



## A Comparative Study of Raju, Rosie and Marco in R.K Narayan's *The Guide* and its Film Adaptation

Dr. Paresh J. Rabari\* (M. A, M.Phil., Ph.D., G SET)

\*Adhyapak Sahayak (Assistant Professor), J.Z Shah Arts and H.P Desai Commerce College, Amroli- Surat

Page No. 78-83

**Abstract:** To adapt a literary piece into screen becomes a modern trend. It comes to notice that, people prefer to watch a screen version rather than reading a thousand pages literary text. In recent time, number of literary texts adapted to make a film like *Pinjar*, *Train to Pakistan*, *Haider*, *3 Idiots*, *Half Girlfriend*, *Guide* and so on. The researcher has tried to critically analyse the presentation of the characters Raju, Rosie and Marco of the novel 'The Guide' and the film 'Guide'. He has tried to present that; the film makers have made a different presentation of the characters. R.K Narayan himself was not satisfied with the screen version of his novel 'The Guide'. Narayan had a great dissatisfaction with the negative presentation of the character Marco in the film. Narayan has presented a typical Indian domestic life in the novel, while on other hand, the film maker has tried to present a free will and western life-style.

**Key Words:** Free will, typical Indian society, adaptation, screen version etc.

*The Guide* is the masterpiece in Indian English literature, which was written by R.K. Narayan. It was first published in 1958. It is a Sahitya Akademi Award winner novel. Like his other works, the setting of this novel is Malgudi. It is the fictional town in South India, which is created by Narayan himself. The novel narrates a story of a transformation of the central character Raju from a tourist guide to a spiritual guide. By writing this novel, Narayan has gained popularity in the Indian English Literature. On the success of the novel *The Guide*, Geoffrey Kain has critically commented in his book *A Companion to Indian Fiction in English*:

"Narayan's most highly acclaimed and widely read (and translated) novel has been *The Guide*. Surely it represents the peak of the author's ability to manage ambiguity and irony, while it introduces a more daring narrative technique and allows for some contemporary satire, as well." <sup>1</sup>

*The Guide* is widely read by the Indian English readers and even outside India. After publication of *The Guide*, Narayan becomes the taste of English readers which, shows Narayan's ability of creative writing. *The Guide* is the story of Raju and Rosie and their journey of unpredictable problems. Raju famously known as Railway Raju because he is a popular tourist guide at Malgudi Railway Station.

The film 'Guide' is directed by Vijay Anand and released in 1965. It was first released in America. It was starring by Dev Anand and Waheeda Rehman as the main leading characters. It is counted as one of the bold movies at the time of its released. The director has confessed that, the movie *Guide* is completely based on R.K Narayan's *The Guide*. It is noticed that,



Time magazine has listed *Guide* movie for four times as best Bollywood classics. It was also nominated for nine times at the 14<sup>th</sup> Filmfare Awards.

R.K. Narayan is well-known for his art of characterisation. His psychological treatment of characters can be seen in all his major works. The characters in his works are realistic or true to life. Some characters of the novel as well as the film have received universal identities. Raju, Rosie and Marco are celebrated in Indian society as well as outside India even at the present time. Name of all the characters in the novel *The Guide* and the film *Guide* are same. Though, there is a different presentation of the characters in the film *Guide*. The character of Raju is differently presented in the film *Guide*. Voice of the protagonist is different at some extent than the novel. In the film, the protagonist speaks a local language, while Narayan has put some sounded words in the mouth of the characters. In many ways, the director has to compromise in presenting the characters like Raju, Rosie and Marco, because film is a time bound medium. The director has to add some glamour and other elements in portraying characters in the film *Guide*. The researcher has tried to present the same dialogue, which are spoken by Raju in the film *Guide* and the novel *The Guide*:

“He felt he was attaining the stature of a saint. Velan went down the steps meekly, crossed the river, climbed the opposite bank, and was soon out of sight. Raju ruminated. ‘I wish I had asked him what the age of the girl was. Hope she is uninteresting. I have had enough trouble in life.’”<sup>2</sup>

In the above lines. One can see the sexual desires which aroused in Raju. Velan comes to Raju for the guidance because he is in trouble. The novelist has shown the double personalities of Raju. The outer look of Raju is looking as a saint but, he wanted to make sexual desires for Velan’s sister. The inner sexual desire of Raju can be seen while, he speaks the sentence that, ‘he hopes, she has no interest in him because he has had enough trouble in life’. R.K. Narayan has presented a picture of Raju as a characterless saint whereas, Vijay Anand has presented Raju as a good saint in the film *Guide*. The presentation of Raju in the film ‘*Guide*’:

“Lekin sara kusura mera bap ka hai, mere bap ne teen sadiya ki, ek se to me hua, dusre se pagal ladka, or tisri se ek ladki, ladki kya musibat ki jad samjiye, khair, kuch b ho, fir bi bahen bahen hoti hai, bhagvan janta hai, kis kis tarah mene usko palkar bada kiya hai, lekin uska badla kese le rahi hai ...  
Sadi karne se inkar kar rahi hai.”<sup>3</sup>

One can find vast dissimilarities in the dialogues between Raju and Velan which are presented in the novel and the film. R.K. Narayan has presented the character of Raju as a lustful and fraud saint whereas, Raju is presented by the director as a humble man in the film. The filmmaker has changed the name of Velan to Bhola in the film. In the film, Bhola comes to Raju for the help. He helps him in a polite way, which cannot be seen in the novel. Bhola expresses his trouble before Raju. Bhola has come to Raju for the help because he strongly believes that, saints have a divine power in their moral lessons. To compare both the references which, the researcher has pointed out, it makes a clear picture that the personality of Raju by R.K. Narayan in *The Guide* is totally different from what Vijay Anand has shown in *Guide*. Narayan has presented the character of Raju as a characterless and fraud saint. On the other hand, the director has presented the character Raju as a typical Indian saint, who is compassionate and helpful to the society.



R.K. Narayan has picturised the life of Raju in the jail, which can be seen in the novel but such thing cannot be seen in the film. In the film, one can see that, Rosie could not meet Raju in the jail because Raju was belled six months earlier, but in the novel, one can see the meeting between Raju and Rosie. They have deep sorrows for whatever they have done in their past, but the director had to exclude this incident in the film due to the time limits of a film. Pushp Lata has pointed out in her research article *Revisiting R.K. Narayan's The Guide on Silver Screen*:

“In the film, the constraint of a laborious detailing of events has led the director to cut out the dominant images. Also, the idea of public discourse in areas such as education, self and the strength of communal effort and harmony has been imbued into the story of an accidental saint. Thriving on these compelling images, the movie achieves an immediate and spontaneous rapport with the audience.”<sup>4</sup>

The director has to compromise with many scenes related to the central character in the novel. The director has imbued ideas of public discourse in areas like education, strength of communal efforts etc. To compare with the novel, film has less description of incidents like drought in the country, teaching to children by Raju, ritual, traditional celebration of the people. By analysing pathos and religious sentiments in the novel *The Guide* and the film *Guide*, it can be seen that the film touches the heart of the people due to its easy and simple language of the characters. It is clearly indicated in the film as well as in the novel, that religion or religious beliefs are the remedy of people's suffering and griefs. Religion leads people to become optimistic. It teaches that there is light after darkness. Human beings are always in hope of their bright future. People's hopes are implied in the mind of the Indian people through religious practices. By remembering and worshipping God, man forgets his woes and worries. Religion is also a kind of ideology, which makes people's behaviour in a proper manner. Sin and good deeds are inbuilt in the human psyche. He has a fear that if he does anything wrong, he would be punished by God sooner or later. Raju gets benefit of such religious ideology to make people optimistic and earns respects and livelihood by the innocent village people. So, both the novelist as well as director has willingly shown an orthodox Indian society. Indian people are more trustworthy and kind hearted so, they are easily exploited by Indian Saints and Bavas. There are numbers of sadhus even today, who trapped and mislead people in the name of religion like Asharam, Narayan Sai, Radha Maa etc. The director has excluded a childhood of Raju but, it is beautifully described by the novelist in *The Guide*.

Rosie is the second most important character in *The Guide*. She is an Indian traditional woman. She is so beautiful; one can compare her with the moon. Her mother wanted to marry her with a rich person. As a result, Rosie had to marry with an old man Marco. He is a practical man and not emotionally connected with Rosie. Marco has a busy life in discovering old caves for his personal achievement.

In the movie 'Guide', the Film-Maker has skilfully portrayed a bold picture of Rosie while, she breaks all the patriarchal norms and starts a new life with Raju. She enthusiastically wears ghungroos and steps through market. Here, the Film-Maker has tried to break down the patriarchal dominance on Indian women. They are the puppets in the hands of Indian male dominant society. The voice of Rosie's ghungroos is a response to Indian patriarchal society that, Rosie is the first one who breaks the societal norms. It would follow by numbers of Indian women subsequently. Her free will and the celebration of her freedom from patriarchal norms are captured in the song *Kaaton se kheenche ke ye anchal, chhod ke bandhan bandhe payal*. She



has thrown out all the societal bondages and now she is free to live as she wants. In the song, she uses the word 'aaj tod diye sare bandhan' which suggests that she has abandoned all the Indian traditional customs. Vijay Anand has portrayed Rosie as a modern and feminist woman in *Guide* whereas, R.K. Narayan has not presented her as that much free minded woman in *The Guide*. Vijay Anand has used symbols to justify the character of Rosie. In the song *Kaaton se kheench ke ye anchal, chhod ke bandhan bandhe payal*, Rosie is riding in a truck trolley and breaks the pot. The pot is the symbol of patriarchal societal norms, which she breaks and starts a new journey. On the other hand, R.K. Narayan could not present songs in the novel. In short, Rosie is portrayed a bold woman in the film to compare with the novel. In *The Guide*, Rosie is unhappy with Indian societal norms, but it does not mean that, she is unfaithful to her husband, Marco. Pushp Lata has pointed out Rosie's compassions for Marco in her research article *Revisiting R.K. Narayan's The Guide on Silver Screen*:

"Even through the course of their affair and much later still, she refuses to accept Raju as her soul-mate, instead cursing herself for her impropriety..... 'I deserved nothing less. Any other husband would have throttled me then and there. He tolerated my company for nearly a month, even after knowing what I had done.'"<sup>5</sup>

R.K. Narayan has presented the character of Rosie as a pure Indian traditional woman who obeys her husband and societal norms whereas, Vijay Anand has tried to rise voice against Indian patriarchal society through the character of Rosie. The novelist has favoured the Indian marriage system in which a woman must follow her husband. Though having an affair with Raju, Rosie strongly believes that woman should be faithful to her husband. She could not accept Raju as her soulmate because, she believes in Indian traditional marriage, that's why, she always curses her destiny not the society. Such things cannot be seen in the film. Vijay Anand has criticised Indian traditions marriage system in the film whereas Narayan has glorified Indian marriage system in the novel. Guiltiness in the mind of Rosie clarifies that, Narayan favoured Indian traditional marriage system rather than the concept of free will of Western culture.

Marco is one of the most important characters in the novel, *The Guide*. He is a researcher and has a will to discover old caves. He is portrayed as a less romantic and practical man. He is only interested in facts and discovering new things. He believes that one should not waste his time in love and other romantic notions. Instead of romantic relationships, one should spend his time in discovering new fact which are hidden on the earth. He is a rational man of the highly romantic town of Malgudi. There are not any romantic perceptions in his mind to make his beautiful wife happy. P.K. Singh has pointed out about Marco and Rosie's relationship in his critical book *The Novels of R.K. Narayan A Critical Evaluation*:

"Rosie and Marco, of different taste and temperament, were misfit to each other. And this ironic gap between their temperament provides scope to an infatuated admirer of Rosie's divinity to intrude in between and exploit the situation to his advantage"<sup>6</sup>

Marco and Rosie have different ideologies about life. Rosie has many romantic perceptions about life whereas, Marco is a man of reasons and facts. Marco does not like to spend time with his wife and to go for a picnic. On the other side, Rosie is passionate and highly romantic. Marco fails in fulfilling his wife's wishes like to wander on mountains as lovers and her wish of dancing. So, they have an uncertain marriage life. Raju gets chance to trap Rosie to fall in



his love. This is how, Raju and Rosie come closer and finally start to live together. The novelist has portrayed Raju as a morally corrupted. Rosie is portrayed as an Indian innocent woman, who easily trust on Raju. On other side, the director has picturised a good character of Raju, who tries to help everyone. He is a virtuous man but looking the beauty of Rosie, he falls in love with Rosie. The director has tried to present Raju as just a common man and has certain romantic feelings for a woman. Not only Raju but, Rosie too wants to make relationship with Raju. The director has skilfully favoured the character of Raju in the film *Guide*. Rosie speaks to Marco in the film *Guide*:

“Or koi bat nahi, muje batao me janna chahta hu, or koi vajah hai kya, koi dusra aadmi to nahi.  
Ho b sakta hai.  
Kya? Tumhara matlab, tum kisi or k sath.  
Me bewafai karungi Marco, to khule aam, kam ka bahana kar ke kahi dur ghane junglo me kahi chup kar nahi.  
Muj pe shak kar rahi ho.”<sup>7</sup>

The film-maker has tried to present Raju as a man of character. It is not Raju but Rosie, who came to the house of Raju for shelter. By presenting the conversation between Marco and Rosie, the filmmaker has willingly supported the relationship of Rosie and Raju. The director has tried to make a villainous character of Marco. Further in the film, Marco gets angry and says that, he married her to satisfy his personal needs. He has no any emotional attachments for his wife Rosie. In short, the director has supported the relationship between Rosie and Raju by presenting demonic character of Marco in the film *Guide*. Whereas, Narayan has supported the marriage life of Rosie and Marco and discarded the relationship of Raju and Rosie. This is a major distinct point between the novel *The Guide* and the film *Guide*. It is a clear indication of the director to favour Raju and Rosie’s relationship by presenting a bad nature of Marco in the film. On other side, Narayan has favoured Marco and Rosie’s marriage life in the novel. P.K. Singh has pointed out Rosie’s guilt for her husband in his book *The Novels of R.K. Narayan A Critical Evaluation*:

“Rosie unhappiness, it is clear, results from an unbalanced psyche. In spite of an emotional depth, she acquires in her relations with Raju, she could never free herself entirely from ‘the unconscious’ of her past relations with Marco.... After all, after all he is my husband’... I do, and I deserved nothing less. And another husband would have throttled me then and there...”<sup>8</sup>

R.K. Narayan has clearly indicated in the novel that, Rosie is unhappy because she has betrayed her husband, Marco. She is unhappy due to her psychological guilt. She is constantly memorising her betrayal to her husband. The novelist has used the word ‘unconscious’ which suggests Rosie’s psychological guilt. She openly confesses that, after all Marco is her husband, she should look after him. The novelist has presented a true picture of Indian traditional wife through Rosie, who follows her husband, even though her husband misbehaves with her. Indian women must have to sacrifice all their wishes for their husbands. Indian husband can misbehave with his wife because Indian myth permits him. Rosie becomes too much emotional for Marco because husband is a husband after all. Rosie’s unconscious guilt is the cause for her



unhappiness because she is suffering from her psychological guilt like Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky. Even Raju fails to send away Rosie's psychological guilty. So, one can see vast dissimilarities in the presentation of characters by the novelist and the film maker. The Film-Maker has justified the illegal relationship of Raju and Rosie in the film *Guide*, while the novelist has justified Indian traditional marriage system in the novel *The Guide*.

## References:

1. Piciucco, Pier Paolo(ed). *A Companion to Indian Fiction in English*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors. 2004, p.17.
2. Narayan, R.K. *The Guide*. New York: Penguin.1958, p.14.
3. *Guide*. Dir. Vijay Anand. Perf. Dev Anand, Waheeda Rehman, Kishor Sahu, Leela Chitnis, Gajanan Jagirdar, Anwar Hussain. Navketan International, 1995.Film.
4. Lata, Pushp. Sanjay Kumar. *Revisiting R.K. Narayan's The Guide on Silver Screen*. [www.researchgate.net](http://www.researchgate.net). The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies. Accessed on 15 April 2021, p.5
5. *Ibid.*, p.7.
6. Singh, P.K. *The Novels of R.K. Narayan A Critical Evaluation*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors. 2014, p.43.
7. *Guide*. Dir. Vijay Anand. Perf. Dev Anand, Waheeda Rehman, Kishor Sahu, Leela Chitnis, Gajanan Jagirdar, Anwar Hussain. Navketan International, 1995.Film.
8. Singh, op. cit., p.46.