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Aspirations of Youth in R.K. Narayan's *The Guide* and Its Cinematic Adaptation

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Abstract

R. K. Narayan was leading writer of Indian literature in English. In his writing we saw various issues of Indian Society. He has touched some of the sensitive issues in his works like poverty, caste system, and lack of education. R.K. Narayan's most famous novel entitled the *Guide* explores the aspirations Indian society and Indian youth. The movie *Guide* is an adaptation of the novel *Guide* presents aspiration of youth and Indian society. Literature always attracts cinema, various movies are based on the books. R. K. Narayan tried to show aspirations of Indian youth in the novel, this issue had attracted film maker. The paper presents the aspirations and beliefs of the main protagonist Raju. The main theme of the novel and movie is transformation of Raju from scoundrel to a sadhu. The paper concludes with a comparative study of *The Guide* and its cinematic adaptation.

Keywords- *Literature, Aspiration, Indian Society, Youth, Cinematic Adaptation*

Introduction

Literature and Cinema are the vital part of the human life both are the mirrors of the society and give us knowledge and entertainment, both are the narrative art whereas literature uses literary language and cinema uses cinematographic language. Literature and cinema reflect images of the society in their different approaches. Many Indian writers tried to raise Indian issues and social problems and various books have attracted film makers. Films portray reality of the society and remove many illusions. The main element of the text and movie is assimilation.

The film, however much of a talkie it may be remains a medium of expression affecting the eye more than the ear. While a reader can respond to dialogue by imagining the human voice behind it, he will never be stirred by the description of

movements, facial expressions, setting and other visual details, which often constitute the most dramatic elements of the film action. (Clair137)

Movies show various areas, it may be social, political, economical, cultural, and fashionable. It is also create controversies:

It is painfully evident that there is no idea about the cinema- what it can do, what it should do in its role as a medium of art, education, entertainment and information. “Violence” and ‘Vulgarity” are like red regs to a bull, but no study has been made either by the government or by the industry, to discover why audiences enjoy this violence as much as they seem to. (Vasudev143)

The various movies are based on books like the movie *Sahib, Biwi Aur Gulam* is based on *Saheb, Biwi Aur Gulam* written by Bimal Mitra, the Bengali writer. The movie *Devdas* is the story of a heavy drinker is based on the book same name written by Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay, *Shatraj Ke Khiladi* was in fact an adaption of Prem Chand’s book by the same name and so on many movies are based on the books. Guide movie is also an adaptation of the novel *The Guide*.

The novel *The Guide* was written in the year 1958 by R. K. Narayan. “It is not surprising when we know that at all times Narayan writes not merely with an intense social awareness of his own age but with the past of India in his bones. Thanks to him our social sympathies are broadened and our moral being considerably heightened” (Narasimhaiah 198).

The movie *Guide* is an adaptation of R. K. Narayan’s novel *The Guide*. Movie was directed by Vijay Anand and the film stars Dev Anand and Waheeda Rehman were in lead roles, film was released on 1965. The film won all the awards including best film, best director and best story. Dev Anand won the best actor award; Waheeda Rehman also won the best actress award. The author and the film maker portrayed the aspirations in good manner. There are some changes in cinematic adaptation. The reason of changes in cinematic adaptation is demanded by a new medium. Literature and movie have their own narrative techniques. In a novel a new chapter may take us back to a different time and place in a narrative, where as in a film we may go back to the same time and place through the use of various techniques like flashback and crosscut. The destination is also different in movie; R. K. Narayan’s novels are based on the fictitious town of Malgudi, a south Indian town whereas in the movie the south-Indian town of Malgudi changed into the Udaipur, a Rajasthan city. Setting is change and change of setting motivates characters and the plot:

Narayan’s Rosie, for instance, is part of a traditional and orthodox South Indian society, and an exponent of the strictly classical tradition of the Bharat Natyam, where the dancer actually performs an act of worship to Lord Shiva Nataraja through the dance. All these factors determine her character and her actions in the novel. By

contrast, Wahida Rehman's Rosie is far more cosmopolitan – she performs dances which are typical Bollywood extravaganzas “in deliciously fruity colours and costumes”... This was obviously done to cater to the average Bombay film audience who might find Narayan's Rosie too serious and complex for their taste (Sen 6).

In the novel and movie main character is Raju, who became the owner of a stall near railway station and turns a tourist guide, a dancer's manager, a swindler, a prisoner and a saint. “ The Railway meant the undoing of Raju and his old mother- a small shop keeper's son becomes a Railway guide who starts living by his wits and runs into Rosie and Marco, two tourists, gets emotionally entangled, neglects his old, honest means of making a living and brings ruin upon himself as well as a married woman” (Narasimhaiah 132). Raju is an ambitious young man; he wants money, name and fame. He always looks for opportunity and seeks short cuts. He becomes a tourist guide and takes visitors to historic sites and tells them the stories- some are true and some are false about these places.

One day, a man Marco comes to the city with his young and beautiful wife. Marco was an archaeologist by profession and he wants to do some research on the caves outside the city so, he hires Raju as the guide. Raju goes around their day to day life and comes in contact with Marco's wife Rosie. Marco spends his lot of time in his work. Rosie begins to spend time with Raju. He falls in love with Rosie. Rosie is a beautiful dancer and always passionate about dance, her desire to continue dancing, but Marco does not approve her talent. Raju encourages Rosie to fulfil her dream. Soon, Marco finds out his wife affair with Raju. After listening his wife's affair Marco leaves his wife Rosie. Rosie finds herself alone, for shelter, she comes to Raju's house. Raju's mother was amazed to see Rosie alone. Raju's mother told “Girls today! How courageous you are! In our day we wouldn't go to the street corner without an escort. And I have been to the market only once in my life, when Raju's father was alive.”(Narayan 141)

Now Raju and Rosie live together. Raju decides to follow her dreams. Raju's mother does not accept their relationship and leaves them. Raju starts Rosie's dancing career, again he becomes “guide” as a personal guide. He becomes Rosie's stage manager and with the help of Raju's marketing tactics, Rosie becomes a star dancer and achieves stardom. Raju was happy to achieve the success, he has also gain name, fame along with Rosie. But soon, he falls into bad habits, drinking and gambling; he also becomes money minded and turns into a criminal. One day, he signed Rosie's fake signature on a cheque and send to the prison for forging a cheque.

After released from prison Raju finds himself alone, he thinks what to do with his life. He has no desire to return at the house, to face people's talks and rejection, he cannot face his village folk, Raju wanders far alone and find himself in a village and hides out in a temple near the unknown village. He lives alone in the temple. One day, a man named Velan comes at the temple and he does

conversation with Raju. Velan comes to regard Raju as some sort of a holy man. Finding the situation good, Raju plays along with the ruse. There comes a day when Raju speaks truth about who he is and where he comes from. But Velan had developed a complete faith in Raju like the rest of the villagers. Raju keeps fast in order to make it rain, the media and the huge crowd gathers to watch Raju. After fasting for several days, he goes to the river one morning as part of his daily ritual, where his leg sag down as he feels that the rain is falling in the hills. The ending of the novel leaves unanswered the question of he died and whether the drought ended. In the novel, the last paragraph is as follows:

He got up feet... finally reached the basin of water. He stepped into it, shut his eyes, and turned towards the mountain, his lips muttering the prayer. Velan and another held him each by an arm. The morning sun was out now; a great shaft of light illuminate the surrounding. It was difficult to hold Raju on his feet, as he had a tendency to flop down. They held him as if he were a baby. Raju opened his eyes, looked about, and said, 'Velan, it's raining in the hills. I can feel it coming up under my feet, up my legs; He sagged down. (Narayan 247)

In the movie, Raju meets a celebrity death surrounded by his near and dear ones and the media with rain ending the drought in the village. However, in the novel, this event is unclear ending about his death. In the end of the story of the novel and movie, Raju realize what it means to serve others selflessly. His entire life, his money and fame all fall away. Finally he becomes a saint, he is left nothing in the last finally he becomes able to sacrifice himself willingly in order to restore hope to the lives of others. The name *Guide* conveys different meaning at different times in the novel and in the movie; a tourist guide, a personal guide and a spiritual guide.

Conclusion

To conclude, R. K. Narayan's *The Guide* is a story about self realization. The novel *The Guide* shows how a man transforms himself from a common man to holy man. Film director Vijay Anand also directed film very beautifully; a beautiful masterpiece of Indian cinema. Film shows how people can be destined for great things without even realizing it. Novel and Film show various aspirations of every character like Raju and Rosie. They want to live their life in their own way, Raju wants become rich and Rosie wants become a famous dancer. There are some changes in cinematic adaptation like the south-Indian town of Malgudi changed into the Rajasthani city of Udaipur. The morally upright and studious Marco is treated as a villainous and Marco who also is a womanizer. But the theme of the movie and the novel is same, both are show the social condition of the Indian society and the aspirations of youth who want to get everything. In the last of the novel and the movie Raju becomes a good man. Raju a self effacing man sacrifices for other.

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