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## ANALYTICAL PORTRAYAL ON THE STRANGE CASE OF BILLY BISWAS

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### Introduction:

This authentic article deals with The Strange Case of Billy Biswas by Arun Joshi. Crises for identity becomes the most agonizing experience in this Modern World. It can be shown in a materialistic life or on spiritual life. It has its associations in our climate of our conscious spirit or soul. Arun Joshi's protagonist in The Strange Case of Billy Biswas, explore the idea of Alienation, individuality, self-Existentialism in a vivid manner.

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### THEMES RELATED TO ALIENATION:

Identity crisis, cultural dislocation, search for Authenticity.

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### CRITICAL ANALYSIS ON ALIENATION:

In the Civilized World the hero wanted to locate his real self not in Westernized Culture but an innocent Anthropological past India Culture. He had a strange experience at the age of Fifteen got rooted in his Mind and Soul. This Strange encounter created a specific interest to attain it. Unaware of this interest went on life's journey. The author Arun Joshi Mind I reflected in his hero Billy Biswas. Arun Joshi being a prolific writer, written five novel and a collection of short stories. In all his writing, some way or the other his attitude and mind is exposed. He high lightened certain complexities which explores issues like inequalities, Moral decadence, the conflicts between the individual desire and social repression, Crises in enlightenment, a sense of Alienation and so on. Despite of having all the comforts in life, he gets alienated. Billy's struggles to reconcile his Indian heritage with Western Education. While searching for a sense of belongingness, he explores the Indian spirituality and philosophy.

Billy Biswas criticizes the upper simple life. The upper-class value of culture makes a person superficial not reality and even inhuman in human approach and behavior. The Strange Case of Billy Biswas (1971) abandons his place Delhi in search of greater truth in the forest. He goes away from his family, friends, wife etc. because, he feels that they are unable to support his quest and aim, the greater truth. What is this Greater Truth? It can be 'PEACE' Peace in Heart Mind and Soul.

"Peace, I leave with you, My Peace I give to you, not as the World gives, do I give you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be not afraid" (Bible. St. John's Gospel Chapter 14, verse 27. Only God Almighty can give us real peace and not the world. Absence of Peace lead to struggle and conflict. Peace gives satisfaction and fulfillment in life. In the course of life Peace should lead us. When we alienate ourselves, from this disturbing world, Peace takes control of us. We should abide by God's Ethic and Commandments. Materialistic pursuit result in conflict; conflict between individual desire. So, Billy Biswas gets alienated and goes in search of primitive tribal community. He was taken up by the beating sound of the drum, goes into solitary worship of God.

Billy Biswas is considered as failure by some critics, but he is on his better way to peruses his lie journey. He is a failure due to family sufferings in establishing a meaningful contact with his wife and the society. Failure! Because his pursuit is different from Modern World. Modern world blindfolds the aspects of peace in good sense. Billy's exploration of Indian spirituality and philosophy has a meaning and purpose beyond material success. Interest in Eastern mysticism and spiritual practices fulfills his life.

Satisfaction and peace over rides mental disorder, struggles, stress and even dreadful diseases. First a person should discover his calling, accordingly with the help of God's grace we decide the life pattern. Today's youngsters lack in this aspect.

Rejoice always. In everything, give thanks to God. Do not quench the Spirit; Test all thing; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil" (Biblical 1Thessonians chapter 16 verse 22) Enlighten and good guidance leads to positive thinking, growth and development.

Billy Biswas was against the upper-class Indian society, and he realized its understanding of development culture and Modernity are humbug, leads to nothing worth. 'As empty vessel makes much noise' so also modernity is merely a 'noise' and destruction. There is difference between Nature Culture, Rural and Urban space. Billy's decision to assimilate himself within the local tribe abandon his family and his willingness to bridge the intellectual gap of indigenous knowledge structure with civilized world.

Billy Biswas could be considered a Misfit in the society as he recklessly leaves behind his entire family by disappearing into the woods. He feels connected to calling to e his primitive self (Joshi; the strange case 101)

He stood on a rock and saw in the night sky a reality that brightened him and its eternal ferocity. (Joshi; the strange case 102) Alienation is proceed to its higher peak. "For a day in your court is better than a thousand of my own choosing. I would rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tent of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun and shield, no good things will He with hold from those who walk uprightly" (Bible Psalms: 84:1011).

As said in the above words the influence of Western Philosophy on Josh's novel has contributed to creating a disconnect between him and the Indian English. The Protagonist suffer a acute mental conflict, on his way to success. Man fails to perceive life like this today. Nevertheless, modern scientific and Technological advancement, physical pleasure, comfort rather make himself a tragic mess. Billy not only leaves behind worldly pleasures but his wife Meena, who is fond of money, wealth, Materialism which support the identity of present self-centered society. Such type of interest causes disaster. The degree of alienation between him and his wife mounts up like a battle field and the reason for their separation can be concluded as failure and Billy's new identity result to be successful.

### **Theme Analysis:**

#### **1. Cultural Duality and Identity Crisis**

Billy Biswas, the protagonist, embodies the conflict between modernity and tradition. As an expatriate in the United States and a product of an elite, Westernized Indian upbringing, he struggles to reconcile his inner self with societal expectations. This dichotomy creates an identity crisis that fuels his eventual departure from conventional life.

#### **2. Alienation and Belonging**

The novel critiques the urban elite's superficiality and Billy's alienation from their values. His yearning for authenticity leads him to tribal life, where he finds a profound sense of belonging, contrasting starkly with the mechanical and hollow lives of the urban elite.

#### **3. Primitivism and Spiritual Quest**

Billy's withdrawal into tribal society symbolizes a rejection of materialism and a spiritual quest for meaning. The tribal world is presented as a utopia, untouched by the corrupting influences of modernity, offering a stark alternative to the fragmented life of urbanity.

### **Character Analysis :**

#### **1. Billy Biswas**

Billy is portrayed as a sensitive and introspective individual whose quest for authenticity drives the narrative. His actions challenge societal norms, making him both an outlier and a symbol of the struggle against conformity.

#### **2. Narrator (Romesh Sahai)**

As Billy's close friend, Romesh serves as a window into Billy's psyche. His narration juxtaposes rational observation with emotional resonance, emphasizing Billy's enigmatic nature.

#### **3. Meena Biswas**

Billy's wife, Meena, symbolizes the superficiality of urban modernity. Her inability to understand Billy's depth highlights the chasm between the protagonist and societal expectations.

### **Symbolism**

#### **1. The Tribal World**

The tribal world represents purity, freedom, and authenticity—a space where Billy escapes the pretensions of modern life.

#### **2. The City vs. Wilderness**

The city symbolizes chaos and artificiality, whereas the wilderness is depicted as a sanctuary of peace and unfiltered existence.

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### **Narrative Style and Structure**

The novel employs a first-person narrative through Romesh, blending realism with psychological depth. This perspective allows readers to grapple with Billy's complex personality and philosophical musings.

### **Critical Reflection**

#### **1. Modernity vs. Tradition**

Rao critiques modernity as a force of alienation and fragmentation, juxtaposed against the tribal world's holistic and integrated life.

#### **2. Universality of the Human Condition**

The novel transcends cultural and geographical boundaries, addressing universal themes of existential angst, belonging, and the quest for purpose.

### **Life Lessons from *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas***

#### **1. Self-Discovery is Essential**

- True fulfillment comes from understanding and following one's inner calling.

#### **2. Materialism Cannot Replace Spiritual Fulfillment**

- Happiness lies in simplicity and authenticity, not in wealth or societal validation.

#### **3. Have the Courage to Be Different**

- Standing by your beliefs and breaking away from societal norms requires bravery.

#### **4. Belonging Matters**

- Finding a community or environment that resonates with your identity is crucial for inner peace.

#### **5. Modernity is Not Always Better**

- The novel critiques urban life's superficiality, urging us to question the cost of progress on our mental and spiritual health.

#### **6. Value Indigenous Wisdom**

- Indigenous cultures offer profound insights and harmony with nature, deserving respect and preservation.

#### **7. Balance Freedom with Responsibility**

- Seek freedom and authenticity, but remain aware of the responsibilities tied to your choices.

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### **Conclusion:**

*The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* remains relevant as it probes issues of identity, globalization, and cultural assimilation. It resonates with readers who grapple with similar questions about their place in a rapidly evolving world.

In conclusion, the novel is a compelling exploration of the human spirit's resilience against the homogenizing forces of modernity. It invites readers to reflect on their values and the true essence of living a fulfilled life.

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