



Research Paper

## The Use of Symbolism in “The Guide” by R.K.Narayan along with triangle relationship and social realism

Ramen Goswami

Magadh University, Bodh Gaya  
(English Department)

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### ABSTRACT :

At first sight, the humanity of *The Guide* seems to be prearranged along uncomplicated binaries—Malgudi and Mangal, the city and the rural community, urban complexity versus rustic simplicity, modernity versus tradition, pessimism versus reliance. On quicker examination, each of these mechanism reveals itself to be highly challenging, full of hybridises, fissures and contradictions. Malgudi is less prominent as an ideological and edifying place in *The Guide* than in a lot of other Malgudi novels. Even so, we see sufficient of it to notice a social humanity slowly moving away from its earlier enriching homogeneity. The example of life-like depiction in literature in particular and any art in wide-ranging is known as practicality, where as the recreation of the prehistoric spiritual or material tales that lay stored in the cooperative unconsciousness of a race or educational area becomes a legend. In his *The Guide*, R.K. Narayan interweaves realism and saga so intricately that the novel becomes a segment of Indian life. R. K. Narayan’s *The Guide* is often considered to be a sensible representation of the Indian society at the time of her freedom. The novel nonetheless incorporates imagery as one of its major stylistic features: Raju, Rosie, Marco and a variety of other characters are symbolically presented to supplement Narayan’s descriptions of the Indian civilization and characterizations of its people.

**Key words:** symbols, lover, loyal, fool, tourist, guide, symbols, irony, Mangal, Malgudi

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Significance of symbolism: Raju is defined by the symbolic purpose of the guide, from tourist guide to Rosie’s professional guide to a pious guide. Raju performs well as a guide, for integrating friendliness with cordiality. Raju has the capacity to adapt in his new circumstances, for he has “a kind of water-diviner’s instinct” about the right word or action in any state of affairs. Nevertheless, the representation of the guide is satirised and applied to an sarcastic effect here—this guide misguides others, and is later foolish himself. He behaves recklessly to the tourists, whom he misguides and slanders to Marco, whom he deceives, and Rosie, whom he also misleads (“I never said, ‘I don’t know’...instead, I said, ‘Oh, yes, a fascinating place’...I am sorry I said it, ... be pleasant”)(P,87). Furthermore, he almost betrays the village folk. In the novel, Rosie’s symbolic union with snake is brilliantly manifested in Raju’s metaphors — “she watched it [the cobra] sway with the raptest attention. She stretched out her arm slightly and swayed it in imitation of the movements; she swayed her body to the rhythm.” It is also echoed in the commentary made by Raju’s mother — “a serpent girl”(P,182). This could entail that, like a serpent, Rosie possesses poisonous and negative nature. And indeed, it is on her explanation that Raju sacrifices the “Railway Raju,”(P,87) which finally leads to his ruin. Nevertheless, the symbolism of the snake has far deeper aftershock in the novel, for it has yet another nuance for a dancer in India. In the Hindu mythology, the naga is the insignia of the Cosmic Dancer, Shiva-Nataraja.

Also symbolic is the novelist’s employ of Rosie’s name, which functions as part of Narayan’s arrangement of the social and class dissimilarity in Indian society at the time of his inscription. “She was just an Indian, who should have done well with Devi, Meena, Lalitha, or any one of the thousand names we have in our country.”(P,51). Such a name is not familiar to by the conventional Hindu society in which Raju is brought up. In this admiration, Rosie’s malfunction to give the name of her father locates her social identity as belonging to a family of devadasis—“I belonged to a family traditionally dedicated to the temples as dancers...we are viewed as public women... civilized.”

'Marco' is a name that Raju invents since the man's strange attire somehow reminds him of Marco Polo. Definitely, the name resembles the probable strangeness in him, and his exterior reinforces this: "He dressed like a man about to undertake an expedition, with his thick coloured glasses, thick jacket, and a thick helmet, over which was perpetually stretched a green, shiny, water proof cover, giving him the appearance of a space-traveller." (P,52) The appearance of Marco's desire to control every aspect of his environment seems to shoot from his distaste for the random energy and disobedience of living things: "dead and decaying things swung their limbs."

In a similar fashion, Gaffur, as a taxi-driver who virtually replaces the horse-drawn jutka as the normal mode of transport in Malgudi, metaphorically represents the entrance of Western ways into grand India.

Narayan's portrayal of the two complementary lawyers is yet another symbol of the enveloping evil in the Indian society, whose flaws in the legal systems are once again critiqued: the "five-rupee lawyer" continually prolongs the case and Raju's 'star lawyer' who "could prove a whole gang of lawless hooligans to be innocent victims of a police conspiracy." In this sense, the use of these diverse minor characters as symbolic legislative body contributes to Narayan's representation of a realistic Indian civilization at his time of writing.

#### Social realism:

The novel depicts the progressive transformation of a 'picaroon' into a Swami or Mahatma. The basic substratum of this narrative is reality that Narayan encountered in his personal life or that he observed in the lives of others. Raju's father no longer follows the conventional Brahmin calling of priesthood-it is definitely sardonic that at the end of the novel Raju comes back full circle to his social group occupation as a actor of sacred resources in a most vague way. The father is a worldly man, who takes full benefit of colonial world of job and business along 'the Trunk Road' by doing vigorous business in his 'hut-shop', later ,he exploits the newer opportunities obtainable by yet another colonial interference, the railway, to graduate from the hut shop to a more profitable platform booth.

Even earlier than the railway, Malgudi was no blameless bucolic retreat-the colonial legal and managerial system had begun to confuse provincial Indian rustic life even in Raju's father's creation. It is the railway which brings the exterior world, with its modernism and hybridity, to Malgudi. The conventional side of the tracks is signified by the dwelling house with coconut thatch, its papaya plants and its well and buffalo in the yard. An addition of this long-established world with in the settlement is the Pyol School in Kabir Lane with its antiquated expert. Raju's father chosen it to the 'fashionable Albert Mission School' where he felt 'they try to convert our boys into Christian and are all the time insulting our gods'(P,64). With its relations of motion, humanity and change, the railway conjures up a planet very different from Raju's modest middle class backdrop, with its wrinkled style of living, lack of solitude, the many obligations to family and relatives, and the steady inquisitiveness of the neighbours.

What, then, of Malgudi's legendary associations that apparently keep Malgudi's life entrenched with in the three-thousand year old custom of Hindu civilization, according to several critics? The holy Sarayu is still there, rising near 'a small shrine on the peak right at the basin'. But Raju's Westernized pessimism is quick to display absolute devotion and belief. Indeed, the holy Sarayu and the strange Mempi Hills have by now been abridged from sites of pilgrimage to traveller attractions, like the elephant-Khedda. Even Marco's attention in them is intellectual rather spiritual.

Ironically, it is this newly built-up, nouveau riche humanity of Malgudi, and not the traditional world that Raju's mother and uncle live in, that fosters the new beginning of art by encouraging Rosie to express herself as an performer and classical dancer. The same Rosie, who was shunned as a devadasi by those folks who swore by their customary norms, is reborn as Nalini.

Triangle relationship: Rosie-Marco-Raju connection in R. K. Narayan's *The Guide* is worried because they live on different planes. Rosie is dedicated to the art of dancing while Marco looks at it as mere road acrobatics. He is fanatical with his archaeological surveys and studies. He is strict, self-centred and self-righteous. Rosie's longing for sharing of information and ambitions are dismissed by Marco as an idiotic woman's sentiments. He is more paying attention in the carvings on the ramparts, stone statistics and caves but neglects the beating, vivacious heart of his wife. Marco's obsession is to be correct in everything - be it in paying the bills for which he would not overlook demanding vouchers even at the critical moment of his detection of Rosie's unfaithfulness or in acknowledging the obligation to Raju for the help rendered in bringing out the book. Raju wonders how Marco could be indifferent in a lady like Rosie. He comments "dead and decaying things seem to unloosen his tongue and fire his imagination rather than things that lived and moved and swung their limbs".(P,109)

Marco could not appreciate her. If Rosie surrenders to Raju, it is not just to please her corporeal passion. She feels suffocated in her existence with Marco. The desire for friendship and contact brings her close to Raju. She is hungry of affection and yearns for identification and acknowledgement of her imaginative talent.

Her first mania is dancing. Raju wins her by appreciating her skill, by praising her aptitude and by encouraging her.

In spite of Marco's indifference and cold activities Rosie tries to be an obedient wife. She becomes all the more thoughtful towards her husband after her new closeness with Raju. That she is pricked by guilt ridden conscience is palpable in her recurrent mention of her duty to her husband. With the final effort, Marco could take out the whole truth from her. Like an absentee child confessing its mistake, she confesses her fault and begs his pardon. She never imagines of leaving Marco but "followed him day after day like a dog waiting on his grace" At the cost of her pride and self-respect she tries to make amends for her folly.

Rosie, who hails from a family unit devoted to dancing, is a misfit in the humanity of Marco. She is pulled by conflicting forces of faithfulness and duty to her husband on one side and the much longed-for friendship and encouragement she gets from Raju on the other side. This mental conflict continues till the end. She reflects "I may be mistaken in my own judgement of him - After all he had been kind to me".(P,208) Her ardent passion compels her to find an outlet and Raju expediently uses it for his own advantage by acting as connoisseur of art.

One may find Raju's portrayal of Marco as different from Rosie's evaluation of him. Raju looks at him as a hard-hearted lout. But Rosie never makes such pronouncements against her mate. Her dissatisfaction with her husband gets reflected only through her in not direct comments. When Raju asks her what it that interests her is, she answers "anything except cold, old stone walls". This declaration amply underscores the division of their ideas and aspirations. Even when she shows interest in his work and says that she would bring out an innovative place of dance with the help of his findings, she is snubbed at and dismissed disdainfully. Her observation "I'd have preferred any kind of mother-in-law if it had meant one real, loving husband", explains the bay between them. Though R. K. Narayan does not check out deep into the psychological mayhem of Rosie, he succeeds in presenting her predicament in all amounts.

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