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**AN EXPLORATION OF CLASSIC INDIAN METAMORPHOSIS OF A
PROTAGONIST DEPICTED IN *THE GUIDE***

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Abstract:

*In very simple terms, India is defined by the words 'unity in diversity'. The cultural diversity and spirituality of India have fascinated Western thinkers since the ancient time. The diversity found in India in the field of spirituality and philosophy is also astonishing. Indian philosophy has accepted complete opposite philosophy as an integral part. The belief that moments of transformation come in a person's life and after that, the person's life changes radically is very strong in Indian thought. Many saints in India were born as very ordinary people before their transformation. The transformation of the protagonist in the novel *The Guide* surprises Westerners, but this is a very common thing in Indian culture. Raju, the protagonist of the novel, accepts the role of Swami despite going through numerous experiences first accept the role of Swami unwillingly but later dissolves himself in this role. The metamorphosis that has taken place in his personality is decisive that ultimately he is willing to pay the price of his life so that the villagers can get water.*

Keywords: Spirituality, India Tradition, Metamorphosis, Deception, Prison, Love, Spiritual Awakening, Sacrifice, etc.

One of the most renowned novelists in Indian English literature is Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyengar Narayan (1906–2001). Generally known as R. K. Narayan. *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The English Teacher* (1945), *The Guide* (1958), *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967), *A Tiger of Malgudi*, and more books are among his works. *The Guide* is the most well-known of these books. In 1958, it was published. His best novel, *The Guide*, earned him the Sahitya Akademi award in 1960. Raju, Rosie, and Marco are the three main characters in the book. The novel's title alludes to Railway Raju's life. In the book *The Guide*, he serves as both the protagonist and the tour guide. He serves as both the novel's hero and antihero.

Raju comes from middle-class families all around the country. He resides in Malgudi's traditional setting. He is sent to Pyol School by his father. Before Raju was born, the facilities were extremely limited. Raju then develops beside Malgudi. Raju's life is altered when railways are built in Malgudi, linking the tiny community with the outside world. He likes man vehicles games and wandering. He is not so clever at studies. His father call 'clay headed' and mother refers to him as a 'mitigated loafer'. It means boy who is good for nothing. It explains that he is not good student. On the other hand, he is certainly observant and intelligent. He acquires knowledge with the help of papers, magazines, periodicals and old books. Following the passing



of his father, Raju enters the train station shop. He works as a stall keeper at first. He eventually became the tour guide. He purchases old books and papers as a stall keeper. In his free time, he reads those books and papers. Reading this resource helps him get information about Malgudi. He sometimes even gives wrong information and cheats the tourists. He takes them to interesting locations. In his capacity as Railway Raju at the railway station, he responds promptly to inquiries concerning tourists. With his capacity to speak, he pleases every visitor. It demonstrates his comprehension of human psychology. He always gets assistance from his close friend and cab driver, Gaffur.

The arrival of Rosie marks a sea change in Raju's life. She is among the novel's primary characters. Rosie and her husband, Marco, an archaeologist, travel to Malgudi. She is a youthful, charming, and intriguing woman. Despite the fact that the attractive woman is married, Raju falls in love with her right away. Marco does not satisfy Rosie. He disregards her. She is a natural dancer. Raju's interest in her artwork is another reason she finds him attractive. However, Marco forbids her from dancing.

Raju succeeds in luring and enticing her, and he wins her heart. Marco finds out about their liaison. Marco leaves Rosie by herself. Rosie has nowhere else to go, so she comes to Raju's residence. They move in together. However, Raju's mother left her house to live with her brother since she dislikes their connection. Raju starts a career in dancing and encourages Rosie to pursue her goals. Rosie quickly becomes popular due to her love of dancing. Raju now organizes her dance performances and works as a theater manager. Her achievement alters Raju's standing. He changes from being a lover to more of an agent and manager. He is the one who created the dancer Nalini (Rosie). He takes care of everything for her.

Raju makes a lot of money but wastes it on gambling and drinking with his friends. Her money provides for him. She appreciates art for its own sake, while he does so for financial gain. Rosie and Raju's friendship devolves into a business partnership. As a result, they become estranged from one another and stop communicating. Raju conceals Marco's book out of love and envy. When Marco sends his book to Rosie, Raju conceals it out of fear that she would return it to him. The fact that he feels secure now is evident. Additionally, he falsifies Rosie's signature on a voucher to purchase jewelry that is in the bank under her name. In essence, he wants her to be unaware of Marco's kindness. Raju receives a two-year prison sentence after the counterfeit is discovered. In actuality, he is unaware of the magnitude of his act. Raju is the creator of the dancer Rosie (Nalini), however Nalini is not only Raju's puppet. The Raju-Rosie relationship is, in essence, the focal point of the book. His riches have already been exhausted, his friends abandon him, and Rosie leaves for Madras. Without Raju, Rosie becomes an exceptional dancer. Raju is therefore shown to be a parasite that has been living off of her income and taking advantage of her financially and sexually. We yet feel sorry for Raju in spite of this.

Raju is arrested and sent to prison for forgery. In prison, he is completely content. He proves to be an excellent prisoner. A lot of people visit him in prison. He turns into the inmates' comforter and teacher. Additionally, he rose to the position of supervisor and now visits every department in the institution. In summary, everything is good in prison. He is prepared to be incarcerated indefinitely. He becomes everyone's favorite and nearly enjoys his day in prison.

Raju seeks refuge in an abandoned temple on the banks of the Sharayu River, close to the settlement of Mangla, after finishing the sentence. Velan, the village headman, looks at Raju. He finds Raju's saintly aspect impressive. He is mistaken for Swami by the common Mangla farmer. Velan confides with Raju about his issues. Because 'It was in his nature to get involved in others



interests and activities,' (8) Raju chose to take on the role of Swami and gives Velan advice and guidance. The function of a spiritual guide and that of a tourist guide are very similar. Therefore, just as Raju is the creator of Rosie-Nalini, the dancer, Velan is the creator of Raju, the Swami. In actuality, he is a rogue and a phony, yet he is now mistaken for Sadhu. Additionally, he manifests every inch of Mahatma. Rather than going back to Malgudi, he chose to remain in Mangala.

As a Swami, Raju resolves people's issues. He meets the needs of the Mangala locals. Swami (Raju) is the object of devotion for the villagers. They consider the superior soul to have moved close to their village. The residents of the village are devout. By giving them advice, Raju strives to help everyone with their problems. Day by day, the number of worshipers grew. They feed him. As a result, the villagers visit Swami (Raju) every day to receive his blessings. Raju therefore turns into a genuine saint and spiritual mentor. There is doubt about the villagers' level of dedication.

A devastating famine strikes the village once. To please the rain god, the locals anticipate keeping a fast. They ask Raju to observe a fast. He is therefore compelled to fast in order to ensure their survival. He understands that he had put himself in a situation from which he was unable to escape. He tries to tell Velan everything about his infamous history. Velan doesn't believe him when he tells him, "I am just ordinary, not as great as you imagine." To appease the villagers, he is forced to fast. He lost all power.

Around the world, word of his rapidly spreads. A thorough account of the fast was also carried in the newspapers. Mangala, a tiny village, quickly became well-known. People begin to arrive in order to receive the Swami's blessings. Raju knows this knowledge all the time. The food is saved by him. On the first two days of the fast, he has a little meal at night. For a few days, he fasts. R. K. Narayan says this. "For the first time in his life he was making an earnest effort; for the first time he was learning the applications, outside money and love; for the first time you always he was doing nothing in which he was not personally interested" (Narayan, 238).

Raju's behavior indicates that through fasting he is going to regret his blunders. Fasting has a unique significance in Indian tradition. Fasting is done for the purification of the mind and intellect. Fasting helps to conquer the mind and destroy sins. Raju has now merged into the role that he reluctantly accepted. It demonstrates Raju's spiritual accomplishment. He mutters prayers during the day and night. The audience keeps growing.

At last, Raju stands in the knee-deep water after being taken to the river. He closes his eyes, murmurs prayers. He opens his eyes slightly to see mountains in the distance. 'Velan it's raining in the hills, I can feel it coming under my feet up my legs (Narayan, 247)'. He sagged down after saying this. There is an ambiguity in the last scene; the reader is left wondering at the novel's conclusion whether he actually dies, whether the drought actually ends, and whether it actually rains. Indian scholar M. K. Naik captures this dilemma in following words. "It raises many disturbing questions about human motives and actions, compelling us to ponder problems such as appearance and reality, the man and his mask, ends and means. Of all Narayan's novels, *The Guide* teases us into thoughts to an extent no other novel of his does" (Naik, 171).

Raju undergoes spiritual transformation and is sacrificed for the benefit of others. In this way, the rogue becomes a saint. In short, Raju's journey from tourist guide to Mahatma demonstrates the veracity of the statement that Raju did nothing and that things constantly happened to him. He may or may not have died, but he undoubtedly recovered. His whole career serves as an example of how the passive character shifts between varieties of roles. As a result, Raju takes on a number of roles, from tour guide to martyr saint. It is very difficult to judge Raju as right or wrong.



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