

MASCULINE INNOCENCE IN ARUN JOSHI'S, *THE STRANGE CASE OF BILLY BISWAS*

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ABSTRACT

Women are considered as soft-natured and innocent creatures in human kind, as we taught so far in Indian society. So, our society offers complete freedom and protection to them. In ancient India, women are treated as superiors. So, they have been given all sorts of sophistications such as education, warships, arts, etc. When the wars started to emerge for the sake of women, it had become adequacy to protect women. So, women are hidden into their houses. Time rolled on. But, the practice remained as the same with metamorphosis reasons that, women were inferior to men and so they had to be controlled and ruled by men. After few centuries, due to the British colonization, Indian revolutionist like Bharathiyar, had taken women out from their slavery. In contemporary society, women are completely away from their suppressions; in some extremes cases women suppress men. Though, men have dominating mind outwardly, they are actually soft-natured and innocent inwardly. Men tend to protect women economically, sociologically and all kinds. Women are enjoying all kinds of sophistications and liberation from men but women attack men's innocent inner-self. Each and every man, in the contemporary Indian society, fell into unexpressed suppressions into their heart. These unexpressed and suppressed emotions cause for frustration and stress. These suppressions created not only by women but the entire society which has deviated from the ancient way of living, detachment from nature, society cultivation in unreasonable rituals which were deviated from the ancient reasons along with women's hurting attitude. I do not indicate all women are wrong but insisting that not all women are correct. These problems mostly occur in the marriage bonding. Women can achieve in all fields which have been proved transparently without any doubt. My interrogation is where women's tolerance has flown away amidst all kinds of sophistications and liberty. This paper is focusing on, the protagonist, Billy Biswas and his variable marriage concepts, due to his innocent side of his inner mind in Arun Joshi's *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*. Though Billy is born with silver spoon and receiving red-carpet welcome at everywhere, his mind thirsts for other missing element. He could stand neither his outward world nor his inner self. Respectively, it is resembled in the lives of Billy with Meena and Rima. Finally, his masculine innocence is discovered, when he started to live together with Bilasia, the daughter of mother-nature. His archetypal and anthropological mind finds comfortable, with aesthetic pleasure and feels the satisfaction, from unexpected love that attracts his innocent inner self. It tends him to give up all kind of worldly sophistications and his fame.

KEYWORDS: Inner Self, Unexpressed Suppressions, Masculine Innocence, Aesthetic Pleasure, Materialistic Society

Article History

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INTRODUCTION

Masculinity is natural ascribes of manhood such as bold, strong and brave. Men are created as bold, strong and brave to protect the women. We consider men are strong enough to do anything. Men do never care for anything. Men are free from emotional suppressions. A man is too bold to fulfill their desires with the consideration of his surroundings. He often dominates his wife why women are considered as inferior gender from the ancient period. But the actuality is reverse. It is exposed in Arun Joshi's *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*.

Women are hailed in high stature in Indian context. In ancient days, women are celebrated for their loftiness. They were provided with all sorts of sophistication and liberty. Women were considered as a great asset of the country. So women were given more security. Even though, the high-security provided, women had been trapped and so wars had occurred among the countries. Women were given higher level of security by hiding inside of the houses especially during the war times. It had persisted as a routine habitual. Time rolled on. The persistence of women restrictions had become the compulsion to the society tradition. People did never know the actual reason for hiding women inside the houses and so each had created their own reasons. Thus, women slavery occurred in the society. It is more helpful to men for abusing women as their own wishes. So men were described as Tyrants.

In middle ages, women are taken out from the slavery by the revolutionist like Subramaniya Bharathiyar. They were incessantly fighting for women liberation. The revolutionists' had kept on fighting, against the women slavery. They had taught the adequacy of gender equality to the women in all aspects, specifically in education. As they dreamt, the contemporary Indian women society had attained their liberty. Now-a-days, women explore in everything. Women have become tough competitors to the men. They are completely forgetting about their slavery. Women are free from abusements and bondages. The restrictions are broken. Women are enjoying sophistications from men rather than tortures.

Masculine support is always nurtured by feminine society: In ancient age, men served women as a protector; middle age, as a fighter and in contemporary, as a moral supporter. Such support can be possible only in martial relationship in general view. Though women enshrine all sophistications and liberty from men, where their return help have gone? For all the times, masculine serves either directly or indirectly towards feminine development. There is no evidence for feminine support towards masculine support.

Men are described as brave and bold due to their unexpressed emotions which lay under their inner self. Over-fear may cause for their fighting nature. Too much of disappointments may root to the over-possessiveness. It might be possible not only in contemporary age but can be applicable for all ages. Arun Joshi opens his novel, *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, by the appreciations of Satpura Hills. The narrator, who is friend of Billy (Bimal) Biswas, with a hint of masculine innocence, "As I grow old, I realize that the most futile cry of men is his impossible wish to be understood. The *attempt* to understand is probably even futile. His obsessions were not so extraordinary after all, even if the garb in which they appeared was (7)". These lines delineate the situation of men that there is no one to care for masculine inner side. Everyone watches men only from the outward appearance. Men are not even expecting to find a source to share their inner suppressions and depressed emotions. Though men are facing so many troubles in the self centered world, no one has shown their depreciations at their house. When a man returned to the house, he simply sits to watch television in most of the bourgeois family. It also depicts the pathetic situation of masculinity that the inner depressions are very pathetic and if there anyone tries to

understand is more pathetic. The inconsideration of masculine inner side tends to the inverse turning of his selfhood. It is also stated by Romi, in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*:

If life's meaning lies not in the glossy surfaces of our pretensions, but in those dark mossy labyrinths of the soul that languish forever, hidden from the dazzling light of the sun, then I do not know of any man who sought it more doggedly and, having received a signal, abandoned himself so recklessly to its call. In brief, I know of no other man who so desperately pursued the tenuous thread of existence to its bitter end, no matter what trails of glory or shattered hearts he left behind in his turbulent wake(8).

Joshi tries to convey the purpose of human existence. The meaning of human life lays on the unexpressed and hidden emotions which turn into another side of mind. Here Joshi is mentioned the term "Darker" stands for the inconsistency of current tradition in the living society. The zeitgeist of human psyche reminds same from the origin age but the culture, tradition and rituals changed. Though Billy had sent to study Engineering, he would have studied anthropology up to Ph.D in U.S.A. He studies against the wishes of his father who was the High-court judge. Life is not easier to do what one thinks to do. It is restricted in name of civilization.

The development of society, culture, life of humans due to the consequences of science and technology, man falls into self-alienation. He goes beyond to earn money to fulfill the needs of his family rather to fulfill his personal desires. He does never hesitate to sacrifice his selfhood more than a woman but he gets hurt when his sacrifices are invalid and irresponsibility of his family members. This is same view discussed by Mohd Muzmil Sohil, Ph.D Research Scholar, in his article entitled, *Self-reflexivity in the The Foreigner and The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*:

In the rat race of life man is a strange not only from the outside world, but also from his own self this seems to be the root cause of crises of identity and self-hood which is one the factor of crises of the present world man has been plunged into uncertainty, perplexity, and unsettlement. There is confusion, root concern, frustration and disillusionment prevailing in human psyche. This is also true to the case of Indian ethos which is perplexed by a growing sense of human root maintaining itself as crises of self-identity.

The contemporary urban society is completely self centered and money-minded according to Joshi's projection. As M. M. Sohil mentioned in the above lines, manhood becomes completely alienated not only from the society, but also with the selfhood. The hurrying outward life and workless inner self mingles together forms the duality in the mind and they have weakened the normality of human mind. So, there are so many difficulties occur.

Man possesses too many responsibilities in a family who carries in the form maximum percentage of family fulfillments specifically economic fulfillment. We are paying more attention to resolve the needs and emotional thirsts of women. Though women are emotionally inferior, they can easily express it through their tears. But men do not take the medium of tears instead he hides into his inner self. The suppressions lead him for the frustration and stress. Though their materialistic and physical needs are fulfilled, men find some sort of missing elements inside his deeper heart. The dumped and unfulfilled trifles have formed the greater thing in his inward and mental state. Billy's days in U.S.A, he had fulfilled everything such as travel, wealth and education. But he thirsts for his inner self and personal desires which could never be found in the modernistic world. This is observed by Romi, as follows:

He (Billy) laughed, but his eyes remained serious. That was another of his incongruities. For most of the time that Billy was with you, he bantered and laughed, but his eyes which were the dominating feature of his face,

and were probably found very attractive by women, never lost their deep somber look. Most people who met him considered him a light-hearted, good sport without quite noticing the incongruity of his eyes or suspecting what went on in their dark depths. (11).

Billy's outward appearance says about his duality. Though he is smile, his eyes reminds with the sense of cruelty. There is a famous proverb that the face is the index of the mind. In that case, Billy's eyes remind the index of his selfhood. Though it is attractive even to the women, no one could find out his suppressed emotions. He looks soft-natured outwardly but stronger inwardly. The inward strength occurs out of his outward hidden emotions. The people with ordinary relationship could never understand his thought stream. A person one should approach him with the entire understanding of his soul and body could reach him. Billy thirsts for that kind of person in his life and he could not accommodate with other people including in his marriage bonding.

Billy had brought up with the silver spoon from his childhood. But his mind is deposited with the depressed thoughts which had been turned into the proposal of his masculine innocence. When it is enquired at Romi, he replied, "the difficulty" of activate "what he wants to do" (18). When Billy desired to do something, he is stopped by the family members to maintain the prestigious responsibility of the family. When he studied anthropology, he gets some sort of relaxation from his depressed thoughts. He was out the eyes of materialistic modern society. So he wanders for aesthetic fulfillments rather than materialistic misgivings. These thoughts reflect in his marital life too.

Meena Chatterjee is Billy's first wife. She was selected by his parents. His parents focus on match between the statuses of the family. Meena is a typical woman who gets satisfaction in materialistic fulfillments. Then he has fallen on the hands of Rima Kaul, who is his colleague at Delhi University. The relationship develops whereas the field trip with their students at Satpura hills. But Rima's relationship demands economic needs of herself, rather than fulfilling aesthetic thirst. These two women in his life frames misogyny in his mind. Billy gets marriage with the expectation of fulfilling another side of his selfhood. Instead of satisfying his inner self, both of them render only outward fulfillment. Though Rima is different from Meena, Rima's relationship just shows his inner disappointing self.

Meena has created the inner wounds of Billy; Rima had shown his wounds. But Bilasia applies the medicine to cure the wounds. After the entry of Bilasia in Billy's life, He feels the emotional fulfillment. His suppressed and unexpressed emotions find way to depart from Billy. Though, Bilasia is economically and materialistically inferior to Meena and Rima, She knows the way for aesthetic pleasure, which is the actual thirst of Billy. It is stated by H.M. Prasad, as follows:

Meena deadens his seasons, Rima corrupts him and the material civilization kills his innate natural instinct. It is Bilasia, who causes explosion of senses – the proper medium to reach soul. Billy renounces the civilized world and its symbols in Meena and Rima. From Meena to Rima and from Rima to Bilasia is not a mere trifling in Billy's life, it is a development from sex to sympathy and from sympathy to sublimation (58).

Meena tries to rule over Billy by her support of family and status though her marital bonding. It is approved by our civilized society. Because the marriage turns into an authoritative cage for men to fulfill women's inner and outer needs. So his suppression lays on Meena. He feels her domination rather than love. So, he goes beyond Rima. Rima is shaken reputations of Billy's image and family's tradition in the society. It is another knot in society tradition that the interference of a man's privacy. It is Billy's need to fulfill his needs whether it not available

from his legal marital partner. It was not an issue in ancient days and so ancient people were happy. But Billy finds that Rima gained the economical sophistication from Billy rather than taking him towards his thirst of self fulfillment. Bilasia stands as an unique species for Billy. Bilasia, the daughter of mother-nature, shows Billy to move forward the path for his passions. His actual passion is to lead pleasant life on the lapse of aesthetic treasures. The urban life style gives frustration and stress to him. There is nothing pure and taste in the civilized life led by the people. People remind the manual machines in the urban society. Men dump their feelings. People abandon their emotions. People discard their selfhood. Though all the tensions are hidden into themselves, men are underestimated and wounded by the activities of their own family. The statement in *India today* says the city-based National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) research report, that: "Men in urban areas suffer more than women from hypertension"

The urban society becomes self-centric without any doubt. But men are sacrificing their selfhood for the sophistication of his family. When their inner self keeps on hurt, their selfhood would become softer. Their arrogance only expressed outwardly. So the family members fail to envision the inner self of the man. Like women, men do never search for medium to spill out his intolerable emotions. It has grows into his darker side according to civilized society. The frustration leads to stress. The stress embodies the side which leads him to destroy his public fame as child cries out for chocolate during its illness. He just desired to escape from all the responsibilities frames by the civilized society. He loses his materialistic identity to attain his self identity.

People are trying to compensate the duality. Once a man moves towards his innocent side from his moderate point, it is highly impossible to bring him back. The family members should pay more attention for caring the mind state of the man, who is tolerating all the troubles from the outer world. We need not sacrifice anything for them. We can just give moral support by spilling the sweet words. It reduces stress and provides meaning for their life. Instead of kindness, nothing makes stronger a man. Otherwise, men always pour into their innocence within their selfhood.

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