



SAROJINI NAIDU VANITA MAHA VIDYALAYA



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Two Day International E-Conference
on 21st Century Cinematic Adaptation
of Literature in Indian Cinema-
A Reflection of Socio Cultural
Aspects



Organised by the Department of English





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SEEING THE INDIAN FILMS THROUGH THE POINT OF VIEW OF BILDUNGSROMAN: 'K.G.F. CHAPTER 1' AND 'THE GUIDE'

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ABSTRACT

The development of character of the characters in any movie is generally the stand point of evaluating 'bildungsroman' in that movie. Keeping this in mind we propose to analyze protagonist Rocky from *K.G.F.* and Raju from *The Guide*, through the lens of their distinct development. As Rocky evokes the dilemma of him being an anti-hero or a hero, while in the movie *The Guide*, Raju acts as a swindler on whom gurudom has been forced. The autobiographical account in *The Guide* vis-à-vis the 'magic realism' in *K.G.F.* serves in some aspects under the umbrella of 'real to reel'. Present paper attempts to showcase the moral growth and psychological upheaval of the protagonists. Both the movies circle free within the time and the space. Our take on the protagonists is based on the differences they reflect after their transformation into the better version of themselves. Despite the maturing of both the protagonists, one of them clears the path of his sins and the other continually lives on with the notion of winning the world. Our findings include the loss of the protagonists, the journey followed by the conflicts resulting into personal growth and finally the maturation. Looking at the similarities in terms of what life offered them, both our protagonists seem to grow in order to fit in the stature of what was imposed on them quite aptly. Though the outcomes show no similarities, their life does, so is why this paper shall offer a detailed study of the overall character of the characters.

KEYWORDS: Indian cinema, bildungsroman, real to reel, magic realism, picaresque.

Introduction

Bildungsroman and Erziehungsroman are German terms signifying 'novel of formation' or 'novel of education.' A philologist named Karl Morgenstern coined this term in 1819 and the term was later validated and popularized by Wilhelm Dilthey in 1905. When the term is divided into 'bildung' and 'roman' it infers to 'education' and 'novel' respectively. This term in novel as well as in film refers to the development of the mind and character of protagonist. Broadly viewing the outline of the term with regards to a novel or a film, it works like this; childhood through varied experiences-

and often through a spiritual/emotional crisis – into maturity, that generally results into realization of one’s own identity and role in the world. Coming of age as it is often referred to, it is a depiction of journey of a naïve person towards maturity through internal and external conflicts. The usance of this term is panoramic in scope and surficial in technical terms.

The two movies that are juxtaposed in this paper portray two different kinds of development in the protagonists. In K.G.F. Rocky’s development begins in skeptical environment that could be a proposed result of his negative build out. Though here we have tried to look out for his character as inclined towards the dark side of the life, it is open to interpretations for the readers to classify him under the roof of a villain, an anti-hero, or a hero. The protagonist of the film The Guide rises to maturity in the last few minutes of the film which also suggests the ending of his life. Despite the ‘swamipan’ or ‘gurudom’ that was imposed forcefully upon him, he finally wins over his own internal conflicts. Contradictory to Rocky who is tilted towards the dark side of the life, Raju defeats his dark side and conquers his benevolent self.

Loss through protagonists’ early life

The key element of bildungsroman happens to be the loss suffered in the childhood of the character who is the protagonist. If not exactly in the childhood, more broadly in the beginning of the movie. Both the characters here undergo a life changing loss when film begins. Rocky’s mother dies in the beginning of the film which is where the seemingly unchanging hardships in his life gets a flow. His life is hence shaped with the dreads of existential crisis since his childhood. The movie revolves freely in the circle of time and space. His loss eventually carves him into making what becomes of him at the end of his life. The similarity in both the protagonists is that they lose their mother in the early life. For instance, death of Rocky’s mother due to a disease that could not be cured because of their poor economic condition and no human support and separation of Raju’s mother with Raju for bringing home a prostitute’s daughter.

In case of Raju the film begins with his freeing from the jail. Initially the viewers might feel that as the loss of his life as he was locked in prison, for some reason that remains anonymous to them in the beginning. While that event in Raju’s life maybe easily mistaken as the actual reason for the loss, it is not. The reason is certainly of his mother leaving home due to the unwelcoming circumstances of Rosie’s coming home. Just like Rocky, Raju also faces a series of internal and external conflicts with himself as well as with Marco and Rosie along with his mother and people from his work atmosphere. These conflicts give a rise to many more losses throughout the movie i.e., throughout his life.

What led to it?

The constant notion of winning the world was hovering over him since the day his mother took exit from the world. It was only a single thing that Rocky’s mother wanted for his son, that was to ‘die

rich'. Her last words were: *"I don't know how you will survive, but when you die, you will be the most powerful man."* In order to bring life to what his mother once said, Rocky sets off his journey to one of the most powerful cities in India, Bombay. His destination was of course not set, but his mind was, and that made him what he once promised to his dying mother. Throughout his life Rocky is in the hardcore urge of making his name which is why he encounters various dreadful events. Separated from his mother in the early childhood, Rocky is oblivious to the negative and positive aspects and ways of life. Not knowing what to do and what not to, how to live and how not to, he fell in the unending quest of 'power'. He was convinced that "Powerful people comes from power places" Since that day he made up his mind to go to the city of the struggle 'Bombay'. He was not knowing for what he was destined in that horror a city. A series of events were thrust upon him including the dreadful tasks undertaken by known underworlds. His childhood led him to tragical scars which seemed to be his destiny. In a constant quest of having a 'name' he interestingly behaved contradictory to most of the children of his age. He was not terrified by the bloodshed he envisioned on daily bases. Growing up this way his character rises emotionally and becomes positively hard hearted. He then falls in the hand of local gangster where he thinks he would have an opportunity of being popular. Day by day he kept getting better at this job so much so that he becomes a gangster who scares everyone. Inayat Khaleel was the biggest competitor of the transaction of gold from Dubai. The news of arrival of his ships started a rumpus in the gangland, people of Inayat Khaleel thought that Rocky is killed by his opponent powers and hence they were all set, and sailed towards the city shore. And now comes the twist in the events when Rocky was actually not killed but alive. This is explicitly narrated in the film likewise; "If Bombay faces the ocean on one side, on the other side is Rocky. Even if the waves want to touch the shore here, they have to seek his permission." Rocky's character develops deliberately when he is needed by a more dominant person than the one under whom he was working. His boss is made to see the fact that Rocky never takes a bow in front of him. Basically, he is made aware that it is Rocky who is the touchstone and people around him are well aware of this fact. The 'power' is his repeatedly highlighted want which makes him journey towards the kolar gold fields. Finally, then, he is assigned the killing of the most dominant person whose murder is as easy as drying the sea.

When Rocky finally has the chance to come face to face with Garuda, the person who was to be killed by him, he realizes there were yet many stones untouched in his quest of 'winning the world'. In order to examine the depth of the ocean in to which he was to dive he made up his mind and was determine to win the race slow and steady. He had the chance to kill Garuda on their first meeting but instead he found it more appealing to wait and watch. Deciding not to kill him at the very first encounter was a counted step on Rocky's part. He got the map of the fields and available informations regarding the kolar God field, the security arrangements, the protocol followed there and of course of Garuda. He endeavors to reach to the kgf. where he makes a good show of his

bravery and defeats Garuda's tight security. This is where he wonders and a vigor evokes in his mind of being kind towards the labourers who were jam packed in a truck and were being taken to work heartlessly at the hellish fields.

Coming to our second protagonist Raju, his journey begins when he is set free from the jail. The movie shifts to the flash back when Rosie who was once his beloved narrates her life with Raju as 'the guide'. Throughout the movie he is seen to be confused in various situations. For instance, at once he is a railway vendor and next, we see him as a guide. His shallow and superficial knowledge made him easily qualified for showing places to people and impressing them. Being a guide, he was then contacted by Marco who was in search of some ancient caves. That is when he finds out the unpleasant relationship into which Rosie, Marco's wife was married. Robert Green Ingersoll said: "hope is the consolation of the world". This is quite fitting in case of the strings that began to attach between Raju and Rosie. Raju consoled Rosie to not lose hope when Marco was totally oblivious to Rosie's existence and hardly cared. Rosie was merely a trivial thing for Marco as she hailed from a prostitute mother. Knowing the background too, Raju never thought of Rosie the way Marco did, 'as a property'. That is where the seeds of respect and kindness sprouted in the troubled and saddened heart of Rosie. Day and night Raju began to care about Rosie without any romantic feelings initially. Gradually Rosie found out that Marco was unfaithful to her, which loosened the wall between her feelings for Raju and her duty towards her lawful marriage. Time shifts and Raju works tremendously hard to set up a respectful image for Rosie. As a result of which Rosie shines as 'Nalini' the dancer. Moving on Raju begins to live with her and becomes her manager where they tour together across the country and earn a lot of money. Not to mention fame. Rosie begins to be cheerful and merry again by doing what she loved the most. Engrossed in her own world now, Nalini/Rosie develops a sort of resistance towards Raju and she corners herself from him.

One incident and it alters the lives of Raju, Rosie and Raju's mother. Raju is imprisoned for forging the signature for two years. On his freeing from the prison life gave him two ways, one was to return to his town and live with Rosie and the second was to begin his life from scratch in a place where no one knew him. He chose the second way.

Caught in conflicts

Rocky and Raju's life, as mentioned earlier was one that was imposed upon them and not the one they chose. Caught up in their own dual conflicts both our protagonists battle internally with the notion from the past and want for the future, and externally with the outer world that was not very welcoming or favorable.

Rocky enters the kolar gold field facing a lot of troubles and defeating almost undefeatable guards. He examines the work atmosphere at the fields which was horrifying. He children, the women, the

old men and the adults were harshly tortured and heartlessly exploited. But, as earlier mentioned he first wanted to examine the ocean in which he was to dive and hence he let the things happen as they were happening and became oblivious to the exploitation at his entry to the field as a worker. He gradually began to accumulate information about the insane elephant disguised in human.

Till the time he was outside the fields in the gangland he was seen as an anti-hero as he was one among the gangsters in the city but best of them. Now when he makes an entry to the gold fields his character evolves psychologically. He becomes vulnerable towards the feelings of the other workers there. Initially he chooses to work as a silent spectator but his ego takes a toll on him when he hears children saying that there was no one who could bring back the old man from the clutches of death. He becomes adamant on going after the odds and thus saves the man. Egotism is introduced here specifically to witness his growth as well as decline. He then, is able to kill Garuda at the sacrificial ritual of goddess Kali that eventually becomes his own.

Aforementioned event opened two windows for Rocky, one was to handover the empire of Garuda to his governing masters and the second was to establish his own kingship at the Kolar Gold Fields, the K.G.F. certainly, he did not choose the first option offered to him. He was positively thrust upon the conflicts and his choosing were inclined towards the conquering other which is according to our evaluation a path of viewing him as an anti-hero and not a villain.

Shifting towards our second protagonist Raju, his life had never been voided of internal conflicts and dilemma. From his job to his relationship to his life everything seems haphazard. Raju faces a constant loneliness throughout the film. He never gets a constant support from his mother or Rosie or his friend. He keeps losing them at various stages of life. He selflessly supported Rosie but when her turn comes to return his debts she backs off. Though the viewer would not choose to consider Raju as an innocent person in entirety. He was the one who forged the signature of Rosie's husband without her concern. This event sow the seeds of Raju's downfall. While he was in the jail Rosie realized his importance and promised to spend her life with Raju after his freeing. Caught up in the prison Raju had abundant time to ponder upon his future, that is how he would go about once he would be set free. And one day finally, his lamenting years come to an end.

Drawing similarities between Raju and Rocky the viewer would analyze that the former lives through the exact same situation like that of the latter. That is when Raju is set free he too has two ways to go about his future, the first is to choose to get back to his home and revive his relationships with his mother and Rosie and the second being to choose 'the road not taken'. Yet his conflicts does not take a pause here. Wandering through towns and villages he happened to rest in a village named Mangal, where his character becomes divergent. Some layman covers Raju with a saffron cloth and the village people mistakes him as a great saint. Devoid of shelter, dying of hunger and nowhere to go Raju accepts the service of the villagers as a boon from god. He wins the faith and

trust of uneducated village people and enjoys their service fully. But fate had different plans for him. He could not get away with this manipulated living. The village that took him for a devotional sage faced a drought and came up with a solution that if the divine souled saint fasts for twelve consecutive days the almighty will be pleased and it will rain. The tables turned against Raju and he had no choice but to fast. His conscience shouted to tell the truth so much so that he tried to escape the village but in vain. Left with the only choice he fasted knowing that it was an act of blind faith.

The beginning of the end or the end of the beginning?

Towards the end of the film Rocky caters to his dream of 'winning the world'. His character underwent through a tremendous loss following which he had to survive without any human support or otherwise. Strongly determined as he was he gives a fight and wins each and every horror that comes forth him. His character develops psychologically throughout the film as well as morally. Though it might be an open argument whether to put him under the category of anti-hero or a hero. This was certainly the beginning of his rise. Psychologically his mind travels from the thirst for bloodshed to saving a life. As a granted rule, one would not have thousands of people following when one is not morally positive. Similarly, Rocky had gained huge number of people who decided to stay with him in the dread of the gold fields and continue to be a part of his life. This could be seen as no less than a bench mark because when these petty workers entered the fields they had no idea what is going to become of them, the terrifying picture of the dark and mysterious fields haunted them and made them desperately want to leave. On the contrary when one among them killed the master of the horror house, all of them rose to the confidence of not leaving. This in itself was not just the maturation of Rocky but of all the people he represented. The trivial folk who were in desperate want to running off as soon as they can, now stayed with their new hero.

In the film 'The Guide', Raju is hovering between conflicts of his own personalities. When the fasting comes to an end and it rains, he partially if not wholly starts to believe in the divine power. But, as earlier mentioned the self-conflict becomes evident within him. The pride on his mind on one hand and the purity of the soul on the other gave him a tough time. His career as a 'guide' was not only in literal terms, he played his role in guiding Rosie, in guiding the people of the village towards spiritualism. Finally, the relationships started being revived with his mother, his beloved and his friend. The dilemma of listening to the mind or the heart, the pride or the kindness led him towards the final journey. The journey of end of the beginning. The immortal soul conquered the mortal pride and Raju became guru from the guide.

While we put Rocky vis-à-vis Raju, it becomes quite clear that their journey from loss to maturity has been a tough one. Rocky's maturation is visible when he did what his mother wished for and he promised for. But at the same time, he could have opened different doors to get to the final

destination. It was a choice that he made of becoming a gangster and not a noble man. One can reach to the same destination taking different routes but what counts is how and why. Raju on the other hand is plunged upon the gurudom and thrives to fit into that stricture until he finally is at peace with it. In keeping the faith upright and believing in the villagers and their trust on God he dies a divine death. Rocky's empire was ready to welcome him. And as his mother had once wished that he should die rich even if he was born poor, it is for viewers to decide whether he would or not die a divine death like his compared protagonist.

Conclusion

The picaresque element is witnessed in both the protagonists in their early life. What makes a difference is how they handled the situations imposed upon them and became the best version of themselves.

Towards the conclusion Raju develops from a swindler to a saint and dies a peaceful death where he is finally free from the prison of eternal dilemmas that he faced throughout his life. Rocky rises in the station and conquers the hearts of thousands of people at the same time gives a sense of betrayal to the powerful heads who helped him become what he dreamt of. Raju's life can be generalized as any layman's life which is why some critics have mentioned it to be an account similar to an autobiography, because it is 'every man's story'. The magic realism is one of the lens to scan the film K.G.F. the geographical and historical facts are true in nature and altered to make it seem like a work of fiction.

Thus, we have tried our best in analyzing 'bildungsroman' in the movies 'The Guide' and 'K.G.F. Chapter 1' and bringing out the different aspects and stages of bildungsroman and hence of the chosen protagonists. Raju sacrifices himself to prove the faith of the villagers and stands in our eyes as the hero. On the other hand, would you call Rocky a hero or an anti-hero?

BIONOTE

I am Prashant Chauhan. I am in my last year of post-graduation. I am pursuing my masters in English Literature from Saurashtra University. I endeavor to write poetries of my own. My likings include reading poems, stories and essays. Eco criticism is a branch that I wish to do my research upon. I live with my parents and my elder sister is married. My father runs a business and my mother is a homemaker. I have a knack of photography and watching documentaries related to history, mythology, fiction and science interest me a great deal.

I am Deesha Lathigara. I am pursuing my Masters in English Literature from Saurashtra University, Rajkot. I have a great passion for literature and arts in general. Apart from academics my interests lie in classical dance and music and origami. I am a trained kathak dancer and I hold a master's degree in that. I have also been a part of the Republic Day in 2019 through National Cadet Corps.

Fortunately I was awarded ‘Student of the Year’ trophy in my under graduation. My family consists of my grandmother and my parents. My father is a teacher and my mother works in the State Bank of India. I believe in ‘opportunity does not knock twice’ and thus it is my constant try to not miss out on whatever syncs with my interests.

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