

## **The Creative Launcher**

An International, Open Access, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, E- Journal in English

**UGC Approved-** (Sr. No. 62952)

### **R. K. Narayan's *Guide* and the Movie: A Comparative Study**

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#### **Abstract**

Novel and films are very familiar words these days. In fact they have begun to interlink now a days. Studios are increasingly looking to turn popular novels into movies. It has been observed that one third of the total films made were adopted from novels<sup>1</sup>. Films and novels are also common in aspects of narrative. The moving image of films tends to explain meaning in a more clear term than novels. To talk in a layman's language, the things become clearer when shown practically. Same is the case here, as in today's fast paced society; many people rely on films rather than the written word. Moreover films are also made out of novels, to reach the masses. The present paper presents the story of, "Guide", the movie in comparison to the novel. No doubt both are masterpieces in their own respects; still there are intricate differences which speaks their own language.

**Key Words-** *Novel, Film, Cinematography, Language, Flashback.*

Novel is written in prose form and its magnitude permits a greater variety for characters, greater complication of plot, ampler development of milieu<sup>2</sup>. Novel is further divided into various types on the basis of emphasis, subject matter and artistic purpose. Novel became so popular that in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it displaced all other popular forms of literature. As a matter of fact novel is still the major accepted form of literary genre. The upcoming of novel was also due to the large number of printing press available for its spread. In earlier times, for the entertainment of people, there were no means except the drama enacted by locals. It used to cater to the needs of people. After work, people would

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gather at a place meant for enactment and enjoyed watching it. But as technology progressed, this live enactment gave way to short documentaries and then movies. Today we have two hour show of a movie or so. 'Films evolved as and from popular culture and from interstices of number of technical development and recreational/ leisure pursuits: Victorian optical toys, the projector, the music hall and burlesque<sup>3</sup>.....'

Film has been the quickest genre to establish, develop and flourish as the other literary genre took many years. Since the time of adaptations, more than three quarters of the best pictures award have gone to films which are adaptations of novels<sup>4</sup>.

Adaptation are generally criticized on the basis of film's fidelity to the original events of the novel, "references are constantly made to what is left out or changed instead of what is there because more than often a three hundred page novel is written into a two three hour movie and a great deal of content is sacrificed"<sup>5</sup>.

Movie makers should remain loyal and stick to the novel if they claim the adaption to be so. This cinematic representation of the novel attracts more audience. We have especially in India many illiterate masses. No doubt they are being uplifted but the pace is really slow. For such people, English is a majestic word. The problem of this language, for them, cannot be ruled out. Even though our first lessons are in English still the problem of it being a second language looms large. For example if a student does not follow anything in English, he seeks explanation in his own mother tongue. This tendency is self-explanatory as it shows the importance of mother tongue over the second language. This is also one of the reasons why English novels while translated to movies in regional language of the masses, proves to be a big hit. This even allows various audiences to become aware about the stories and creativity of prominent writers. The cinematic representation of 'The Guide' came out both English and Hindi versions. But only Hindi version was a big hit. Turning a novel into a screenplay is not just a matter of pulling dialogues from the pages of a book. "Film is structured like a language"<sup>6</sup>.

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The reach of cinema is almost everywhere now, moreover the influence of cinematic representation was more clearly revealed than the literary expression. Major difference between the two genres is those visual images stimulate our perception directly while written word can only do it indirectly. For example- reading the word 'car' in the novel requires a kind of mental translation that viewing a picture of car does not. Film is more sensory experience than reading- besides verbal language, there is also colors, movement and sounds. The novel is moreover controlled by just a person while collaborative efforts of lots of people required in a movie. It depends on director as how a movie is directed and how well the actors and actresses understand the emotions of the written script. In the case of *Guide*, a 1965 romantic drama film in which DevAnand and Waheeda Rehman did their best. It was directed by Vijay Anand, who contributed to the screenplay. The actress Waheeda Rehman did her role as Nalini and even as Rosie in a wonderful manner. The emotions, sarcasm, feel of the character were writ large on her face. In novel, the narrator tells a story but in movies, the narrator largely disappears. The movie *The Guide* was a nice adaption of the novel by the same name written by R.K. Narayan.

The conventions of features of cinematography plays major role in the screening. It is in away attached to the expectations of audience. Most of the time it is the scene rather than the telling which allows the audience to understand it better as such scenes, speaks for themselves. The author sometimes uses all sorts of literary devices to describe the beauty of the female character or a natural landscape etc but when screened through the linguistic aesthetic, it is overlooked. More often than not, the visual representation misses out on the linguistic and prowess of the author, who expresses a scene or a heroine using various figures of speech like metaphors, similies or images.

*The Guide* is authored by a renowned Indian writer R K Narayan. The novel focuses on the transformation of two main characters from non entity to celebrity. Raju, the protagonist owned a small time shop at the railway station and Rosie happened to be the

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spouse of an archeologist. Both of them shoot to fame suddenly, the former due to sheer luck while the latter due to the inherent talent for dancing.

The story of the novel as well as the movie is told through flashback technique. It is very aptly shown in the movie and the audience can connect to it. By seeing the movie one feels more empathetic towards Rosie than by reading the novel. It is very nicely portrayed. The focus and camera angles are very intelligently used. Most of the scenes in the movie are shown through wide area lens. The emotions and the facial expressions are captured very intensely.

In 1965, an extra marital affair was considered to be a taboo. So at this point of time Guide was avantgarde movie. It was anti conventionalist one. The songs which are there in the movie are not an interpolation but they explicate the emotional depth of the nature of kinship and bonding.

Rosie, the heroine of the novel and movie was already a talented girl. It was just that the flowering of her talent did not take place earlier. Nobody except Raju could understand her passion for dance. Marco, her husband is totally apathetic and unemotional towards her. He calls her dancing skills as street acrobatics and compares it to monkey dance. But still she was tolerant and optimistic. She is what she is and cannot be otherwise. She is an ideal character who is a devotee of dance form and does what she pines for. Though she mints money as a celebrity, she is not overpowered by greed. All she needs is an opportunity to dance and achieve name and fame. We can very clearly see this in the Cobra dance episode.

Marco objectifies the existence of Rosie and treats her as an object to wipe away his lust. In the film it is shown that once Rosie and Raju discovers Marco in the arms of a woman of easy virtue. Whereas Raju is a romantic and emotional character, who empathizes with the heroine and is the right man to fulfill her needs. He treats her like a subject. According to Jean Paul Sartre, Marco's relationship with Rosie is sado-masochistic. Marco as such being interested in the excavations is digging into the past whereas Rosie lives in the present and prefers the world of art, music and dance. But when she shot into fame, after getting an

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opportunity, she does not change essentially. She is rolling in wealth, yet she has sympathy for the poor as she is concerned about the artists who work behind the scenes.

Though in real life Marco seems to be callous and feelingless, existentially speaking he is an 'authentic' character for he does not wear masks and avoids pretensions. Instead of superficially telling Rosie that he does not mind her dancing, he straight away tells her that to him dancing is like monkey's pranks. Raju, for certain, is inauthentic character as he sometimes behaves oddly in trying situations. For example he forges the sign of Rosie to keep her out of the matter, for his own selfish motives. This mistake earns him an imprisonment.

On his release from prison, Raju stops to rest near an abandoned temple, where the villagers mistakes him for a holy man. He does not want to return in disgrace to his friends and he reluctantly decides to play the part of a holy man. He is happy to accept the daily offering of food which the villagers bring him. Gradually he accepts the role which has been thrust upon him and he acts as spiritual advisor to the village community. Raju's role playing as Swami an act of existential 'inauthenticity', because he betrays his own self to live the role of which happens to be the only choice left for him.

Everything went well until a drought occurs. Now to save his face he has to take up a 12 day fast. As a great crowd gathers to watch him during this ordeal, he begins to believe in the role he has created. He has taken on an unselfish task this time. Despite grave danger to his health, he continues to fast till he collapses. In the movie this scene is very aptly shown and it catches the attention of the audience. Whereas the ending in the novel is not clear. Raju mumbles the enigmatic last words of the novel, 'It's raining in the hills. I can feel it coming under my feet, up my legs...' His own soul and body is shown talking to each other in the movie. It clearly shows that he dies in the end. But this question remains unanswered in the novel. The denouement in a way is marked with ambiguity as nothing has been mentioned of both the central characters.

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Thus, we see that adaptations keep up the feel of the original. Of course, sometimes it deviates from the source just because it has to cater to the spectacular appeal. The film Guide has always drawn packed houses due to the justice it has done to every minute detail.

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