

R.K.Narayan's The Guide : A Study of The Transformation of Raju from a Tourist Guide to Spiritual Guide

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Abstract: R.K.Narayan's novel 'The Guide' published in 1958 is based on Malgudi, a fictional town in south India. The novel describes the transformation of the protagonist Raju from a tourist guide to a spiritual guide and then one of the most famous holy man of India. The title refers to the last three of the roles that Raju assumed in his Unplanned career i.e. as a tourist guide, as guide for Rosie and as Spiritual guide for society. He begins his career as any other young man of average abilities by fitting into any role that comes his way. He runs the petty shop of his father and when Malgudi station is set up, he runs a book stall selling, old magazines, being enquired by the passengers on various details about the neighbouring places and he assumes the role of a tourist guide. His chance encounter with Marco-Rosie makes him change his role as a champion of Rosie's craving for dancing career. He gradually assumes the role of an impresario and manager of Rosie's dance career. Then a transformation takes place from fake swami to true sanyasi (Spiritual Guide).

Keywords : Transformation, Social, Morality, Acceptance, Contribution, Confess.

R.K.Narayan is a great writer of characters. He is praised for his art of characterization. His characters are based on the psychological treatment. All his characters are real and life like. Raju is the central figure in the novel 'Guide'. The whole theme revolves round him. He dominates from the beginning to the end of this novel. He is the only source of all incidents and events in it. He appears before us in various forms as a Railway Raju, a hermit, a lover, a fraud, and a criminal. Thus, the novelist has named this novel after him. It is Raju who is the guide.

The hero of the novel Raju is presented to us in various role that he plays in his entire life. He is presented before the readers in different characters according to the changing circumstances. He acts and behaves as per the demand of his circumstances. But one very inconspicuous trait runs from the beginning to the end of his personality is the sense of guiding people in their private or common problems of life. The underlying theme of this novel is that the hero begins and ends his life while guiding others, but failing to guide himself totally. So this novel revolves round the central point of view which is guiding people in this world.

Raju the hero of the novel is a young man, son of an ordinary village shopkeeper, having little education. But as grows up he develops to be an intelligent and romantic young man. He is social, adventurous and can win the hearts of his associated people.

With the introduction of the railways to Malgudi, tourists begin to pour there. The background of Malgudi, tourists begin to pour there. The background of Malgudi is rich in natural sights and sounds. It has very beautiful hills with lush green forests. There is the river Saryu flowing by. Far away is found ruins of a place consigned to oblivion.

All these stimulate the interests of the visitors. Now Raju changes from shopkeeper to a successful guide for the people coming to Malgudi. So we find Raju's first appearance as a shopkeeper changing to a career of a tourists. He earns a lot of money and fame. He is extremely popular because of sociable nature.

Further, there is turning point in the life of Raju. In course of his guiding career he comes across a young couple —Marco and Rosie. Raju comes in the life of Rosie and begins to act as her guide on her artistic quest. For this, he also fans her discord against Marco her husband. On this account the romantic turned artistic guide Raju confess,

"I was accepted by Macro as a member of the family. From guiding tourists I seemed to have come to a sort of concentrated guiding of a single family."

Raju then successfully acts an artistic guide of Rosie. Soon Rosie gets a towering success. And she is the success of Raju. From artistic guidance Raju turns to a commercial enterprise. He transforms Rosie into a commercial dancer. He begins to earn money. His art of guiding brings him affluence and fame. At this stage the guide in Raju is known as Mr. Raj.

Unfortunately, Mr. Raj, the guide tries to forge the signature of Rosie for the release of her jewelry from the bank. This is discovered and he gets imprisonment for two years. In jail, Raju's fine sense of humor and social sense win him good friends. He acts also a guide for them in the jail. The jail life marks the end of the romantic and commercial in Raju's life.

After all the jail life, he abandons his previous life and wanders away to a very distant and remote village called Mangal. Here, the artistic-guide turned 'gaol-guide' Mr. Raj. Or Mr. Raju takes shelter in a temple. By chance he is taken to be a saint by the local people. He receives a lot of presentations and edibles which gives him a comfortable life in the temple. Soon he capitalizes on the benightedness and credulity of the villagers. Soon he begins to act as a wise man for the villagers by settling disputes and arranging education for children. Here the traits of artistic turned gaol-guide seems to be 'Spiritual-Guide' obtaining reverence from all but definitely not from God. The cosy life of Raju is caught in his own net of deception. Raju is forced to go on fast to propitiate the 'Rain-God'. But before he dies, the guiding tone is still present in Raju's words, when he says,

"Velan its raining in the hills. I can feel it coming up under my feet up my legs"

After his two year period in jail Raju bids good bye to the romantic life of woman, wine and wealth. He wandered away to a remote village called — Mangal, where he sought shelter in a temple from the probing eyes of society. By chance, the villagers look him to be a great and lived on their charity. But after a long time, he was caught in the net of his own misdoings. The villagers forced him to go on fast in order to propitiate the rain god to help the people struck by a long famine. Raju reluctantly went on fast and slowly kissed the inevitable end on the 14th day of his fast.

The character of Raju strikes us very much even though he does not possess the great tragic heights. Raju being an intelligent man, could read anyone in a short time. He tells us about Marco and Rosie — "Perhaps he (Marco) married out of a desire to have someone care for his practical life, but unfortunately his choice was wrong - this girl herself was a dreamer if ever there was one." However Raju does not exhibit the great inner storm that we find in the tragic heroes of Shakespeare or Graham Greene. More or less Raju proves himself an impresario from beginning to the end. He has no care for tradition, culture and morality. He does not hesitate in luring a married lady and also earns money through her.

Raju has also certain good qualities which keep us bound to him. He receives punishments for his misdeeds. The fast he was forced to take leads to his end without any salvation. He could have run away from the village, but he did not want to demolish high hopes of villagers in him. He preferred to die than to betray those who held him in such a reverential esteem. Raju's all voices are redeemed when he dies for the villagers. His laying down his life evokes in us pity and sympathy which are the corner stones of a great man.

So R.K. Narayan's "The Guide" is a fine example of realistic portrays of Indian scenario as this technique was used by in tragedy King Lear Shakespeare skillfully exposes the chaos, illness and turmoil of Lear's dominion with unadulterated realism of his art (Ramanan, 2014) [1]. With the same skill R.K. Narayan portrays the journey of different phases of Raju's life like Station food vendor, a tourist guide, a sentimental adultery, a manager of Rosie, a jailbird, martyred swami while portraying transformation of Raju from Railway Raju to spiritual awaken Raju. Narayan put forward different religious, cultural, social, economic aspects of Indian society. He also focuses on deteriorating family relation, religious nature of

Indian society, and different problems of Indian society like drought, blind faith on sadhu, superstitious nature of Indian people. "The Guide" is a magnum opus by R K Narayan which was published in 1958. It's greatness is recognized by bestowing Sahitya Akademi Award on it. The movie "The Guide" is the blend of philosophy, fiction and elements of supernatural blended with the faith of morals in it. Bollywood stars of bygone era Dev Anand and Waheeda Rehman acted as leading stars in the film "Guide".

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