his assigned gender.



He would cry when forced to wear dresses and would beg his mother to let him Jeremy came out to his family and began to transition from female to male.

The book follows Jeremy's journey through adolescence and into adulthood, as he navigates the challenges of coming out to friends, family, and the broader community. Along the way, Jo also recounts the many obstacles that she faced as they tried to provide support for Jeremy. They encountered ignorance, prejudice, and bigotry from those who did not understand or accept Jeremy for who he was. Despite the difficulties, Jo emphasizes the importance of love and acceptance in their family's journey. Jo also recounts the many Jeremy had as he began to live as his true self, making friends within the LGBT community and finding a supportive trans mentor. Ultimately, *Once a Girl, Always a Boy* is a moving and intimate memoir that sheds light on the challenges that transgender individuals and their families face.

"*Once a Girl, always a Boy*" is a powerful memoir by Jo Ivester that recounts the journey of her transgender child, Jeremy. Jo shares the story of how she and her family navigated the difficult road of coming to terms with Jeremy's gender identity and accepting his transition from female to male.

The book details the author's experience as a transgender individual, and the challenges he faced throughout his transition. By applying transgender theory throughout the book, JOLVESTER is able to provide a deeper understanding of the social, psychological, and political dynamics surrounding the transgender experience. One of the key themes of the book is the idea that a person's gender identity is not necessarily fixed or determined by their biological sex. Jolvester explores the ways in which gender identity can be fluid and subject to change, and how this can manifest in terms of gender dysphoria – a discomfort or distress caused by a misalignment between a person's gender identity and the sex they were assigned at birth.

The book also discusses the social and cultural barriers that transgender individuals face, including discrimination and marginalization. JOLVESTER highlights how these barriers can exacerbate the challenges that come with transitioning, making it more difficult for transgender individuals to access appropriate medical care, emotional support, and legal protections. overall, once a girl, always a boy: a family memoir of a transgender journey emphasizes the importance of understanding and accepting transgender people for who they are, and provides a valuable insight into the complexities of the transgender experience.

No matter where you fall on the Lgbtqia+ spectrum or whether you consider yourself an ally or not, this book should be required reading for everyone. Yes, this book is about a trans person, but it's also about discovering one's true identity while battling preconceived notions. We all experience it at some point in our lives, but for trans people, it is particularly difficult since they must contend with laws that are blatantly discriminatory and struggle with who they are, how they feel, and what others may think of them. With Jeremy's support network, how can you stay joyful and become your genuine self? He is incredibly fortunate, and his parents and siblings have shown themselves to be true supporters, offering more encouragement and compassion than anyone could ever hope for.

This book, which his mother wrote, covers Jeremy's tale from a variety of angles. All of his siblings and his father participated in an interview and storytelling session with his mother, Jo. Additionally, she should confront herself with difficult questions and provide brutally honest answers. Jo effectively tells a tale of hardship, maturation, and love. They all experience doubts and questions at various points, but aren't we all human about everything? It appears that the book was written with great care, taking the time to

express real emotions and feelings while ensuring that nobody felt guilty about it. In my opinion, Jo has been extremely mindful of all of Jeremy's transgender parts.

That much is actually already revealed in the opening chapter. Although not everyone's story is the same, this one can serve as inspiration for all of them. The disparate laws in each state also disturb me; the US may be a very dysfunctional country where you can exist as a person and be welcomed (on paper) in one state but be prohibited from being who you truly are in another. I'm relieved to reside in a nation where this is not taking place. If schools made this moving book required reading, I believe—or at least I hope—the world may improve a little.

As soon as I understood this was mostly written by the mother of a transgender man, I became concerned that the narrative would be skewed or exploitative. However, I later learned that the book was actually written by the entire Ivester family, with a particular emphasis on the voices of Jo, the mother, and Jeremy, her son. This combination really works nicely, in my opinion, this book would be excellent for someone who is not familiar with transgender people or their experiences. Although Jeremy's experiences are undoubtedly not typical of those of all trans people, his particular tale does highlight the humanity and vulnerability that all trans people share. This situates Jeremy's experiences and those of the Ivester family in the current political environment of the USA, with all the privilege and prejudice that entails.

This book covers a wide range of topics, including intergenerational perceptions of masculinity and femininity, exclusion, bullying, disguising one's feelings and emotions in order to fit in, politics, and everyday life. This book documents a lot of significant life events, and I feel honoured to have been able to read about this family. *Once a Girl Always a Boy: A Family Memoir of a Transgender Journey* by Jo Ivester is a heart-wrenching story of a family's journey through their son's transition to becoming a

transgender male. The book provides insights into the life of a transgender person and how it impacts not only his own life but also the lives of those around him.

The protagonist of the story, Jeremy, had always felt like a boy from a very early age, despite being assigned a female at birth. His parents, Jo and John, were supportive of him until he started to express his desire to transition physically. Their beliefs and fears about the unknown path of transitioning created a conflict between them and their son. This conflict serves to highlight the challenges that trans genders face, not only in society but also within their own families.

The book shows how society views gender as binary and how it restricts people from exploring different gender identities. Jeremy's journey reveals the struggles that transgender individuals face, such as bullying, discrimination, and a lack of acceptance from loved ones. The book also touches upon the importance of a supportive community, and how it is integral for the mental and physical well-being of a transgender person. Jeremy's transition process was not just about changing his physical appearance. It was also a journey of self-discovery, where he had to come to terms with his new identity and face his fears. The book shows the immense emotional and mental burden that transgender people bear, as they have to battle prejudice and misconceptions about their identity, often leading to feelings of isolation and depression.

Once a Girl Always a Boy brings to light the importance of family and friends in the life of a transgender person. Through Jeremy's story, Ivester shows how the support from his siblings, extended family, and friends was instrumental in helping him through his journey. It also highlights how crucial the role of parents is in accepting their child for who they are and providing unconditional love and support. The book also sheds light on the medical aspects of transgender individuals' lives. The process of transitioning is fraught with physical and mental challenges, and the book emphasizes the importance of

having access to proper medical support and therapy. Jeremy's journey shows the complex process of hormone treatments and gender reassignment surgeries, and how they are not a mere physical transformation, but also a mental and emotional one.

Jeremy's story in *Once a Girl Always a Boy* is an important one, and one that highlights the ongoing struggle of trans genders in our society. The book offers insights into the lives of transgender individuals and underscores the challenges they face in their journey of self-discovery. It is a poignant reminder that acceptance and support from loved ones can go a long way in alleviating the burden faced by transgender people.

In conclusion, *once a Girl Always a Boy* by Jo Ivester provides a poignant account of a family's journey through their son's transition to becoming a transgender male. The book offers insights into the challenges and struggles of transgender individuals, highlighting the importance of support from family and friends. It also shows the medical and emotional aspects of transitioning, and how classifying gender as binary can have dire consequences for those who do not fit into the conventional mold. Overall, the book is a powerful reminder of the need for acceptance, inclusivity, and love for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity.

The book recounts the challenges that the protagonist, Jeremy, faced as he went through the journey of coming out as transgender. Being transgender means identifying as a gender that differs from the sex assigned at birth. In this case, Jeremy was born a girl but identified as a boy. The memoir divulges the problems that Jeremy, as well as the family, went through in accepting this realization, the challenges he faced when transitioning, and the societal norms that were just not yet ready to accommodate him.

The first major challenge that Jeremy faced was the realization that he was transgender. According to the book, this was a significant personal challenge as it came with a sense of bewilderment. Jeremy had grown up as a tomboy, and it took a while

before he could make sense of his feelings. These feelings were even harder to communicate to his parents, who at the time, were not familiar with the concept of transgender. Jeremy tried to connect with his feminine side by engaging in feminine experiences, such as dance classes, dressing like a girl, and wearing makeup. However, none of these activities made him happy, and he continued to feel out of place.

Another challenge that Jeremy experienced was coming out to his family. In the memoir, the author Jo Ivester writes about how the family faced an internal conflict when they learned about Jeremy's transgender status. The book explains that it was challenging for Jo and her husband to comprehend what Jeremy was going through. There was a sense of denial and rejection of the idea, which ultimately led to a period of constraint and distance between Jeremy and the family. As a result, the family struggled to accept this new change, and it took them some time to discover ways to support Jeremy.

One of the biggest challenges that Jeremy had to face was society's negative perception towards transgender individuals. Transgender people have long faced discrimination in many aspects of society, ranging from healthcare, legal recognition, work opportunities, and access to basic amenities such as bathrooms. The book offers a glimpse of the detrimental practices and attitudes that impeded on Jeremy's freedom as an individual and left him exposed and vulnerable to insensitive gestures.

The transition was yet another significant challenge that Jeremy had to face. The book explains how Jeremy went through a period of identity-changing processes, starting with the use of hormone treatments. Jeremy's hormones had to be manipulated through therapy and counseling to allow him to explore and express his new gender identity. Furthermore, physically transitioning from female to male meant undergoing some surgical procedures. Hormone therapy, top surgery, and lower surgeries are all examples of the procedures that Jeremy had to undergo to make his transition complete.

The society he lived in was not yet fully equipped to accept or even understand the rights and needs of transgender people. The book describes how the community responded to Jeremy's transition with varied reactions ranging from disbelief to unsympathetic opinions. Many questioned why he would choose to transition, asked insensitive and sometimes ludicrous questions, and made unkind comments about his masculinity. These societal-induced negative feedback became fuel for fear and anxiety which ultimately placed a heavy burden on him.

To sum up, the challenges faced by the protagonist in *Once a Girl, always a Boy* is both heartbreaking and motivating. It showcases the immense resilience demonstrated by Jeremy as he walked through this journey, cross-cutting deep-rooted societal norms and traditions. Through the memoir, Jo Ivester gives readers a deep understanding of the challenges faced by transgender individuals and their families. In the end, the story is a victory for Jeremy as he successfully navigated through these challenges, find his true gender identity, and embrace his authentic self. The book is a reminder that the struggles of individuals like Jeremy are not only of personal significance but are also crucial to the activism of the LGBTQ+ community and the fight for a more inclusive society. The book is an honest and raw account of how the family came to terms with the reality of Jeremy's true identity and the impact it had on their lives. The messages conveyed in the book are far-reaching and significant to anyone who has experienced or is currently experiencing a similar journey.

One of the central messages in the book is the importance of acceptance and love. From the very beginning, Jo and her family embraced Jeremy's transition, even though it was hard for them to understand and accept at first. They recognized his right to be who he truly was and supported his journey, even if it was not what they had imagined for

him. This shows the fundamental truth that acceptance and love are essential for new beginnings, even when those beginnings are tough to accept.

The book also illustrates the harsh realities of transphobia and discrimination. Jeremy and his family faced numerous obstacles in their journey, from disapproving family members to school policy. The book draws attention to the fact that transgender people face terrible injustices in society and how important it is for everyone to stand up against discrimination and hate.

In conclusion, *once a Girl, always a Boy* is a powerful book that challenges our expectations and perceptions of gender identity. It shows the importance of love, acceptance, resilience, education, advocacy, and self-acceptance. The book is a poignant reminder that transgender people are human beings deserving of respect, kindness, and affirmation. It is a must-read for anyone looking to learn more about transgender issues or for those seeking inspiration to overcome their own struggles. The messages within the pages of the book are valuable and crucial to creating a more just and compassionate society for all.

As people become more aware of different gender expressions, we are beginning to see more representation of transgender individuals in the media and in discussions about civil rights. Jo Ivester's book "*Once a Girl, Always a Boy: A Family Memoir of a Transgender Journey*" is a poignant account of one family's journey to understand and accept their transgender son, Jeremy.

In this book, Ivester shares her family's experiences in navigating the medical, legal, and social challenges of raising a transgender child. She details their struggles to understand Jeremy's feelings and to find the resources they needed to support him. Through the words and perspectives of family members, Ivester's story shows the



multifaceted nature of gender identity and the need for greater acceptance and understanding of those who do not conform to traditional norms.

The book highlights several key themes that are directly relevant to current society. First, it illustrates the importance of listening to and respecting individuals who are gender non-conforming. In the case of Jeremy, his family initially struggled to understand his desire to live as a boy, and even initially resisted his requests to change his name and pronouns. However, as they began to listen to and empathize with him, they were able to see the pain he was experiencing as a result of living in a body that did not match his inner identity. This ultimately allowed them to support his transition and celebrate his true self.

Second, the book emphasizes the need for greater education and awareness about transgender issues. Ivester's family was initially in the dark about what it meant to be transgender and the resources available to them. They had to learn through trial and error, often encountering roadblocks and resistance from medical and legal professionals who were not well-versed in treating transgender patients. This highlights the need for more comprehensive education for healthcare providers, educators, and the general public on gender identity and transgender experiences. Third, the book showcases the power of community in supporting LGBTQ+ individuals. Jeremy's family found solace and support in local transgender advocacy groups, which normalized their experiences and helped them connect with others who were going through similar struggles. This sense of community can be particularly important for transgender youth, who may feel isolated and misunderstood by those around them.

Overall, "Once a Girl, always a Boy" is a powerful memoir that offers a valuable perspective on the complexities of gender identity. By sharing her family's story, Jo Ivester helps to increase awareness and understanding of transgender experiences and the

challenges that many transgender individuals face. The book provides an important reminder that though society has made progress in becoming more inclusive of all gender expressions, there is still a long way to go in terms of fighting for transgender rights and acceptance.

In “Once a Girl, always a Boy: A Family Memoir of a Transgender Journey,” author Jo Ivester shares the personal story of her son’s transition from being a woman to a man. Throughout the book, Ivester incorporates various elements of transgender theory to help readers understand the complexities of her son’s journey and the challenges faced by the transgender community as a whole.

One key aspect of transgender theory that Ivester addresses in the book is the idea that gender is a social construct rather than a biological fact. She discusses how her son, Jeremy, always felt out of place in her assigned female gender role and how he struggled to fit into traditional gender norms. Another important aspect of transgender theory that Ivester explores in the book is the concept of gender dysphoria. She describes how Jeremy experienced intense distress and discomfort with his female anatomy and how his decision to transition was driven by a desire to align his physical body with his gender identity.

Ivester also touches on issues related to gender oppression and discrimination, highlighting the challenges that Jeremy and other transgender individuals face in a society that often does not recognize or accept their gender identity. She describes the challenges that Jeremy encountered in accessing healthcare and other services as a transgender person and reflects on the discrimination and violence that many transgender individuals experience. Overall, by weaving together her personal story with various elements of transgender theory, Ivester seeks to create a more nuanced understanding of transgender experiences and to promote greater empathy and acceptance for transgender individuals.

The memoir starts with Jo Ivester introducing her exceptional son Jeremy, who was born as a girl named Samantha, and how he always identified as a boy ever since he was a toddler. Jo narrates how Jeremy preferred playing with boys' toys, dressing up in boys' clothing, and playing rough sports despite her attempts to get him to conform to female gender roles. Jo also shares how she and her husband, John, struggled to understand why their child felt so uncomfortable in a girl's body. As Jeremy grows up and comes out as transgender, the challenges in front of him become more significant, and the family has to navigate a complex world that is often unfriendly to gender non-conforming individuals. Jo details her family's struggles with finding the right support for Jeremy and their journey towards understanding and acceptance.

Throughout the memoir, the author sheds light on the medical challenges that Jeremy faced while transitioning. From hormone treatments to surgeries, the road to physically transitioning from female to male was a difficult one for Jeremy. Ivester explains these medical procedures in a way that is easy to understand for those who may not have prior knowledge of them, offering insight into the complex and expensive process of medical transition. Ivester also discusses the challenges of finding acceptance in society, chronicling Jeremy's experiences of bullying, rejection, and discrimination. She explains how Jeremy found his community and learned to embrace his authentic self despite the harsh realities of living in a world that is not always accepting of transgender individuals.

The memoir provides a candid account of the experiences of a family that is dealing with a life-changing situation, and how love and unity can overcome even the most considerable challenges. Jo Ivester, in her portrayal of the events, is honest, vulnerable, and insightful, giving readers a glimpse into the emotions and feelings that she and her family went through while Jeremy transitioned.

In conclusion, “Once a Girl, always a Boy” is a powerful memoir that sheds light on the complexities of gender identity and the challenges that transgender individuals and their families face. It is a poignant account of a family’s journey towards understanding and acceptance of their child as he transitions, highlighting the importance of love, compassion, and support in navigating these life-altering experiences. It is a must-read for anyone seeking insights into the transgender community or wanting to understand the struggles and experiences of families navigating gender dilemmas.

Another significant theme of the book is the struggles and challenges that transgender individuals face, both in society and in their personal lives. Ivester shares her family’s experience with discrimination and hate towards Jeremy, including instances of transphobia from healthcare providers and teachers, which impacted Jeremy’s ability to receive proper care and support. The book highlights these issues, seeking to raise awareness of the struggles that transgender individuals face. Ivester’s message stresses the importance of fighting for transgender rights and to challenge the discrimination that trans individuals face in society.

Furthermore, the book highlights the tremendous sacrifices that transgender individuals and their families make to transition. Jeremy’s story is not just one about a person discovering their true identity, but it is also a story about the sacrifices that come with transitioning. The coming out process brought challenges not just for Jeremy but also for his whole family, and they had to navigate through multiple emotional and physical setbacks in the journey. Ivester’s book details these struggles and stresses the importance of supporting the ones undergoing the transition.

Through her words, we can see the struggles that individuals experiencing gender dysphoria face and the power of a supportive family to help them navigate these challenges. This memoir is an important story that will resonate with anyone who has

experienced or knows someone who has experienced the complexities of coming out as transgender. It is a reminder that even the most difficult journeys can have a happy ending and that love and acceptance can triumph over ignorance and fear. Overall, “Once a Girl, always a Boy” is a heartwarming and insightful read that will undoubtedly leave its readers with a greater understanding and appreciation of what it means to be transgender in today’s society.

Throughout the memoir, Ivester delves into the complexity of gender identity, challenging societal norms and expectations. The conclusion of the memoir emphasizes the importance of recognizing and respecting an individual’s self-identified gender, rather than adhering to rigid binary definitions. Ivester’s son’s journey serves as a powerful testament to the authenticity and validity of transgender identities, encouraging readers to question and challenge their own preconceived notions of gender.

The conclusion of the memoir emphasizes the need for advocacy and education to promote understanding and acceptance of transgender individuals. Ivester’s memoir serves as a powerful tool for raising awareness about the challenges faced by transgender individuals and their families. The conclusion highlights the importance of sharing personal stories and experiences to foster empathy and combat discrimination. Ivester’s advocacy work, both within her family and in the broader community, serves as a call to action for readers to actively engage in promoting inclusivity and equality.

The conclusion of “Once a Girl, always a Boy” underscores the significance of support networks for transgender individuals and their families. Ivester’s memoir highlights the importance of finding community and connecting with others who have shared similar experiences. The conclusion emphasizes the need for support groups, counseling services, and resources that can provide guidance and assistance to families

navigating the complexities of gender identity. Ivester's journey serves as a reminder that no one should face these challenges alone and that support networks are crucial in fostering resilience and well-being.

“Once a Girl, always a Boy: A Family Memoir of a Transgender Journey” by Jo Ivester is a powerful and transformative memoir that explores the complexities of gender identity and the importance of love, acceptance, and support. The conclusion of the memoir emphasizes the need to challenge societal norms, promote understanding and empathy, and advocate for the rights and well-being of transgender individuals. Ivester's personal journey serves as an inspiration for families navigating similar experiences, while also encouraging broader societal change. In conclusion, “Once a Girl, always a Boy” is a compelling and necessary read for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of transgender experiences and the transformative power of love and acceptance.

## **Chapter :4**

### **“Breaking Gender Binary: An exploration Of Transgender Theory and Identity “**

Kalki Subramaniam’s memoir “We Are Not the Others” is a first-person account of her life as a transgender person in India. The book tells the story of how she struggled with prejudice and discrimination, both within her family and the larger society, and how she eventually found her voice as an artist and activist. Kalki’s book is a powerful exploration of the challenges faced by transgender people in India, and it provides a glimpse into the lives of those who are often marginalized by society.

In contrast, Jo Ivester’s “Once a Girl, always a Boy” is a memoir of a non-transgender person’s experiences as the parent of a transgender child. The book tells the story of how Jo’s son Jeremy came out as transgender, and how Jo and her family navigated the challenges and complexities of this journey. Jo’s book is a poignant account of a mother’s love and acceptance of her child, and it offers insights into the challenges faced by families with transgender children.

In summary, “We Are Not the Others” is a first-person account of the life of a transgender person, while “Once a Girl, always a Boy” is a memoir of a mother’s experiences with her transgender child. Both books provide important insights into the challenges faced by transgender people and their families, but they do so from different perspectives.

“We Are Not the Others” is a memoir written by Kalki Subramaniam, an Indian transgender activist, artist and actress who has become a prominent voice in the fight for the rights of the transgender community. Her book chronicles her life growing up as a transgender person and the challenges she faced along the way. It is a deeply personal

account of her journey, from her early childhood experiences of feeling trapped in the wrong body to her eventual acceptance of her identity as a transgender woman.

Throughout the book, Subramaniam shares the details of her struggles, from the discrimination she faced in school and from society at large to the challenges of finding work and love as a transgender woman.

She also covers the discrimination and abuse that many people in the transgender community face, including violence against transgender people, exclusion from healthcare, and a lack of legal protections. Subramaniam's memoir is not just a personal account of her journey but a call to action to address the injustice that many transgender people face. She uses her experiences and insights to offer a compassionate and insightful perspective on the challenges that transgender people face in India and around the world.

Unlike Subramaniam's book, which is a deeply personal account of her own journey, "Once a Girl, always a Boy" is a story of a mother's love for her child and her efforts to help him navigate the challenges of being transgender in a society that is often hostile and unsupportive. Ivester shares the details of her family's journey, including the emotional struggles they faced as they came to terms with their son's transformation. She also highlights the challenges that transgender people face in accessing healthcare and Securing legal protections. In doing so, she offers an important portrait of the ways in which society often fails transgender people.

One of the key differences between the two books is in their focus. Subramaniam's book is primarily about her own journey and experiences whereas Ivester's book is about her son's experiences. Both books offer readers a powerful insight into the challenges that transgender people face in their everyday lives, but they approach the topic from different perspectives.



Another difference between the two books is the cultural context in which they are written. Subramaniam's book is set in India, a country where transgender people face a unique set of challenges, including discrimination, violence, lack of legal protections, and limited access to healthcare. Her book offers an important perspective on the experience of being transgender in India, as well as the wider challenges that transgender people face around the world. Ivester's book, on the other hand, is set in the United States and offers a perspective on the challenges that transgender people face in that context. By sharing her family's story, Ivester highlights the ways in which society often fails transgender people and the importance of support from family and loved ones in helping them navigate those challenges.

Transgender theory is a complex and multifaceted field of study that seeks to understand and address the experiences, identities, and social issues surrounding transgender individuals. In both books, transgender theory is applied in various ways to explore the experiences and challenges of transgender people in society.

She uses transgender theory to explore issues such as the social construction of gender, transgender identity, and the intersectionality of race, class, and sexuality. For example, she discusses the ways in which gender is not simply determined by biological sex, but is rather a social and cultural construct, and how this construct affects the lives of transgender individuals in particular. She also explores the intersections of transgender identity and other forms of oppression, such as caste discrimination and Islamophobia, and how these intersecting forms of oppression create unique challenges for transgender people.

Similarly, "Once a Girl, always a Boy" by Jo Ivester is a family memoir chronicling her transgender son's journey towards self-discovery and transition. Ivester uses transgender theory to explore issues such as gender dysphoria, transitioning, and the

experiences of transgender individuals in a cisgender-dominated society. She also uses the theory to challenge the dominant narratives about transgender individuals and to advocate for greater awareness and acceptance of transgender people within society.

For example, Ivester explores the idea of gender dysphoria, which is the distress or discomfort experienced by transgender individuals as a result of the mismatch between their gender identity and their sex assigned at birth. This concept, which is central to transgender theory, helps her to understand and articulate her son's experiences and challenges as a transgender person. She also explores the ways in which society reinforces the gender binary and marginalizes those who do not adhere to cisgender norms, and how this contributes to the challenges faced by transgender people.

Overall, both books demonstrate the value of applying transgender theory to understand and address the experiences of transgender individuals. By drawing on this theoretical framework, these authors are able to articulate the challenges faced by transgender people and to advocate for greater acceptance and understanding within society. Both share the common theme of transgender identity and the challenges that come with it. While the two books may be written from different perspectives, they have similarities in the struggles, emotions and experiences of transgender individuals.

The first similarity is the issue of identity. Kalki Subramaniam talks about her inner struggle with her gender identity. She felt disconnected with the body she was born in and knew from a young age that she was different. Jeremy knew from the age of 4 that he wasn't a girl and wanted to be a boy instead. Both books explore the concept of "feeling trapped in the wrong body" and the challenges that come with accepting and expressing one's true gender identity.

The second similarity is the challenges of coming out. In both books, the authors share how difficult it was to come out to their families and friends. Kalki Subramaniam

describes the fear and anxiety she felt before coming out to her parents and the rejection she faced from her community . Similarly, Jo Ivester talks about the moments leading up to Jeremy's coming out and the emotional turmoil that the family faced before accepting and supporting him.

Jo decorously tells the journey of her transgender son, Jeremy, and the family's experience of coming to terms with his transition. She tells the story primarily from a mother's perspective, and how the family's unwavering support helped young Jeremy face the world with confidence and acceptance. In essence, Jo's prime message is the importance of unconditional love and support for transgender family members.

Both books offer essential insights about the transgender experience. Through personal stories molding powerful messages, both books compellingly highlight pervasive social prejudice and remind readers of the importance of acceptance and inclusion. Understanding and embracing diversity remains an essential crucial to the flourishing of a truly inclusive society, where all people are respectfully recognized and included. In the past few decades, transgender rights have become a hotly debated topic in society. The ongoing struggle for the acceptance and equal rights of transgender individuals has gained momentum in recent years. In light of this, there are two essential books that stand out – “We Are Not the Others: Life of a Transgender Artist,” written by Kalki Subramaniam and “Once a Girl, always a Boy: A Family Memoir of a Transgender Journey,” written by Jo Ivester.

These books present two different experiences of being transgender at different points in life. Kalki Subramaniam's “We Are Not the Others” is a personal memoir of her journey as a transgender woman from her childhood to the present day. Through her story, Kalki highlights the struggles that transgender individuals face in Indian society.

She also discusses her journey to becoming an artist and activist, using her voice and platform to advocate for transgender rights.

On the other hand, Jo Ivester's "Once a Girl, always a Boy" revolves around her son, Jeremy, and his journey as a transgender man from a mother's perspective. Jo shares her own struggles in accepting her child's identity and how she eventually came to support and understand him completely. She also talks about the challenges of raising a transgender child in a society that does not fully understand or accept them.

Both books are essential in the current society because they bring to light the personal experiences of transgender individuals and their families. They show the obstacles and challenges that these individuals face in society and the emotional battles they fight to be accepted for who they are. Moreover, these books also shed light on the positive impact of acceptance. They showcase how acceptance and support from family, friends, and the community can transform the lives of transgender individuals, providing them with the confidence to live their lives to the fullest.

While the two books differ in style and content, several common themes and features emerge that help to shed light on the transgender experience. One shared theme is the struggle to reconcile one's internal sense of gender identity with the expectations and norms of society. This conflict can manifest in a variety of ways – from Kalki's experiences of discrimination and violence in India to Jo's son Jeremy's insistence on being recognized as male from a young age. Both authors' stories illustrate how society's rigid adherence to gender norms can lead to emotional and even physical harm to individuals who do not conform.

Another shared feature is the importance of community and support systems for transgender individuals. Kalki highlights the role of activism and community organizing in promoting tolerance and acceptance of transgender individuals, while Jo writes about

the importance of family support in her son's journey towards transition. Both authors emphasize the role that allies can play in advocating for the rights and dignity of transgender individuals, as well as the need for greater representation and visibility of their experiences in mainstream media and cultural narratives.

A third theme that emerges in both books is the power of storytelling to humanize and amplify the voices of marginalized communities. Kalki's artwork and activism seek to reclaim the stories of transgender individuals from the dominant narratives that have excluded and silenced them, while Jo's memoir seeks to provide a personal and relatable account of the experiences of transgender youth and their families. Both authors show how sharing personal stories can challenge stereotypes and misconceptions about transgender individuals, and can catalyze greater understanding and empathy for their struggles.

The project thesis conclusion about "Ones a Girl, always a Boy: A Family Memoir of a Transgender Journey" by Jo Ivester and "We are Not Others: Life of a Transgender Artist" by Kalki Subramanyam in standard language would depend on the specific analysis and findings of the project. However, based on the provided context, it can be concluded that both memoirs offer valuable insights into the transgender experience and the challenges faced by individuals in their journey towards self-acceptance and societal recognition.

In conclusion, both memoirs contribute to the broader conversation on transgender experiences and advocate for greater understanding and acceptance. They serve as important resources for individuals seeking to educate themselves about transgender issues and promote a more inclusive society. In analyzing the memoirs "Once a Girl, always a Boy: A Family Memoir of a Transgender Journey" by Jo Ivester and "We Are Not Others: Life of a Transgender Artist" by Kalki Subramanyam, it

becomes evident that both works explore the experiences of transgender individuals, shedding light on their personal journeys and the challenges they face in society.

While both memoirs share the common theme of transgender identity, they differ in their approach and focus. “Once a Girl, always a Boy” primarily centers around the author’s personal journey as a transgender individual, highlighting the impact of their transition on their family dynamics. Jo Ivester delves into the emotional and psychological aspects of their experience, providing a deeply introspective account. On the other hand, “We Are Not Others” by Kalki Subramanyam takes a broader perspective, intertwining personal experiences with a focus on activism and advocacy for transgender rights. Subramanyam’s memoir delves into the intersectionality of gender identity, art, and social change, offering a unique perspective on the transgender experience.

Despite their differences, both memoirs contribute to the understanding of transgender lives and the challenges faced by individuals within this community. They provide valuable insights into the complexities of gender identity, the importance of acceptance, and the need for societal change. In conclusion, “Once a Girl, Always a Boy: A Family Memoir of a Transgender Journey” by Jo Ivester and “We Are Not Others: Life of a Transgender Artist” by Kalki Subramanyam offer distinct yet complementary perspectives on the transgender experience. These memoirs serve as powerful narratives that contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding gender identity, fostering empathy and understanding in society.

The memoirs “Once a Girl, always a Boy: A Family Memoir of a Transgender Journey” by Jo Ivester and “We Are Not Others: Life of a Transgender Artist” by Kalki Subramanyam hold significant relevance in current society due to their exploration of transgender experiences and the challenges faced by individuals within this community. In today’s society, there is an increasing awareness and recognition of the importance of

understanding and accepting diverse gender identities. These memoirs contribute to this discourse by providing authentic and personal accounts of transgender individuals, shedding light on their struggles, triumphs, and the complexities of their journeys. By sharing their stories, Jo Ivester and Kalki Subramanyam challenge societal norms and stereotypes surrounding gender identity. They offer insights into the emotional and psychological aspects of being transgender, helping to foster empathy and understanding among readers. These memoirs humanize the transgender experience, dispelling misconceptions and promoting inclusivity.

Additionally, “We Are Not Others” by Kalki Subramanyam specifically focuses on activism and advocacy for transgender rights. This memoir inspires readers to take action and work towards creating a more equitable and accepting society for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity. In conclusion, the memoirs “Once a Girl, always a Boy: A Family Memoir of a Transgender Journey” by Jo Ivester and “We Are Not Others: Life of a Transgender Artist” by Kalki Subramanyam are highly relevant in current society. They contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding gender identity, challenge societal norms, promote empathy and understanding, and inspire action towards creating a more inclusive and accepting society for transgender individuals

“Once a Girl, always a Boy: A Family Memoir of a Transgender Journey” by Jo Ivester and “We Are Not Others: Life of a Transgender Artist” by Kalki Subramanyam convey important messages for the new generation regarding transgender experiences and the need for acceptance and understanding. These memoirs serve as powerful tools to educate and raise awareness about the challenges faced by transgender individuals. They highlight the importance of embracing diversity and promoting inclusivity in society. By sharing their personal stories, both authors aim to break down stereotypes and dispel misconceptions surrounding transgender identities.

Through “Once a Girl, always a Boy,” Jo Ivester emphasizes the significance of family support and acceptance in a transgender person’s journey. This memoir encourages the new generation to foster empathy, compassion, and understanding towards transgender individuals, particularly within their own families. In “We Are Not Others,” Kalki Subramanyam’s memoir focuses on the intersectionality of gender identity, art, and activism. It inspires the new generation to challenge societal norms and advocate for transgender rights. Subramanyam’s story encourages young people to use their voices and talents to bring about positive change and create a more inclusive society. Overall, these memoirs provide invaluable insights into the transgender experience, offering important messages of acceptance, empathy, and the need for social progress. They serve as a call to action for the new generation to embrace diversity, challenge stereotypes, and work towards a more inclusive and understanding.



## **Chapter: 5**

### **Conclusion**

Both books are significant contributions to literature, significantly discussing the experience of transgender individuals in different contexts. These books demonstrate that the journey of transgender individuals is a journey of self-discovery and acceptance, with the struggle for acceptance and societal stigmatization being omnipresent. This project aimed to explore the similarities and differences between the two books, highlighting the themes of gender identity, acceptance, and societal stigmatization.

The authors chose different writing styles and perspectives. Subramaniam writes in an autobiographical style, while Ivester writes from a family memoir perspective. However, the overarching themes in both books are similar, with the authors talking about the difficulties that transgender individuals face, the importance of acceptance, and the need for social change. Both books also explore the role of family, community support, and activism in promoting the wellbeing of transgender individuals.

The book titled “We Are Not the Others” depicts the life story of Kalki, the journey she took in coming out as a transgender woman in Indian society, and her evolution to become a prominent voice in advocacy for transgender rights. On the other hand, “Once a Girl, always a Boy” is a memoir of Jo’s family’s journey in raising a transgender son. This book explores themes of family acceptance, the challenges of raising a transgender child in a society with insufficient support mechanisms, and social stigmatization. The different perspectives of these books allow people to not only understand the personal experience of transgender individuals but also understand the experiences of those who surround them.

In conclusion, both books, serve as essential resources for understanding the experiences of transgender individuals and the complexities of their lives. Through these books, we can start creating awareness, advocating for change, and creating a society that understands, accepts, and supports all individuals regardless of gender identity. Ultimately, the journey to acceptance and equality for transgender individuals requires the efforts of everyone, not just those who belong to this community.

The current societal outlook on gender is rapidly evolving, and concepts of gender that were once considered binary and inflexible are now being re-evaluated and challenged. Transgender individuals are among those at the forefront of this movement, challenging our understanding of gender identity and presenting new perspectives on what it means to be male, female, or non-binary.

Despite this growing understanding of the complexity of gender identity, transgender individuals face significant difficulties in society due to widespread social stigmatization, discrimination, and inequalities. Transphobia, discrimination, and violence against transgender people are widespread problems around the world, with many transgender individuals facing rejection or ostracization from their families, workplaces, and communities because of intolerance and lack of understanding about their gender identity.

In the medical community, the path to transitioning is often met with many hurdles, which can be detrimental to the mental and emotional wellbeing of transgender individuals. The healthcare industry is entrenched in an outdated binary understanding of gender, which often makes it difficult for transgender individuals to access necessary treatments and support. The high cost of treatments, including gender-affirming surgery and hormone replacement therapy, is often financially unattainable for many transgender individuals.

In addition to these difficulties in access to healthcare and social acceptance, transgender individuals may also experience gender-based discrimination in employment, housing, education, and other areas. Often this can lead to social isolation, poverty, and mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and suicide. To create a more inclusive and supportive environment for transgender individuals, it is essential to break down the barriers that exist within education, healthcare, employment, and society in general. This can be done through policies and legislation that protect the human rights of transgender people and promote acceptance and equality.

Transgender theory is a crucial aspect of developing a more inclusive society. It recognizes the diversity and complexity of gender identity and serves as an essential foundation for understanding the lived experiences of transgender individuals. It is necessary to break down social stigmatization, discrimination, and inequalities that transgender individuals may face by promoting understanding, allyship, and advocacy. By doing this, we are one step further to creating a safer, more equitable, and enjoyable environment for all genders.

In society today, the awareness surrounding gender identity has begun to gain attention and grasp, however, we still tend to stay rooted in our traditional knowledge of gender identity. We look upon male and female as the only two options and are usually unable to comprehend the feelings and experiences of individuals who are not identified in these two categories. As such, transgender people often, face difficulty in finding support or even acceptance from their families and society at large.

These books contribute significantly to societal awareness and understanding of the experiences of transgender individuals. “We Are Not the Others” depicts Kalki’s life struggles, the discrimination and harassment she faced when she was coming out as a transgender woman in India, as well as her rise as an advocate for transgender rights and

an author. This book serves as an eye-opener, highlighting the necessity for support, therapies, and advocacy for individuals undergoing gender identity conflicts.

In conclusion, “We Are Not the Others: Life of a Transgender Artist” by Kalki Subramaniam and “Once a Girl, always a Boy: A Family Memoir of a Transgender Journey” by Jo Ivester, are essential resources in the current society, contributing to the growing awareness of gender diversity and the need to create an inclusive and accepting society. These books help us understand the experiences and struggles of transgender individuals, reminding us that gender identity is a fundamental aspect of an individual’s existence and everyone deserves equal respect and support. Transgender studies is a rapidly growing field that examines the experience and representation of individuals whose gender identity does not conform to traditional binary concepts of male and female. The scope of transgender studies is vast and encompasses various disciplines such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, history, law, and medicine.

Transgender studies aims to study the experiences and challenges faced by transgender individuals in a socially constructed binary gender system. It examines the intersectionality of identity and how this affects the experience of transgender individuals, including the impact of race, ethnicity, class, and disability.

Another important aspect of transgender studies is advocacy and activism. As the trans community continues to face discrimination, a lack of understanding, and marginalization, this field aims to promote social change. Studies in this scope analyze the legal frameworks, health policies, and social frameworks that discriminate against transgender individuals and suggest measures that can lead to the eradication of such

Transgender studies is an important field that contributes to the understanding of gender identity, gender expression, and the varied experiences of transgender individuals. The scope of transgender studies crosscuts across all facets of our lives both socially and

psychologically and presents an opportunity for the society to fight against discrimination and the marginalization of the transgender community. With continued research and advocacy, gender and its expression would not be a cause for concern or discrimination in our society anymore.

These books introduce readers to a world beyond the binary concepts of gender, where transgender identity is complex and often misunderstood. They offer a glimpse into the lives of individuals navigating a society that is not always accepting of them and the remarkable ways they find to thrive in a world that often works against them. Kalki's journey of self-discovery, and her struggles and perseverance in advocating for transgender rights highlight the importance of acceptance, respect, and support for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity.

Both books work towards destigmatizing and normalizing the lives of transgender individuals. They show that transgender people are no different from cisgender people and deserve the same rights. These books serve as important resources for individuals seeking to understand the experiences of the transgender community and as advocates for greater inclusion and representation.

In conclusion, transgender studies is an important field of study that seeks to understand the experiences, challenges, and contributions of transgender individuals in society. Through examining issues such as gender identity, discrimination, healthcare, and activism, transgender studies offers critical insights into the complexities of gender and its intersection with other forms of oppression.

In today's society, the relevance and significance of transgender studies has never been more pressing. Despite significant progress in recent years, transgender individuals continue to face discrimination, violence, and marginalization in many areas of society, including employment, healthcare, housing, and education. Transgender studies can help

us to understand the root causes of these issues and provide guidance for creating inclusive and equitable policies and practices.

In conclusion, transgender studies is a vital field of study that has the potential to transform the way we understand gender and its implications for society. By promoting greater understanding and acceptance of transgender identities, and by addressing the structural and institutional barriers that transgender individuals face, transgender studies can help create a more just and equitable society for all.

The research conducted in this project has revealed that transgender individuals face a myriad of struggles in their daily lives. From societal discrimination and prejudice to limited access to healthcare and legal protections, the challenges they encounter are deeply rooted in systemic inequalities. Transgender individuals often experience higher rates of mental health issues, violence, and economic disparities, further exacerbating their marginalization.

However, it is important to note that transgender studies also highlight the resilience, strength, and agency of transgender individuals. Through activism, community-building, and the pursuit of legal and social recognition, transgender individuals and their allies have made significant strides towards achieving equality and acceptance. The emergence of transgender rights movements, increased visibility in media, and the growing body of academic research have all contributed to a more inclusive and understanding society.

Moreover, this project has underscored the importance of intersectionality within transgender studies. It is crucial to recognize that transgender experiences are shaped by various intersecting identities, such as race, class, and disability. Intersectional analysis allows for a more nuanced understanding of the unique challenges faced by transgender individuals from different backgrounds and communities.

In conclusion, transgender studies provide a vital framework for comprehending the struggles faced by transgender individuals and the broader implications for society. By acknowledging and addressing the challenges of discrimination, violence, and inequality, we can work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable world for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity. Through continued research, advocacy, and education, we can strive for a future where transgender individuals are fully recognized, respected, and supported in all aspects of their lives.

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