



Characterization of Vasu Master in Githa Hariharan's *The Ghost of Vasu Master*: An Analysis

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Abstract:

Githa has employed a distinctive and distinct storytelling technique in "The Ghost of Vasu Master" to convey her ideas, which is the jigsaw puzzle. Novelists employ a variety of techniques as narrative instruments to delve into the reader's mental condition. Almost all of these tactics have been employed by her, something that very few novelists do. This book has outlined the character of a retired schoolteacher. Vasu Master, the protagonist of this book, does a wonderful job of illustrating how a person must deal with emptiness, boredom, and identity crises after retirement. Any child's life may be transformed by a committed educator who practices integrity in the classroom. He also highlights the shortcomings of the educational system, highlighting how caste and socioeconomic injustice harm kids' education.

Keywords: Education, Story, retirement, Student's life

A significant fraction of Indian women writers are involved in Indian English literature. In the annals of international literature, it holds a unique place. It has adopted a unique personality all its own. Fiction is certainly a relatively new literary form in Indian English literature. English fiction by Indian authors delves into the intriguing and sensual realm of racial fusion and the influence of civilizations with vastly disparate origins. An intriguing study and useful critique of Indian fiction is the struggle and resolution of several civilizations.

In Post-Modern Literature, myths, tales, and epics serve as tools and inspirations for elucidating the local ethos and culture. With her first book, *The Thousand Faces of Night*, which won the Common Wealth Prize, celebrated Indian author Githa Hariharan established a strong reputation. A passage from Panchatantra and other legends is narrated in her second book, *The Ghost of Vasu Master*. In order to portray Indian culture's people, lessons, and tales to contemporary readers, Githa Hariharan uses her imagination. She is adamant that stories must be altered and recounted to fit the context of our day to be considered authoritative.

The Ghost of Vasu Master is a coherent story about a retired schoolteacher from a tiny village. The protagonist and narrator of the book is Vasu, a retired schoolteacher. Six B students from a private school in the Indian village of Elipettai, where he taught for four years, sent him a gift. Following his departure from the institution, Vasu felt as though he had lost his identity. Consequently, the recollections of the past tormented him. After retiring, he was bland and bored. He decided to write notes in the notebook that his pupils had

provided. However, he had trouble focusing when he tried to write about how he felt. It disappointed him. After Mani started attending his tuition, he noticed a shift in his dull and depressing existence. Only because of Mani was he active. Vasu had a difficult time accepting his lonely existence. It took him some time to come to terms with it. The novelist deals with the mind, soul, and body of the protagonist. At the time of his retirement, Vasu had a physical ailment which more or less seemed to be an illusion for him. Vasu agreed to teach the complicated and intractable pupil Mani, to bring a change in him.

Mani was abnormal and was unable to speak or write anything. Something had interfered with his regular growth. He was unable to be cured by the physicians, educators, or schools. Finally, he was taken to Vasu Master, who was also having difficulty finding a way to resolve his physical and emotional issues. Vasu first struggled, but he persisted. He persisted in his difficult mission of guiding Mani to develop a curiosity for learning. However, it is unfortunate that Vasu's efforts were ineffective. Vasu was always thinking about the past as he was instructing Mani. It's fascinating to read the teacher's reflections. Sometimes his memories of his past are just repetitive.

Vasu began to brood about the tale of the animal. His mind wandered to the past, confusing him. The author deftly addresses and lists his issues. Although Vasu was torn by conflicts, it's possible that his physical illness—stomach pain—came from loneliness. He had an extremely hard time finding a cure for his disease. Despite seeing several physicians, he did not get well.

An important part of Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* is played by women. The author of *The Ghost of Vasu Master* depicts women who are minor characters in the story but who had a significant influence on Vasu in the past. Vasu's grandma shaped his character throughout his early years, just like Devi's grandmother did in *The Thousand Faces of Night*. The grandma is the picture of perseverance and hard labor. Vasu was raised by her without a mother, and she gave him a lot of love and care. Mangala, Vasu's spouse, was a submissive woman. She was an ordinary Indian lady. She worked on housework and took free time to learn how to make crafts from her friend Jameela.

Every time Jameela visited Vasu's residence to meet Mangala, she would cause him discomfort. After the death of Mangala, Jameela visited Vasu's house twice. She desired to see Vasu to say farewell to him following the passing of her spouse. She paused for a brief while. Vasu can read Jameela's thoughts. He thought Jameela would have something to say. However, she clarified that she intended to depart from Elipettai. She decided to return to her hometown, where she and Mangala had resided, after realizing she could not live alone in the village. Following that, Jameela too turned into a ghostly apparition similar to Mangala.

Vasu's father had made a deep impression in the mind of Vasu, especially in learning Shakespeare. His dad practiced Ayurveda. He was also an avid reader. The grandma brought Vasu to his father after he made a mistake. His dad was well-versed in her. She was so delicate that she could not take the punishment Vasu would receive. He began by quoting Shakespeare to avoid coming across as harsh:

Beware of entrance to a quarrel; but being in, bear't that the
opposed may beware of thee".

Vasu aspired to be the perfect educator. He knew Shakespeare inside and out. Veera Naidu, the owner and headmaster of Vasu's school, did not accept his goal. Vasu therefore had to put in a lot of effort to establish himself as the perfect teacher. He battles mightily to establish a solid foundation in his private life. He didn't feel content with his life, even after retiring. as he lacked a solid foundation in life. His instruction mirrored this as well. He had a terrible time teaching Mani at first. Vasu's harsh battle was exacerbated by his cramped living quarters.

In the notebook that the students gave him as a parting gift, Vasu intended to write an article titled "Four Decades in a Class Room" as a manual for aspiring educators. He was frequently distracted from his work by flashbacks to the past. He was not able to give a consistent strategy for his future. Whenever Venkatesan (a colleague of Vasu) visited his Guru (a Swami), he spent some time with Venkatesan. Vasu couldn't find a way to overcome his trauma. Vasu didn't seem to have the energy of a literary instructor. He demonstrated this clearly

when he led the students in Wordsworth's "Daffodils." He imagined himself hearing his father's voice. Regarding Wordsworth's source of inspiration—seeing daffodils—the voice made a very negative comment.

Vasu was not an effective teacher. The guys created paper pellets during his class period and pointed them at one another. He conceded his loss, stating that he was unable to understand what was happening in their minds. Despite his education and background as a teacher, he did not subscribe to rationalism. He pursued the Swamiji Venkatesan had recommended, just like a layperson would. Vasu paid attention to what the Swamiji had to say. In his speech, the Swamiji urged all of his followers to separate from their childhood. The thought of his sons Vishnu and Venu, who were deeply worried about their well-being as well as their father's pension and providence, brought Vasu to mind.

Both Head Master Veera Naidu and his colleagues thought well of Vasu as a gentle instructor. Similar to his father, who was driven to correct his patients, Vasu was as passionate about shaping his students for their future endeavors. As with all excellent instructors, Vasu made an effort, but neither the kids nor Veera Naidu acknowledged it. Throughout the narrative, he provides a detailed description of the pupils' disposition, demeanor, and temperament. Once he decided to show his students the Shakespeare film *The Taming of the Shrew*. Vasu was adamant about his choice, whereas Veera Naidu was vehemently opposed. Finally, he brought the lads along. The sensual drawing of the actress was drawn on the board the following day by Raman, a naughty child. Vasu was agitated. Upon seeing the photo, he declared, "I had not died of a heart attack." He tried in vain to correct Raman, asking him to highlight the nouns and verbs from the following words he had written on the board.

The statement of Veera Naidu regarding Vasu was evident from the behavior of Vasu towards his students. If it had been some other teacher he would have scolded the students or given them corporal punishments. Raman left the place unrepentantly. Vasu tried to mold the students. The role of a teacher was best described by Vasu through a moral story. He remembered the story of a mouse. Once a mouse wished to be a teacher, it went to a wise snake. The snake advised the mouse to become a judge, an ideologue, a priest, and a doctor. The mouse returned, and the snake told the mouse that it should have the quality of a mother to nourish the young one (i.e. students). A mother never forsakes her children. The story thus gives us the moral that a teacher needs the skills of all these personalities.

Vasu lacked confidence in his line of work. It was hard for him to find comfort in his own life, as well. He was a complicated person. Even though his grandmother raised him when he was a youngster following the loss of his mother, he did not fit in with the rest of the family. He was no longer able to control his boys following the loss of his wife. There was no real affection between his boys and their father. He experienced a sense of alienation from them. He was raised without a mother's affection. He spent a long time as a husband and wife not having a pleasant life together. Her early death was tragic. He did not receive the attention he deserved from his boys. Vasu's state serves as a stark reminder of how all modern men are now feeling. Many individuals feel alienated and fed up, especially after retiring. And the master Vasu was no different. Ignorance kept him from seeing that a bright future was ahead of him. Diverse thoughts were occupying his mind. Completing his notes was difficult for him. Because of how much his recollections troubled him, he was always sidetracked by his past and unable to finish the work at hand. A large number of people worldwide are in this situation. In his life, Vasu has only welcomed setbacks. Even Vasu acknowledges his lack of experience in taking notes.

In conclusion, Githa Hariharan has shown Vasu master as a common guy who possesses all of his flaws. He never made it as a master. In his life, he was unable to find comfort. In the book, small chapters detailing Vasu Master's reflections are interspersed with some of his philosophical musings. Vasu tells several anecdotes that are woven throughout the book. Panchatantra's stories are heavily referenced in Githa Hariharan's book. In the end, the book is a masterful fusion of fairy tales and psycho-social narratives about a teacher who seeks to create amazing new ways for himself to understand and define the world around him.

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