

**Patterns of Narrative Structure and Conscious Method of Thematic Devices as  
Embellishment in R.K. Narayan's *The Guide***

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**Abstract**

*In fact Narayan's opinion becomes comic when he represents the insincerity of obscurantist values and faiths which circulate for culture and tradition. His entire stance becomes satirical though he always continues cheering and being joyous. In 1929, Great Economic Depression, crisis of capitalism, social economic and cultural crises had been experienced by the westerners. Imperialism, Fascism, the rise of Hitler in Germany created trouble of the culture and civilization of the world. Most of the authors revolted against Imperialism, Fascism and capitalism and they became the progressive writers for the cause of the underprivileged people: they admitted socialism and Marxism which became a panacea for them. Indian authors shaped the Progressive Writers Association whose inaugural function was presided over by Premchand. In India freedom fighters were struggling to get national liberation from the chain of Britishers. Social reformers, scholars, writers were performing their best for the freedom of the nation. But we do not find the description of capitalism, fascism and imperialism in Narayan's writings. He might have been well conscious of the destiny the renowned authors like Premchand, Saratchandra Chatterji Bankim Chand Chatterji, and to name of few open whose texts have been banned.*

**Keywords:** Indian Sensibility, Marriage, Sainthood, Villager's belief.

R.K Narayan is versatile writer He has published novels, short stories, a travel diary, a book on Hindu mythology and a volume of causeries. Narayan has not invented an avant-garde form for his fictitious tale, he has got a homogeneity of theme and technique. He has written novels which have grace. They are written mainly on the themes of equilibrium and completeness, employ cumulative ironies and are revolving around cosmic vision. When the technique becomes obvious, the tale is normally blemished and the force of realism vitiated. When the reader discovers the surface of realism, he finds that Narayan is the master of suiting technique to theme.

R.K. Narayan in his autobiographical book, *My Days*, states about the circumstances in which, *The Guide* was written:

At this time I had been thinking of a subject for a novel: a novel about someone's suffering enforced sainthood. A recent situation in Mysore afforded the setting for such a story. A severe drought had dried up all the rivers and tanks; Krishnaraja Sagar, an enormous reservoir feeding channels that irrigated thousands of acres, had also become dry, and its bed a hundred and fifty feet deep and now exposed to the sky with fissures and cracks, revealing an ancient submerged temple, coconut stumps and dehydrated crocodiles... This was really the starting point of *The Guide*. During my travels in America, the idea that crystallized in my mind. I stopped in Berkeley for three months, took hotel room and wrote my novel.

(Sunderam 76)

The reluctant sainthood provides the guiding principle to the novel, *The Guide*. The tragic and comic aspect of sainthood gives strength to a very simple man is the theme of the novel, *The Guide*. Many critics have judged R.K. Narayan on the basis of Indian and Western points which established him as a great novelist. Narayan is a lover of Indian culture and tradition and he skillfully presented the actual soul of Indian classical tradition in his works and on western part, he is humourous towards the saints, sainthood and the blind faith of innocent and uneducated Indian people.

Thus Narayan viewed it excellent to become a creative writer of Indian tradition and culture and presents the hollowness he sees in its superficialities which have given enough amusement to his reader. The representation of hollowness of Indian culture does not mean that he did not have attachment towards Indian culture but he did it with clean intention and thought so that a scientific rationality may come in lieu of superstitions and blind faiths. Narayan gives importance to Indian culture and tradition which we observe perfectly in his works. And this is secret of his comic ability and the art of narrative-technique with an ironic device.

The feeling and sensibility of Indianness is present in Narayan's works. We find Indian surroundings in depiction of locale, character delineation, traditions, customs and general consents. Though he takes Malgudi, an imaginary and a dreamy land we feel as if Malgudi has real place of the world. Its characters and situations appear like us. Narayan has shown political, social, cultural, economic ethos of the country but these create the background of his works and aspects of Indian life. Narayan really shows the universal appearances of human life which are beyond the range of time and space.

The evaluation of Narayan's popular novel, *The Guide* in this context, we observe that it does not represent Indian culture and spiritual enlightenment of its hero. It is diatribe against innocent villagers is credulous temper of mind and gullibility who easily becomes the victim to the deceptive trick of spiritual possibility of cheat saint who committed the sin, passed a

life of comfort. But actually the novel, *The Guide* is an evaluation of gaining voluptuousness and overpowering self satisfaction which deteriorate the balance of conscious existence.

Raju, Rosie and Marco reflect the various dimensions of this disharmony of life. Marco grieves for extreme infatuation for intellectual pursuits which scorches his main humbleness and he becomes a sign of acquisitiveness. Rosie is an emblem of sensual delight and Raju is an incarnation of boorish licentiousness. The characteristic of their individual innate feebleness, their fellowship and indirection with each other, is a sort of conflict between their inconsistencies which separate them.

Marco is an architect. He is busy in analyzing the pictures of ancient painting. For him these paintings are more real than actual life that's why he gives more time to his life than to his wife, Rosie. Dead things are more attractive. These decayed things appear to open the gate of his imagination. Marco is arranging the place for writing the entire history of art. He is not a practical person because he follows his intellectual pursuit. He thinks that it is waste of time in passing hours with daily petty affairs. He knows only one thing that is to discover the old and decayed places for his materials.

Marco marries out of a wish to marriage that there must be someone to look after his practical conscious existence. He wants to be cared by someone but he does not want to involve with the burden and accountability of marriage. Marco does not participate in movement of women's emancipation that by marrying Rosie belonging to a family of dancers in temple. Marco actually requires someone who may care his personal life and embellish his house as it happens in typical Indian traditional families and entertain all luxury with his money but won't courage to create any further right on him. This is the cheap acquisitiveness in husband-wife relationship. Marco knows and is frightened that upper class woman will not remain obsequious to him that's why he marries to a girl of unequal status. The demeanor of Marco is obvious from the description of his character in the novel. Rosie needs his allowance to dance. But Marco does not give permission because he knows that this action of Rosie interrupts him in his intellectual pursuits.

Marco fails to protect his relationship with Rosie. Instead of giving time to Rosie he visits cave and gaze its paintings. Marco is aware of his physical impotence and he says man searching tranquility of mind. Rosie is dissatisfied by the attitude and demeanour of Marco that why she needs one actual live husband. Marco is emblem of wit, and Rosie is quite opposite to Marco. She is emblem of excessive passion. In the beginning of her marriage, she suppresses her desires but it gets outlet very soon. This marriage was the matter of discussion in Rosie's family as Marco was a very rich and belonged to respectable family. He was so much above from Rosie's family. But all women were delighted to know that a wealthy person of a sophisticated family was willing to marry her.

But Rosie does not compromise with the passion for her dance in her married life. She is an educated woman. She knows the difference between ancient and modern dance and has

complete knowledge about these two dances. Marco is an architect. There is no change in their interest. Marco does not provide equality to Rosie. If Marco fails to alter his interest in researches and explorations, Rosie should have taken interest in her husband's works at least for the sake of emotional involvement with him. But Rosie is a lady with strong passion for dancing. Her background of tradition temple dancers presents her passion for dancing. The numerous gestures of the many organs of her body during dancing show her passion for dancing. She occupied so much in watching the cobra-dance exhibits her love for dancing. After seeing Rosie's dance, Raju realized that Rosie is a greatest dancer of the century. The passion of Rosie's dancing has started to affect the serenity of Raju's life.

The affair between Rosie-Raju is not romantic at all. It is the engagement in unrefined pleasurable agilities. Rosie is upset in her married life but she does not break her relationship with her husband because she needs the social status of the spouse of an eminent scholar as well as the comfort given by her husband. Raju is attracted by Rosie's physical beauty. Rosie does not demonstrate rather she likes him. Rosie and Raju's relationship culminates in physical relations. It is night. When Rosie returns to her hotel with Raju. Rosie's leaving the door half open and staring at Raju and wishes goodnight- all this symbolizes her invitation to Raju to satisfy her physical needs.

Raju has two advantages in his relations with Rosie, first he satisfies his lust and the second he pampers himself on her money. With the fame of Rosie, Raju is renowned. He has contact with upper class people. He states about his effective condition that he can relieve a person just called to do the deed, get a student admitted to an educational institution, get a person employed and get an unpopular official transferred elsewhere, all of which appeared to him significant social activities:

But, even so a man has to be in charge of her program and engagements and Raju is as much in the picture as Rosie. Every time Rosie is garlanded at the end of a performance. Raju is also garlanded!

(Narayan 212)

Raju is very much conscious about his self-consciousness. He is a man without human sensibility and conscience. There is no feelings and emotions left in him. He has become inhuman that he does not concern for his filial responsibilities. Raju is distressed with the thought of his mother's coming back who is already staying with her brother. He resisted the view. He says that there is no one to look after her. He is engaged with several other activities. He tries to justify it by all possible ways. Raju is wanting to escape from the accountabilities of caring his mother. He leaves his responsibilities to his maternal uncle.

Raju and Rosie are living as husband wife. But they are not in favor of marriage. Because there are numerous responsibilities in married life. Both depend on each other. Eventually, Raju develops a monopoly of her and he desires to see her cheerful but only in his meeting. On the other hand Rosie desires to entertain herself independently in the company of dancer

and musicians. Finally Rosie's physical needs appear to attain its saturation point. Now she starts to represent her love for her husband. When Raju interrogates her what is annoying her she responds that Marco is her husband. She has to pay esteem to him. She presents her opinion about her relationship with Raju that being a married woman it is not correct to live with some other man; does this symbolize that Rosie has any ethical regret? The answer is negative. The reality is that she is fed up with dual technical performances of her dances and the delight of the physical needs, she now wants to rehabilitate her declined situation of the wife

She cuts out his photograph from the illustrated magazine and places it on her dressing table. She sits up at night, troubled at the turn of events, worried about her conduct towards him. (Narayan 212)

Marco is popular as an eminent art historian. She accepts that even now she wants to share his popularity and position in society. She states all this despite the fact that she realizes how her husband drove her away from his life when he understood something wrong in her connections with Raju. Then how can she anticipate that Marco will accept her as his spouse? Is it because she has developed contempt of the popularity that Marco has gained which she wished to destroy luster by letting social people aware that such a prominent art historian has an adulterous spouse? Her ambition for dance is set up; now she realizes the surging up another mingling feeling of contempt and retaliation. For gratifying this recently developed emotion, she is emotionless for Raju who has given himself for the sake of her ambition and passion of dance.

But Raju does not surrender to the excessive ambition of Rosie. When he receives a letter of Marco addressed to his wife Rosie, Raju does not hand it over to Rosie because he is frightened that the husband and wife would be reharmonized and he would be alone. He says that this letter of Marco to Rosie would be suicidal. She may take next train to reach her husband's place. After this Raju counterfeits Rosie's signature and sends the document to Marco. A legal case pursues and in spite of Rosie's excellent attempts, he is imprisoned for two years. But when he is released from prison, he does not go to meet Rosie who has been so kindly helpful to him during the last days her connection with him; nor does he worry to regret of his past actions and begin a new life and act something worthwhile. He can never operate anything which may connect hard work nor can he ever be honest to anybody. Therefore, he goes ahead purposelessly.

The great incident occurs in Raju's life as a saint. Narayan openly and beautifully narrates about how Raju is compelled to frolick the part of a saint. At the conclusion of the novel, *The Guide*. There is a complete spiritual reorientation of Raju who analyses to diffuse his foregoing evil self and undertake the part of a deliverer of suffering mankind. But we have to look at an earlier parts of the novel that under what situation does he create such a resolution? When Raju is ensnared in the stratagem of his own discovery and he is compelled to live a



saint, he secretly narrates Velan the tale of his past depraved life. But Velan does not inform the villagers that the person whom they are adoring as a saint is false character because Velan understands it perfectly that he only presented before the people of the village a luminous image of Raju as a heavenly picture. Then how could he brave to inform the villagers that he had not been wise to act all this and drive the ignorant villagers to touch the feet of a devil and offers him food and other services? He is frightened that villagers would think him an accomplice of Raju and punish them and they have to escape from this place. Therefore Velan does not say anything to the villagers and let Raju maintain the condition of body as a saint.

Actually Raju wishes to escape from this village and saves himself from such a severe test. But it is impossible for him to act. Anyone may see him. They may bring him back to the place and punish him for false sainthood. So he discards this thought of protecting himself from such a calamitous condition. It is to be noticed that at such a disastrous predicament in his life Raju resolves to throw aside the thought of gaining food which he has been longing for numerous days. And with such a thought he resolves to fast for bringing rains, understanding it completely that it will verify to be useless. He accepts and acts so because he has created such a large building of faith and belief in the mind and heart of the people about his non-earthly will power that he cannot dare to deteriorate it. Therefore, in order to protect himself from the people, he will have to do the fast even at the price of his life. At such a situation of hunger and helplessness he has a kind of delusion that he is actually performing something great for the first time in his life:

If by avoiding food I should help the trees bloom, and the grass grow, why not do it thoroughly? For the first time in his life he was making an earnest effort, for the first time. He was learning the thrill of full application outside money and love; for the first time he was doing a thing in which personally he was not interested. He felt suddenly so enthusiastic that it gave him a new strength to go through with his ordeal.

(Narayan 212)

He has never worried about anything except for gratifying his own emotions. It is really very extraordinary work for betterment and welfare of humanity. A few days later also he has a delusory emotion that it is raining in the hills. Because he understands that he is going to cease, yet there is no indication of the rains. Villagers are waiting for the rains. Thus even at the final moments of his life he wishes to celebrate their faith and belief in his spiritual strength. There is no sign of rains at all.

Raju's demise for the rains is the symbol of his divine sublimation. This image shows the spiritual heritage of nation. Many critics say that at the end of the novel, *The Guide*, Raju represents the real spirit of India. Raju's demise in the water of the river reminds us the death of Phlebas in Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Raju's death is not general death of a human being but it is symbolical of self-realization and self-purification. Phlebas was sailor of Phoenicia. He

was drowned in the water. He was on his occupation voyage. Gradually he realizes a slow process of his death. He forgets the language of benefit and lose. But there is no redemption deliverance from his sins by atonement. Similarly, Raju is the symbol of modern man who believes in material pleasure. On the fourth day of his fast, he recurs his litany which quiets his discernments and consciousness and the world becomes futile to him. Raju's death symbolizes the physical death and divine rebirth but modern man like Raju can never anticipate for spiritual rejuvenation.

Sainthood is the natural process. Nobody can compel to carry sainthood. To gain sainthood one has to create aware attempt and lead a virtuous life. Raju is devoid of discipline which is the basic requirement of a saintly life. Therefore we can call it inforced sainthood:

A pseudo saint a fraud, is shown being compelled to undertake a fast to bring down the rains- a devastating exposure of Swamihood and the credulity of Indian masses.

(Goyal 63)

Sainthood is its chief requirement of the novel. One can expect at the end of the novel that gratification of villagers hope that with the fasting of a saint, the rain will come. But after the demise of saint when the rain does not come what might have happened to villager's belief? Though the novelist does not comment and say anything about it. This advances readers' imagination to think whether the novel, *The Guide*, actually explains the victory of a saint in his spiritual business.

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