



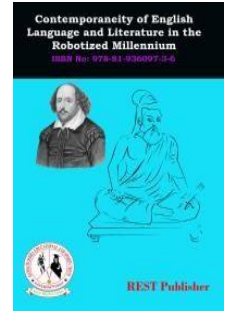
Contemporaneity of Language and Literature in the Robotized Millennium

Vol: 6(1), 2024

REST Publisher; ISBN: 978-81-936097-3-6

Website: <https://restpublisher.com/book-series/cllrm/>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46632/cllrm/6/1/1>



A Comparative Analysis of RK Narayan's "The Guide" and Bollywood's "Guide"

Mamun Abdul Gaiyom

B.G.S High School, Assam, India

*Corresponding Author Email: mabdulgaiyom@gmail.com

Abstract: *Literary adaptations have been predominant in cinema for decades, with stories being reconceptualized for the film to captivate audiences in new ways. Indian cinema is no exception to this and one such well known adaptation is RK Narayan's novel The Guide into a film. This paper delves into the transformation of R K Narayan's novel "The Guide" into the epochal Bollywood film "Guide" directed by Vijay Anand. Through a comparative analysis, this study explores the differences and similarities between the two, examining how the cinematic adaptation reshapes the narrative, characters, themes, and overall essence of Narayan's original work. By dissecting the creative choices made in bringing the novel to life on screen, this paper aims to highlight the nuances of adaptation in Indian cinema.*

Keywords: *RK Narayan, The Guide, Bollywood, adaptation, Vijay Anand, narrative, characters, themes*

1. INTRODUCTION

The adaptation of fiction into cinema has always been an interesting and contentious topic among enthusiasts and the two have a close connection. It is said that the earliest films were often adaptations of famous literary works. John Harrington mentions in his book **Film And / as Literature (1977)** that one third of all films ever made has been adapted from novels and other genre of literature. Almost all the works of classical literature in every language have been adapted into films. The conversion of beloved books, novels, and short stories into cinema has its own challenges and rewards. Despite the challenges, many filmmakers have successfully transformed literary masterpieces into visually stunning and emotionally captivating cinematic experiences. Aladdin and Wonderful Lamp, Uncle Tom's Cabin, the life of Moses, Vanity Fairs, the plays of Shakespeare are famous and successful adaptations.

The Indian Film industry also has a long history of adaptations. Many famous films have been adapted from masterpieces of various writers of different languages. One such great adaptation is R.K Narayan's award-winning English novel The Guide (1958). The film Guide (1965) directed by Vijay Anand is known for the outstanding performance of Dev Anand and Waheeda Rehman. In fact, Narayan's film was adapted for two films one in Hindi and another in English. But the most notable thing was that Narayan was acutely unhappy with both the adaptations because he felt that none of them was successful in capturing the spirit of the novel.

In fact, when undertaking the adaptation process, it is vital for filmmakers to capture the essence, themes, and emotions that made the original work resonate with readers. While modifications and omissions are inevitable due to time constraints and the necessity of condensing extensive narratives, it is crucial to ensure that the core message remains intact. This requires a deep understanding of both the source material and the medium of film. Vijay Anand has failed to sustain the spirit of the novel in many ways.

However, it is also taken into consideration that a film director is not bound to the original and they have every right to eliminate or add some characters and incidents in order to cater to the taste of the public. As Virginia Woolf said in her essay "The Cinema", film adaptation of literature is an attempt to "recreate" it, changing the original.

The film **Guide** by Vijay Anand is a ground breaking piece in Indian cinema, especially for the taboo subject of extra marital affairs it deals with, which was considered proscribed in Indian society. **The Guide** by Narayan and the film **Guide** by Vijay Anand, both are milestones in their respective fields. It is notable that there are many differences as well as similarities between these two versions of stories. In reality as Amar Dutta said in his essay, "converting a novel into screenplay is not just a matter of culling dialogues from the pages of novel. A film director has to keep many things in his mind - such as how to compress the matter of a novel usually comprising more than three hundred pages in three hours or so, how faithful to the original work should the film version strive to be, what are the things to be eliminated from the original text" and what additions can be made, what would be the reaction of the audience and so on.

Vijay Anand condenses Narayan's long story and that resulted in the elimination of many significant parts of the novel. In the Hindi film, *Guide*, Vijay Anand excluded the entire childhood days of Raju which is described vividly by Narayan in his novel; and Raju's childhood days also reflect the socio-political, cultural as well as economic conditions of India of the 1950's and 1960's. Narayan shows the life in the Pyol school, the advent of railways in Narayan's fictional town Malgudi and its impact on life, the impact of urbanization upon the village life etc. The film also does not present the picture of the world inside the jail and the life style of the prisoners.

Narayan's novel and Vijay Anand's film are also different when their narrative techniques are considered. Like the novel the film starts from the middle of the story with Raju being released from the jail and then runs in flashback. But compared to Narayan's complex technique, Vijay Anand's story has a simple and coherent narration which has become possible through the use of various techniques like flashbacks, crosscut or dissolve. Narayan starts his novel in-media-res and then goes back to the past and frequently changes the time from present to past and past to present which makes his narrative too complex. But the film avoids the novel's frequent shifting of time. The narrative point of view of the novel and Vijay Anand's film are different. "The narrative viewpoint is consistently omniscient and usually impersonal in the film adaptations, regardless of the viewpoint employed by the novelist" (Asheim: 262).

In Narayan's novel the story is narrated sometimes from the point of view of Raju, sometimes from that of Rosie, or sometimes the authorial narrator intrudes into the story to remind us about the present situation and comment on the character's morality. But in the film, the authorial intrusion is completely absent and mostly the film is shown from the omniscient or the impersonal perspective. The objective omniscience of the camera eye makes the services of an interpreter unnecessary. While the reader of a novel is free to interpret any events or actions or comments of the characters, the spectator of a film is a passive consumer of the actions as they occur before his or her eyes. Another important point to mention is that both the novel and the film present Raju, Rosie and Marco not as the typical hero, heroine and villain, rather as mixture of all the qualities in each of them.

The relationship between Marco and Rosie is also a point where the film differs from the novel. In the novel, Rosie starts her affair with Raju behind Marco's back and because of which she was deserted by him and it is she who cheats on her husband, not the other way around. Though Marco was always absorbed with his research work and quite indifferent and cold towards Rosie, he had never been disloyal in their marriage. In the film, Vijay Anand consciously introduces a new scene where Marco is seen having a physical relationship with a native girl in the cave. Rosie rejects Marco only after seeing this and goes to Raju. In Raju she finds the care and love that Marco always lacked and it is Raju who also supports her dream of becoming successful dancer. It can be said that this scene was quite necessary to the film to appease the moral thirst of Indian audience as the audience of that time would have never accepted someone who cheats on their partners as their hero or heroine. By projecting Marco as the unfaithful husband, Vijay Anand has made the union between Raju and Rosie more desirable than it would have been.

However, the most controversial part of the film is the last scene which shows the twelve days fasting of Raju in order to bring rain to the draught ridden village of Rampuri, during this period Raju's mother and Rosie also came back to him. Finally, rain comes and Raju dies, and the film ends. But the novel has an open-ending and is totally ambiguous. It ends with Raju being sagged down with his final words, "Velan, it is raining in the hill. I can feel it coming up under my feet, up my legs." (The Guide:256). We are not told whether Raju dies or the rain comes. Regarding this change in the film, Narayan, in his autobiography **My Days (1974)** expresses his dissatisfaction. In fact, Vijay Anand ends the film in an optimistic and positive way, though there is a bit

lamentation, as it was expected by the audience. But such changes, from the aesthetic point of view, destroys the spirit of the novel.

Songs have been a significant part in Indian cinema. Vijay Anand's *Guide* also gives us some evergreen songs. The music for the film was composed by Sachin Dev Burman, the songs were written by Shailendra and sung by Lata Mangeshkar, Md. Rafi, Kishor Kumar, Manna Dey and Sachin Dev Burman. The songs give us an insight into the feelings of the characters. Narayan however felt that the songs were a source of distraction from the main theme of the story.

Though there are different views regarding the topic of adapting texts, many consider the printed text as superior to the filmed version. But more and more consumers of such films are growing and "despite the fact that adaptations are often considered inferior or secondary offshoot of their source texts, the prevalence of such adaptations are increasing in numbers" (Snyder: 201). But Vijay Anand's **Guide** was a grand success though it was a deviation from the original text. The film was received positively by the audience. It was seriously a treat for Bollywood lovers. Besides, **Guide** established Vijay Anand as one of the best directors. The film and the novels were both successful in their respective genres. Despite Narayan's reservations, the film was a commercial success and it won many awards and recognition from critics. The transformation of the novel into a film and the differences and similarities between the two totally make this a fascinating topic for the critics to explore.

2. CONCLUSION

Though Marco was always absorbed with his research work and quite indifferent and cold towards Rosie, he had never been disloyal in their marriage. In the film, Vijay Anand consciously introduces a new scene where Marco is seen having a physical relationship with a native girl in the cave. Rosie rejects Marco only after seeing this and goes to Raju. In Raju she finds the care and love that Marco always lacked and it is Raju who also supports her dream of becoming successful dancer. It can be said that this scene was quite necessary to the film to appease the moral thirst of Indian audience as the audience of that time would have never accepted someone who cheats on their partners as their hero or heroine. By projecting Marco as the unfaithful husband, Vijay Anand has made the union between Raju and Rosie more desirable than it would have been. Indian cinema is no exception to this and one such well known adaptation is RK Narayan's novel *The Guide* into a film. This paper delves into the transformation of R K Narayan's novel "The Guide" into the epochal Bollywood film "Guide" directed by Vijay Anand. Through a comparative analysis, this study explores the differences and similarities between the two, examining how the cinematic adaptation reshapes the narrative, characters, themes, and overall essence of Narayan's original work.

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