



R K NARAYAN'S *THE GUIDE*: MODERN WOMAN IN MAKING THE JOURNEY FROM ROSIE TO NALINI

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ABSTRACT



Rasipuram Krishnaswamy Narayan was a pioneer in establishing the cannon of Indian English Fiction. He created Malgudi the typical south Indian town like Thomas Hardy's Wessex and William Faulkner's Yokhonophowtphah County. Narayan's novels represent sound Indian middle class life in its varied form. My paper deals with the character of Rosie in his fiction 'The Guide' who transforms from a dependant house wife to self reliant woman Nalini. It is the journey from margin to centre. Can the Subaltern Speak? Yes they can if they are given their due identity and sufficient succor to build their efficacy.

Keywords: *New Woman, Transformation, marginalization, Subaltern.*

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R K Narayan's very first novel 'The Swami and Friends' which came out in 1935 motivated the educationist Prof. Yeshpal to formulate the strategy to enable burdneless education for children which culminated in 'Learn without burden'. His association with Nobel laureate, author Graham Greene vivisected his art of writing fiction and infused it with intensified creative powers. R K Narayan is well known for his series of popular novels like *English Teacher*, *Vendor of Sweets*, *Financial Expert*, *Man Eater of Malgudi*, *Waiting for Mahatma* etc., He is also well known for his short stories 'A Horse and Two Goats', 'Under the Banyan Tree', 'An Astrologers Day' etc., They fill the readers with the feeling of aesthetic pleasure and satisfaction of having read a good story. Typical South Indian middle class family life finds its full expression in his works. Narayan was not just writer of fiction. He is also the critic and the supporter of woman's rights which found abundant space in 'The Dark Room'. Sashi Tharoor Compared R K Narayan's works with those of Jane Austen's who was an early nineteenth century author of English middle class ethos and mores. Narayan was awarded Padma Vibhushan and Sahitya Akademi Award.

'The Guide' is a magnum opus by R K Narayan which was published in 1958. It's greatness is recognized by bestoweing 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 Waheeds Rehman acted as leading stars in the film 'Guide'.

The story of the *Guide* is the story of a man named Raju, who is generally called Railway Raju, the protagonist of the novel but he is not a domineering character in the novel. His transformation from a sinner to saint is the transformation of a soul from baser instincts to spiritual evolution. He epitomizes the struggle and passion for life in its vivid colors. The other male dominant character is Marco who is an archeologist. His passion for the old and antic beauties completely blinds him from seeing the beauty and dignity of real time life. His disinterestedness in the present and dedication only to the bygone past made his personality really antique anachronised with the rhythm of present moment. Rosie on the other hand

is a woman who longs to fulfill her suppressed rather oppressed passions of becoming a dance super star. Rosie, a typical married woman accepts whatever her husband commands, but she fails herself in killing her passion for dancing. She is cornered, marginalized and neglected in the hands of her husband Marco, for him the lifeless beauty in a sculpture is mere appealing then the presence of living beauty in his wife. She is not interested in her husband's work and name and fame it is going to beget, neither her husband has any regard or respect for her desire to become a performing dancer. Both adorn art and artcraft but one is in dead and other one is in life.

Rosy was a passive character when she was with Marco, she was liked and she was cared of if she maintained her passivity. She was expected to be a mere follower of the foot prints of her husband. Rosie before her marriage tries to overcome the stigma of caste system which tried restrict the flowering of her art and intellectuality. Being a devadasi she is expected to become a temple dancer, but she pursued her education up to the level of post graduation in 'Economics'. She adored the beauty of art and the Indian system of Music and dance. Her zeal to become a professional dancer is not entailed in any materialistic seeking. She is very much Indian, Her name Rosie does not indicate any presence of westernization in her character. Raju at once exclaims, 'why did she call herself Rosie? She did not come from a foreign land. She was just an Indian, who should have done well with Devi, Meena, Lalitha or any of the thousand names we have in our country. She is Indian in her womanliness, she had also nursed desire for common pleasures like every middle class woman, on which Raju says 'she liked to loaf in the market, eat in a crowded hotel, wander about, see a cinema, these common pleasures seemed to have been beyond her reach all these days'. After her marriage Marco failed to concede to her common pleasures. He could not become a conduit for her dreams to be realized, instead he turned to be an obstacle. Rosie could not withstand the toppling down of her dreams. Marco compares her dance with that of a monkey doing acrobat. It is a severe aspersion on her love for dance. She was not happy; she was not content with Marco. The artist in her wanted to become free of mortal frame



which is subjected to code of conduct formulated by the society. She finds her way to self fulfillment through Raju. She takes Raju as a conduit to express her feelings and emotions enshrined in the art of dancing.

Raju declares 'I could honestly declare while I watched her perform, my mind was free, for once, from all carnal thoughts. I viewed her as pure abstraction. Raju got the heart of adoring art. Unlike Marco, Raju was not irritant of Rosie's indulgence with her dream of becoming a dancer. Her persistence over her dream made her to move from margin to centre. Her voice started to be heard, her art started to be find expression aided by Raju's continuous support and encouragement. She found shelter in Raju willingly as he willfully takes care of her heart and her art. Yet she was fret with the guilt, the guilt arising from the sense of betrayal. Now Nalini, she is no more Rosie, Nalini is now a changed woman, her transition is the transition from dependent to independent, from margin to centre from following the code to embrace heart's desires. Nalini is a new woman. She respects her inadvertent relation with Raju but regrets her separation from her husband. After her confession to her husband Marco about the relation with Raju she continuously follows her husband up and down the Memphi hills for a month, but at last she was left behind alone by marco to her own fate. Nalini, torn emotionally apart, finds a promising hand in Raju. Her feelings for Raju are genuine and free from any greed for name and fame. Nalini becomes ready to spend a huge amount for Raju's release when he was arrested in forgery case, she wants to protect him and preserve him. Her affection is pure fortified by the sense of gratitude. When finally two men Marco and Raju left her, Nalini becomes self reliant she does not yield to the vagaries of time. As a devadasi she would say 'We are viewed as public women, we are not considered respectable; we are not considered civilized' but as she comes from margin to centre, as she emerges as new woman she garners self respect and undeniable dignity not only for herself but also for her 'Bharatanatyam'. She leaves Malgudi and finds a respectable identity in Madras. Gayathri Chakraborty Spivak, a postcolonial post structuralist critic asks the question; Can the Subaltern Speak ? we

can find the answer in Nalini, her voice is now audible, her art is now recognized, now she is a new woman who can form her identity on her own.

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