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DILENATION OF FOLKLORE AND MYTHICAL ELEMENTS IN  
R.K.NARYAN'S:"THE GUIDE"

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**Abstract:**

R.K.Narayan who was born at Rasipuram in South India in 1906 was a well-known writer. In his novels, characters move on a psychological surface. The title of R.K.Narayan's novel *The Guide* is predominant. The main characters truly represents the social picture of India. The writings of Narayan and the introduction of folklore elements in his novels is an apt illustration to present the folk culture of India and Indian people's rituals, blind faithfulness, religious aspects etc. He described the problems of Indians through his novels. The poverty and myth of India has been reflected with a personal touch of the writer. The basic aim of this paper is to study about the folk elements and how it is connected to the life of the Indian's and their traditional culture through the characters of the novel.

**Keywords:** The Guide, Customs, Folklore, Realistic elements, mythical elements.

**Introduction:**

The famous Indian writer Rasipuram Krishnaswami Ayyar was born on October 10,1906 Chennai. After the completion of bachelor degree from the University of Mysore, R.K.Narayan went to the United States in 1956 at the invitation of the Rockefeller Foundation. He started to write the short stories in newspaper 'The Hindu' in this way he began his literary career. He published 14 novels over 200 short stories, two travelogues, a memoir, essays and two plays. 'Swami and Friends' (1935) was his first novel. 'Grandmother' (1992) was his last work. The main themes included exile and return, education, women and her status, myths and the cultural tradition of the Indian Society etc. He never wrote to achieve fame. He viewed and recorded Indian life artistically. 'The Guide' that appeared in 1958 was the consequence of an American tour organized by the Rockefeller Foundation. He received Sahitya Academy Award for '*The Guide*' in 1960 and four years later he won Padma Bhushan. In 2001, he passed away. Narayan has touched the topics such as casteism, injustice, gender inequalities etc.

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Raju is the protagonist of the novel. He was the son of a shopkeeper and after his death of his father, he took the job of his father. Meanwhile he did the job of a tourist guide. During this time he met Rosie and her husband Marco and from there his life changed. Rosie was passionate dancer who came there for studying the culture of the place. In between, her husband returned to his hectic schedule. Raju and Rosie became attracted each other. Rosie went on with her performances. But once Raju forged Rosie's signature and he was arrested. Life in the jail changed the mind of Raju. He never returned to his village. His past deeds began to prey on his mind and he resolved to leave Malgudi for good. Raju found a shelter in an ancient shrine on the bank of Sarayu. There he met Velan to whom he disclosed his story. He spent time by reading Gita and transforms as a swami. His life undergoes a strange twist and turn when a drought overtakes the village. The villagers believe that swami can bring rain to the village. For that he took fasting for showering rain. On the twelfth day, Raju's condition grows critical. Before he falls down, he tells Velan that it is raining on the hills, for he can feel it coming up under his feet. With these words the novel comes to a close.

**Portrayal of Raju as a typical Indian:**

Raju, who was the only son of a shop-keeper dwelt in a small

house opposite Malgudi station. When his father opened a shop on the railway platform, his education came to an end. Later his father passed away and eventually Raju occupied his father's job. We can see the character himself growing and maturing in time, society remains constantly melodramatic and telescoped into a regional sectarian dimension. The blind faith of the Indian people on swamis and religious men is portrayed in their acceptance of Raju as a swami. Narayan has gone through the psychological consciousness of the protagonist. The arrival of Rosie and Marco was a great turning point in Raju's life. Meanwhile Raju was known by the name Guide Raju or Railway Raju as he used to guide the pilgrims to the places of visiting. The romance of Rosie and Raju has been well depicted by the novelist.

Folklore and mythical elements depicted in the novel:

In 'The Guide' we can find a mixture of the serious and the comic, the real and the fantastic elements. The growth of the protagonist from rags to riches, materialistic gains to spiritual aspiration such as boy to young man as lovers. The second stage is entirely different as a Swami after his release from jail. The novel can be regarded as a fictional biography. The readers or spectators are taken into the present situation of the hero, and the past is narrated as a background which helps in the development of the hero's

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personality. It starts with a spirituality and ends with a culmination. In another aspect the whole novel can be treated as a drama in three parts. Raju's love for Rosie, his life in prison and the ultimate reward he gets for his virtues.

The novelist has introduced the technique of double narration. The technique keeps the readers on their toes and makes the character of the hero real. The complex personality is developed and made credible with the technique of double narration. The novelist has portrayed the rural India. The character in the novel are all real pictures of the people in India. Even the description of the appearance of Marco is real. Velan, the other character uneducated villager governed by his superstitions. The way in which the villagers react when there was no rain. India, the home of wizards and swami has inculcated in her citizens the belief that water for agricultural purposes can be obtained only through rains, and rains by prayers and fastings. The temple, the village, the town of Malgudi the river Sarayu etc. stands as a culture and traditions of India. The temple is the place where all the faith and disbelieves are occupied. In the novel temple is the place where Raju the sinner, transforms his character as a saint. Malgudi is a place that serves a settlement between the oriental age-old traditions and the modern occidental civilization. Malgudi can be treated as the symbol of modern India rooted in

the ancient tradition. The dimensional image projected as a symbol of the changing Indian civilization grows and gets wrapped in time. Malgudi's faith and pliability are effectively corroborative in 'The Guide'. The caves are symbolic of the Indian cultural continuity. Then the river Sarayu's ennobling moral force is revealed throughout the novel. Raju's transformation events are dramatized on the banks of the river, near the village on the outskirts of Malgudi. From Rosie's character we could know that 'Devadasis' tradition still exist in the Indian society.

Raju's life can be compared to Valmiki –the person who led a bad life changed to a saint. His character here becomes a function of the landscape. However estranged from his community Raju's past may reveal him to be, still remains an integral part of it. He may find salvation from only within the entity of roles made available to him, engraving by his culture.

Conclusion:

R.K.Narayan has designed the plot like a biography. Raju's romance, greed for money, his sin and repentance form the gist of the novel. The protagonist Raju becomes the spiritual guide at the end. 'The Guide' can be considered as a compromise between didactic and aesthetic values. The writers has resorted to realistic language and method of narration. Blind faithon sadhus and superstitions about

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rain all this aspect has been beautifully described by the writer. The villagers represented here are steeped in superstitious and ignorance. Naryan is endowed with a keen eye, tolerant mind and a compassionate heart which are the essential qualities of a true writer. The novelist thus show how an ordinary man become a criminal, and how a criminal can become a saint, or slightly a martyr. Narayan has tried to represent the different roles of a man in life through a single character named Raju. The different religious aspects and the

deteriorating family relation and superstitious nature of Indian people has been well ddepicted.

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