



A STUDY OF R.K. NARAYAN'S 'THE GUIDE' IS STORY OF POLY-GUIDE

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Abstract

R.K. Narayan was a well-known writer. He was born in Rasipuram, which is located in the southern part of India, in 1906. Characters in his books glide over a psychic surface as they go about their lives. The title of R.K. Narayan's book *The Guide* features prominently throughout the text. The primary characters are an accurate reflection of India's diverse socioeconomic landscape. The works of Narayan and the incorporation of parts of folklore into his books serve as an ideal instance to illustrate the folk culture of India and the rituals, blind fidelity, and religious features that are common among the Indian people. In his works, he portrayed the difficulties faced by Native Americans and Indians. The author adds a touch of his or her own personality to depict the poverty and myth that are associated with India. Investigate the folk components and the ways in which they are tied to the everyday lives of the Indians and the traditional culture that they uphold via the characters in the book. R. K. Narayan is now widely regarded as one of the most accomplished writers alive. Even though he passed away a few years ago, people continue to read his writings because they find them intriguing. One such outstanding book is called *The Guide*. It may be seen from different angles.

Keywords: *The Guide*, Customs, Folklore, Realistic elements, mythical elements.

Introduction:

On October 10, 1906, in the city of Chennai, the well-known Indian author was born. After receiving his bachelor's degree from the University of Mysore in 1936, R.K. Narayan accepted an offer to go to the United States. He began his career as a writer by contributing short tales to the publication known as *The Hindu*. This was the beginning of his work in the literary field. He is the author of nearly two hundred short stories, two travelogues, a memoir, essays, and two plays in addition to fourteen novels. *The Guide* was his debut book, which also happened to be his last piece of labour. Exile and return, education, women and their standing in society, myths and the cultural heritage of Indian society, etc. were some of the primary issues that were explored. He never wrote with the intention of becoming famous. He had an aesthetic perspective on Indian life and captured it. The publication of *The Guide* in 1958 was the direct result of the Foundation's efforts to arrange a trip of the United States. In 1960, he was presented with the Sahitya Academy Award for his work on '*The Guide*,' and in 1964, he was awarded the Padma Bhushan. "His passing occurred in the year 2001. Narayan has discussed a variety of issues, including gender inequality, caste discrimination, and injustice. The story centres on Raju, who serves as the novel's protagonist. After the passing of his father, who owned a store, he took over the family business and continued in the same line of work. While that was going on, he was working as a tour guide. It was at this period that he became acquainted with Rosie and her husband Marco, who were the catalysts for the subsequent changes in his life. Rosie was an enthusiastic dancer who had travelled there in order to better understand the local culture. In the middle of everything, her spouse went back to his busy



routine. Both Raju and Rosie found themselves drawn to the other. Rosie continued giving her performances as usual. However, Raju once falsified Rosie's signature, which ultimately led to his incarceration. Raju's perspective on life changed as a result of his time spent in prison. Never once did he go back to his hometown. His previous actions started to play on his mind, and eventually he made the decision to leave Malgudi for good. On the banks of the Sarai, Raju discovered an old temple that served as a safe haven for him. There, he made the acquaintance of Vela, to whom he related his experience. He transformed himself into a swami after devoting his time to reading the Gita. The community is hit with a drought, and this causes his life to take an unexpected and perplexing turn. The residents of the community have faith that the swami can deliver rain to the area. Because of this, he decided to go without food until it started to rain. The health of Raju deteriorates rapidly on the twelfth day of his illness. Just before he loses his balance and falls to the ground, he reports to Vela that it is pouring on the hills, as he can feel the moisture rising up under his feet. With these lines, the storey comes to an end, and inside its pages, we discover a combination of the serious and the comical, as well as the genuine and the surreal. The progression of the main character from obscurity to wealth, from worldly success to spiritual enlightenment, such as from being a young lad to a young man in the eyes of his loves. After his release from prison, he enters the second stage, which is quite different from the first. The book might be thought of as a fictionalised autobiography of the main character. Readers or viewers are immersed in the hero's current predicament, while the hero's history is recounted as a backdrop that contributes to the maturation of his or her personality. A spirituality serves as the point of departure, and a climax as the point of arrival. In another sense, the whole book may be seen as a play that is divided into three acts. The love that Raju has for Rosie, his life in jail, and the final recompense that he receives for his good deeds all come together. The author of the book employs a method known as double narration throughout the storey. This method keeps the readers on their toes and brings the character of the hero closer to the reader's experience. Through the use of the method of double narration, the complicated personality is built, and credibility is established. The author of the work has painted a picture of rural India.

The Guide:

In 1960, R. K. Narayan was given the Sahitya Academy Honor for his work titled The Guide. This mature piece of art examines the nuances and complexity of human interaction in a straightforward way, earning it the prestigious award. Because of his enormous popularity, the work has been translated into a number of significant languages. The novel has been successfully adapted to the big screen because to the cinematic method used throughout the book. The novel's success on a global scale may be attributed to the novel's incorporation of universal themes and Indian symbolism into a Western art form. The Guides present a contrast between the traditional culture of India and the contemporary culture of Malgudi, the city that he has created in his mind. He portrays the sensitive humanity of India with wit, humour, acute observation, and affection all woven into the fabric of his writing. Even though he isn't a philosopher, he paints his characters in half-tones, which gives them the effect they're meant to have. He sees things from an outside position, giving him a twofold viewpoint. Therefore, The Guide is an excellent example of artistic creation". The other two significant writers are



known by the name Raja Rao. It is vitally crucial that Narayan's books deal with the lives of the common guy from the middle class. He has a wry, dry sense of humour that he applies to everyday situations. He skewers the hypocrisy of those in the middle class with a dry sense of humour. He has an inquisitive and interested stance toward life. He is an objective observer of our everyday concerns and interests. The Guide, which is narrated in a sequence of flashbacks, is considered to be one of the most engaging and popular works written by Narayan. Within this storey, Raju acts as the narrator of his history and describes his sentiments based on his recollection. Raju continues to tell the narrative of his history when the screen goes completely dark. Both the laying of the railway track and the construction of a railway station in Malgudi come to a successful conclusion. “The author's recollection of Raju adds a touch of realism to the storey. The employment of the flashback method piques the reader's attention and stimulates their sense of wonder. In addition, it demonstrates Narayan's talent as a natural storyteller. The plot of The Guide progresses via an incomprehensible chain of time jumps and flashbacks. Because Narayan was in regular contact with the South Indian film industry, he was able to include cinematic techniques such as jump out, flash back, flash forward, and montage into the creation of his storey. As a result, the book follows an episodic structure rather than the linear narrative of the typical sort of novel, which is characterised by the progression of the tale along a single, consistent arc from the beginning through the middle to the finish. The unorthodox storyline of The Guide skips about in time and place, jumping from the past to the present and back again, and going from Malgudi to the Memmi Hills to Mangal in an apparently haphazard manner. This occurs both inside and between chapters of the book. In the first half of The Guide, which is separated into two sections, Raju's boyhood, love affair, and incarceration are recounted. The second half of The Guide focuses on Raju's development as a swamy. The initial section of the storey takes place in Malgudi, despite the fact that the streams flow concurrently. The first half of the storey takes place in Mangle, Raju's present, while the second portion takes place in Raju's history. The storey of Raju's life in Malgudi is told by Raju himself in the past, while the author tells the storey of Raju's life in Mangle in the present. R.K. Narayan is a writer who writes about everyday people and the circumstances they find themselves in. The storyline he developed for The Guide is comprised of elements and occurrences that are neither extraordinary nor heroic in nature. The Guide is the narrative of Raju's love life, his desire for money, his sins, and his eventual conversion to Christianity. It is also the narrative of how the everyman develops from an ordinary person into an extraordinary one, transitioning from being a train guide to a spiritual guide. There is a combination of comedic and dramatic elements, as well as actual and fantasy elements, in Narayan's plan.

In Narayan's writings, Indian civilization is shown navigating the challenging landscape of the contemporary world. In this way, Malgudi takes on the role of a laboratory in which a variety of options and postures are experimented with. The Guide, which is without a doubt Narayan's most well-known work, is a tale of contemporary India that explores the nature of an old Indian institution known as the guru. This concept does not have a direct translation into the English language. It is also instructive that R. K. Narayan chose to employ the term Guide, which is somewhat less weighty, somewhat more frivolous, and definitely more ambiguous. Narayan has the talent of drawing pen images with his pen that vividly bring situations and personalities



to life without resorting to elaborate or unnecessary description. This is one of Narayan's many gifts. The straightforward style of Narayan's writing belies a profound understanding of the arts. Narayan employs language as though it were a very versatile instrument, one that can easily communicate not just the particular but also the symbolic and the general. The Guide has a calm and reserved atmosphere throughout its whole. As a result, the work is made contemporary, exciting, controversial, and fascinating by the use of flashbacks, common lifestyles, comedic elements, and language, as well as by the dual perspectives of Raju and the author. Imagery and symbolism, which have their origins in Indian culture but are yet accessible to people of many backgrounds, are another of Narayan's rhetorical strategies. At the very conclusion of the narrative, as Raju is struggling to stay afloat, his eyes are fixed on the distant mountains as a beautiful sun rises and the people watch. Narayan brilliantly depicts Raju's death as a picture of hope by contrasting the sight of Raju's suicide with the plain backdrop of the Indian hamlet at daybreak. This is compatible with the Indian idea that one is reborn after dying. Characters such as Raju's mother and uncle, Gaffer, the driver, and Joseph, the steward of the bungalow where Marco slept, all reflect aspects of traditional Indian culture and ethics. Marco stayed in this bungalow. On the other hand, Raju and Marco have mannerisms and cultural traits that are more Western or modern in nature. Consequently, the struggle between tradition and modernity, as well as the influence of one over the other, can be seen throughout the whole of the book in the manner in which these individuals conduct themselves and the words they choose to speak. Some examples of circumstances like this, in which postcolonial influences may be seen in the characters, are shown as follows: The practise of bending one's knees and placing one's hands on the feet of senior citizens and other revered people was widespread among Hindus. But Raju, who had just been released from jail and was sitting by himself on the stairs leading down to the river, would not let Vela, a villager, to do so. To quote directly from the source material: Vela stood up, knelt down, and sought to touch Raju's feet. Raju jerked back in response to the effort. I will not allow anybody to act in such a manner. Only God is worthy of being bowed down before in this manner. If we make any effort to steal His authority, He will annihilate us.' Rosie sought refuge in Raju's home after being abandoned by Marco, who left her there and boarded a train to Madras. The astonishment on Raju's mother's face when she saw her arrive home by herself in the evening was palpable. Who has come with you, Rosie? was the very first question that she asked me when I arrived. Rosie reddened her cheeks, paused, and then glanced at me. I took a few of steps in the other direction in try to decrease the likelihood that she would see me in my full ragged glory. I responded by saying, Mother, I believe that she has arrived by herself. My mother could not believe it. You ladies, today! How brave you are to do it! When we were younger, we weren't allowed to cross the street unless someone escorted us. And in all my years, I have never gone to the market more than once, and that was while Raju's father was still living. This illustrates the variety in temperament as well as the mentality that each individual has. It is not permitted for Raju's mother to be seen in public since she is a devout Hindu lady. She is not allowed to go out by herself, and as a result, she is terrified to do so. In contrast, Rosie is a woman of today. Her demeanour, attitude, and temperament are all clear indications of the western influence she has received. She does not have any reservations about venturing out on her own.



From a sociological point of view, *The Guide* not only depicts Indian society, its customs, traditions, culture, ostentations, superstitions, and religious faith, but it also presents a conflict between the traditional and modern values that are symbolised by Raju's mother and his maternal uncle on the one hand, and by Raju and Rosie on the other. In other words, *The Guide* depicts Indian society, its customs, traditions, culture, ostentations, superstitions, and religious faith. As a result of this tension, old values have to make way for new ones, and as a result, Raju's mother decides to move out in order to provide for Raju and Rosie.

Conclusion:

The plot of *The Guide* progresses via an incomprehensible chain of time jumps and flashbacks. In the process of storey development, he could use cinematic devices such as jump cuts, flashbacks, and forwards, as well as montages. As a result, the book follows an episodic structure rather than the linear narrative of the typical sort of novel, which is characterised by the progression of the tale along a single, consistent arc from the beginning through the middle to the finish. The unorthodox storyline of *The Guide* skips about in time and place, jumping from the past to the present and back again”, and going from Malgudi to the Memmi Hills to Mangal in an apparently haphazard manner. This occurs both inside and between chapters of the book. Novels written in modern European and American styles had a significant impact on authors writing in Indian languages, including English, and Narayan was no exception. *The Guide* has a number of tales that have a picaresque style, including *He Who Rides a Tiger*, which deals with the issue of a cooked Sadhu. In addition to this, *The Guide* investigates the mental state of a fake Sadhu. However, Meenakshi Mukherjee argues that the surface likeness masks a very basic divergence. [Citation needed] In spite of the fact that the protagonist of both of these books wears a mask throughout the storey, only one of them has the protagonist take off the mask and return to the starting point of the storey. In the other, the guy struggles to remove the mask until he realises that the mask has become his face. At this point, he is unable to remove the mask since it has become his face. In the storey by Bhaban, Kalo's lie is an intentional act of retribution carried out against society. Raju, on the other hand, just happens to fall into the character of a Sadhu in *The Guide*. Once he realises he's been cast in the role of an ascetic, he makes an effort to play the part with zeal, partially for the purpose of self-preservation and partly because it works well with his personality. When it comes to the conclusion of '*He Who Rides a Tiger*,' there is simply a scoundrel, but in '*The Guide*,' there is a saint.

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