

## The Focus on Marginalized and the Issues of Sex in Anosh Irani's *The Parcel*

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### Introduction:

It is a great milestone in the lives of third gender community to participate in “Third Gender Poetry Meet” organized by Sahitya Akademi on 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2018. The event focuses on the long been pending lack of communication between marginalized third gender class and mainstream class. The inclusion of third gender in the mainstream of society paves greater influence in the exiled lives of third gender community. The present novel by Anosh Irani can be studied in the context of the great opportunities for the said class for their perspectives towards sex in which they feel exiled from the stereotyped society. The aim of the researcher is to study the contribution of Anosh Irani for the moral upliftment of third gender community.

The term ‘transgender’ is often used as a mark of demerit. This is an umbrella term which defines many ways to understand the place and status of third gender class in our society. There are many categories like transsexuals, butch lesbians, transvestites etc. However, there is different use of word for the said class i.e. *hijra*. *Hijra*, in India has to face lack of identity as it creates the existential demoralized class which is based on its remarkable socio-historical background and different aspects of their castaway culture. In the sphere of cultural identity, they live together with many hierarchies in their structure, rituals and especially for their use of language. They

have different connotations of their names in India according to the regions they live in. Collectively they are identified with a unique identity given by the Supreme Court of India i.e. ‘Third Gender’. The great Indian Mythologist and writer Devdatta Pattanaik in his book, *The Man Who Was a Woman and Other Queer Tales from Hindu Lore* writes:

Scholars and activists, who tend to define *Hijras* as homosexual cross-dressers, transgendered individuals, eunuch transvestites, and male-to-female transsexuals, often overlook the fact that the *Hijras* are not simply a sexual orientation but also a well defined social identity. To be *Hijra*, the crucial step is to take the vow of Hijrahood and become part of the *Hijra* clan, which almost functions as a caste with its own specific inner workings, rules, and hierarchy. (24)

The above statement of Devdatta Pattanaik clearly states that the class of *hijra* has become the most important ideology of their own. They have their own status in our society irrespective of their sexual orientation. They believe in their clan and function accordingly. They live in acute discrimination and visible social exclusion of all kind of bitter experiences of life. While focusing on the idea of queer studies, the writers like Susan Stryker believes that the queer studies is not just “antiheteronormative” but also it entertains the kind of “homonormativity”. The study of

transgender questions more about their identity as a part of queer theory which privileges desire and sexuality as its primary concern. Such visible crisis of identity, the tendencies of the people and different types of practices among the social theorists are confronted and questioned in sphere of literature and art. After the independence, in India many books were written to offer proper judgment to their class. Many writers try to push them outside their social circle by giving them separate representation.

The word '*hijra*' has its etymology. It is taken from Arabic word '*hjr*' meaning departure and leaving one's tribe. So one can easily grasp the denotative meaning of the term that is related to rootlessness. There is one more theme that can be entertained in every phase of queer theory i.e. the theme of exilement. The exact explanation of the queer theory and the theme of exile and alienation is designated in the pivotal work *Exile and Pride* by Eli Clare. The book focuses on different layers of alienation and its impact on life and life deeds.

*The Parcel* is the symbolic novel of Anosh Irani. It creates the devastating picture of modern sex workers. Throughout the novel, Anosh Irani tried to reveal the hidden realities of modern India. Today "Sex trade" is on high rank in the world. Brothel's are symbol of sex industries. According to some social reviewers, prostitution maintains the social balance of young generation. Some believe that it is an essential part of our society. In post-modern India the women are safe and secure because of the business of prostitution. The writer has focused the emerging reality of the life of Madhu who is described as the member of third gender. The story of the novel takes place in

Kamathipura, the red-light area of Bombay. It is a journey of Madhu from child to the third gender called hijra. The story revolves around the central character Madhu. The sympathetic ways of life of Madhu got paused with his new identity as hijra. The story depicts the deplorable condition of his mind. His search for root remains unstable in his sensational life. Anosh Irani succeeds in depicting sexual slavery as mark of hidden culture in India. With the help of the Madhu's character the writer tries to create the positive space for the third gender in the society. The place of hijra in our country is always considered menial by the socially negative mentalities. They do not get value at all in their life. The writer tries to touch the sympathy of the third gender. His small attempt to flourish the life of hijra community gets on verge with depiction of Madhu's life. As a protagonist of the novel, Madhu shoulders serious responsibilities of his own as well as hijra community. It makes us aware of the horrible facts of post-modern India that are hidden and needs to be reflected freely in the society. The writer drags our attention towards the central character and his activities. The very status of Madhu as a hijra makes us feel awkward and sympathetic. The intention of the writer behind focusing Madhu's life remains sincere and valuable. The typical hidden cultures of modern India have been designated in the story. The smashing realities of metropolitan cities, the modern lust and physical satisfaction play the central part of this novel.

Madhu takes birth as a male child but unfortunately his masculinity got crippled in the traditional thoughts. He realized that he has become the victim of the society as well

as his family. His life gets totally disturbed in the criminal attitude of the society. When he got insulted in the society, the adverse effects of this molestation were reflecting indirectly on his family. The writer tried to touch the practical aspects of life beyond the emotional attachment and the relationship between the family members. The real crisis of existence begins here with Madhu's struggle of survival. Here the bond between the relationships comes into ending position. When Madhu finds himself an isolated and strange person, he realized that his life is nothing but absurd reality. Existentialism filled every attitude of his life. He became the puppet in the hands of the society and his family. His family members began to hate his appearance. They felt ashamed of being the part of his relationship. His own family became the symbol of hell like Kamathipura.

The title "The Parcel" indicates that the world is a kind of trade. The real source of the story moves around ten years old girl named Kinjal. When materialistic attitude overcomes the moral ethical values of human life, the role of money creates its dominant impression on the life of human being. The trade of body for lust and money does not bother any moral attitude. The business of selling innocent girls to the

brothel is the assault on ethical values of life. When Kinjal's own aunt sells her for the sake of money, the demoralization of ethics sounds as a concrete reality of life. Madhu plays the role of pimp in such a trade. As the middle man, it is his responsibility to prepare the perfect parcel of the newly arrived virgin girl in prostitution. Initially he was not against the said sexual business matters but when he realized that he is spoiling the morals of little ones, his mind feels ashamed of the fact.

**Conclusion-**The whole ideas of the novel penetrated the mind of the reader with the reality of modern world. Through the story we have the glimpses of sexual slavery. The writer makes us aware about the post-modern realities of changing attitudes of people. The business of prostitution has become the part of rich and middle- class society also. It has become the part of their entertainment only. Homosexuality, lesbianism, transgender culture are the upcoming realities of the postmodern world. The writer makes us alert indirectly about the emergence of new trends like call girls, gigolos etc. The sophisticated rich society has its roots in such a business. *The Parcel* can be seen as a part of revolutionary movement that represents transgender and their issues.

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