



Anjum-Representation Of The Marginalized (Hijira) In Arundhati Roy's The Ministry Of Utmost Happiness

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Abstract

This paper deals with Anjum a Hijra who is been supported by her family from the beginning but she feels that she is not given the freedom that she needs and at the same time she loves to live life as a girl like other Hijras in the city. She stands as a bridge between the ones who are like her to the society who talk bad about them.

Keywords: Trauma, Society, Ostracized, Voice.

1. Introduction

The novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* begins with an unusual place in Bombay. The novel starts with the story of Anjum, a trans-woman trapped in the body of a man. She lives in a graveyard like a tree. A tree is something that has never been given importance by anyone and takes in all the pain and insults that the tree faces. Same as that Anjum also was insulted by many in the beginning so she took the trees there as an example to survive and took the insults like a gentle breeze to blow through her and the leaves as a balm for her pain.

Anjum was always very confident of who she was. When someone asks her about how they will be buried after their death she says "Where do old birds go to die? Do they fall on us like stones from the sky? Do we stumble on their bodies in the streets? Do you not think that the All-seeing, Almighty one who put us on this Earth has made proper arrangements to take us away"? (*Ministry of Utmost Happiness* 5).

Talking about space for transgender it is highly difficult for them to survive as they are never given even a single space to live. They are always considered as sex object. Whatever way they maybe projected either book or movie they are only needed for the sexual thirst of a man later the transgender is treated only as a thing that cannot be touched.

Anjum's lives in a cemetery where no one will even think of being there. She starts her life only there. The reason for her decision is her family and the people around her. She feels that the place she has been a blessed one. None of us can even think of it. When she was born only Anjum's mom knew

that he was a Hijra. She cried so much that at one stage she said that even things have gender then why not my child?

When people came to know the truth the way they treated him made him hate music which was his passion. As years passed one fine day, he admired a woman who was the way he wanted to be. He started to live his life as a girl. He started to move away from his family day by day. The reason was he felt that he was a burden to the family and made them suffer because of the way he was born.

The reason why Hijras were created according to Nimmo friend of Anjum is that God created a creature that does not know what happiness is and those creatures are us. The reason for her to say so is common people having a lot of different things to worry about but for a transgender, the struggle is inside. Everything is within them. They never have an answer for their questions and their quest never ends.

This struggle started for Anjum when he grew taller and became muscular and hairy. As Anjum wanted to be a girl he developed everything that a boy had and most of the time he felt that his body did not belong to him. But as days went by, he accepted himself, and finally one day he entered into his family the real family the family of Hijra in a close neighborhood of his family. So, this is where Aftab becomes Anjum.

When Aftab was fully Anjum she was like a new bride on her wedding and her sexual pleasures were expressed through her new garments. Ustad used to tell her that Hijras were chosen people, beloved of the Almighty. It also means a body that has Holy Soul lives. Anjum had nowhere to go. Nobody took her seriously. But she was proud of what she was She always sees herself as a different from everyone she always says” ‘I’m not Everyone,” (Ministry of Utmost Happiness 29).

Even Anjum always had a feeling of being a mother. When she met Zainab an orphan kid for the first time, she had felt of being born again. Her body inside which was wagging like a battlefield before became calm all of a sudden. She was emotionally attached to the baby.

Hijras of this place believed that they were trusted by their rulers where they were given the work of taking care of their children, wives, and mothers. They were given the freedom to roam in their private areas. Now nothing is there but we are still here to proudly talk about us how we were respected by our rulers. They were never commers. They were the members of the Palace. They were remembered as forgotten ones. This means even in Mythology it is believed that when Ram, his wife Laxman was banished for fourteen years from the kingdom, Ram turned to his people and asked all his people to go home and wait until he returns, he forgot to mention the Hijras where they waited for fourteen long years in the forest.

Even in history, they were forgotten mistakenly and from then their lives were miserable. They had to beg alms for their survival. Had to face so much humiliation. They were holy souls trapped in a body of men as a woman.

2. Conclusion

This shows that the transgender struggle throughout their life to live and fight against the norms of society. Anjum tries to connect differences in the novel and tries to be a person who voices out for others like her.

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