

CONCLUSION

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In Retrospect : In this dissertation, I have made efforts to search 'Self-Discovery' in Githa Hariharan's The Ghosts of Vasu Master. This dissertation is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, I have taken a brief survey of Indian women novelists in the post-independence era. In-fact, before independence, Indian novel in English was male dominated, but in the post-independence era, there appeared a number of women writers like Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, Bharti Mukherji, Kamala Markandeya, Shashi Deshpande, Ruth Pravar Jhabvala, Githa Mehta, Arundhati Roy, Githa Hariharan and so on. Among them, some were feminists but some had other concerns like social injustices, man-woman relationship, problem of adjustment in husband's home, east-west encounter etc. The most realistic and socialistic novelist is Kamala Markandaya, who has presented in her novels the problem of tannery, landlordism, Indian immigrants etc. The problem of adjustment in husband's home is dealt with Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Nayantara Sahgal. In fact, the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award winner, Shashi Deshpande presented man-woman

relationship and pathetic condition of women in male dominated society in her novels. Shobha De, depicted the moral and spiritual breakdown of modern society. Mahasweta Devi appealed the women through novels to realize their inner strength. Bharati Mukherji and Githa Mehta took up the issues like east-west encounter, the problem of adjustment of Indians who live in foreign countries etc. Booker prize winner novelist, Arundhati Roy depicted caste and class prejudiced society in Kerala. It seems that a number of awards are received by women novelists due to their realistic presentation of Indian life.

With this survey of Indian women novelists, I have put forth, Githa Hariharan's biography in short, her works, and influences on her writings, her concern with genre and reviews on her writings. While studying her works, I came to know that though she is a feminist writer, she has a wider sense of themes. She has portrayed in her novels the world of women, hampering notions on them such as tradition, religion and caste, their dreams and desires. She has presented injustices on women with the use of archetypes. Besides feminism, she has dealt with the image of teacher in her two novels.

For instance, in her In Times of Seige, Prof. Shivmurthy is denounced on the grounds of caste prejudice. From her biography, it is seen that she was influenced by her teacher Nita Pillai, the authors like Amitav Ghosh, Mahasweta Devi, Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai and so on. Her concern with genre is humanistic, where she looks at women, teachers, children with clear steady eyes. In case of her novels, Dr Jayprakash Shinde has thrown light on feminine ghosts, Anjali Roy on Githa Hariharan's employment of oriental narratives of story telling and Ram Kundu, on her technique of intertext metafiction.

In the second chapter of this dissertation, I have tried to explain the theory of self-discovery. In fact self-discovery is the psychological process where character studies his own personal life, his achievements and failures. It becomes possible with the help of past memories and future thinking as painting fantasies. I have tried to search various meanings of 'self', 'discovery', self-discovery'. The psychological uses of 'self' are also stated. Besides, different shades of the meanings of fantasy and fable have

been explained with the help of various dictionaries and encyclopaedias.

In the third chapter of dissertation, I have tried to analyse self-discovery of Vasu Master. Vasu Master is Githa Hariharan's image of Indian teacher. In fact, everybody has some merits and demerits. Vasu Master is sketched in the beginning of the novel as a patient, visiting several doctors and he is teaching a boy named Mani who is another patient. One thing is remarkable that Vasu Master has genuine love for education, some desires and ambitions.

In Conclusion :

I found Vasu Master to be weak, coward and a frail person. Among the students, he becomes a laughing stock when his students give him a frog in a box as retirement present, Veera Naidu calls him 'a patient' and Venkatasan calls him a 'Free bird'. He has many good ideas but he can't act due to lack of practical knowledge. His image of an Indian teacher is only to listen about corruption in P.G. and instead of making protest, sit in the home as Grey Mouse inside the mousehole.

Though Vasu Master was an educated person, he couldn't understand the proper meaning of life. Instead of leading happy life with his sons, he accepts impossible mission of teaching Mani. He is always thinking of death, by seeing a crow, he thinks of the messenger of death. He looks into mirror and becomes sorrowful for being old and considers the mole on his chin to be of cancer.

I found Vasu Master to be a negative person, a narrow minded Indian teacher. He can be compared to Tennyson's Lady of Shallot who can't come into the outer world due to a curse. In fact, there is no curse Vasu Master has to face. His sons often wrote him letters, enquired about his health, insisted on him to stay with them, yet he did not send reply to their letters also. It means, he doesn't value his sons, his head-master, his colleagues, Swami and others. He saw only snakes in the office, staff-room, class-room instead of humans. I think even his father and grandmother were more practical minded than him. He is a man of day-dreaming and night-dreaming also.

To Vasu Master, the whole world is found to be stuffed with pains and sorrows, but he doesn't see the happy side of the world.

Thus Githa Hariharan has presented this pathetic image of Indian teacher.

Githa Hariharan has employed an important novelistic technique of self-discovery by which a character can discover his existence, achievements, failures, insights, his missions, objects of his life etc. Vasu Master tries to discover his identity right from the beginning to the end of the novel. At the time of Mani's examination, he discovered that the world seen from far away, seems to be attractive, better but when we go closer. it appears otherwise. Vasu discovered that one can't buy happiness by money.

I found Githa Hariharan's Feministic approach in the present novel through the characters of Vasu Master's grandmother, his mother and his wife Mangala. She has portrayed Vasu Master's grandmother as thoughtful, wise, physically sound who rarely used the word 'medicine'. She used to eat raw, dried, fried, boiled chilies and she had power to digest them. She was harbinger in kitchen who believed that food cures our body naturally. Githa Hariharan has sympathy for female infants who are denounced for being female. Vasu Master's mother was not named for a year because

her parents didn't want to spend money on naming ceremony of a daughter and felt shy that people would laugh for their failure to bear a son and so a sweeper-woman named her as Laxmi.

Githa Hariharan has portrayed Mangala's character as lovable mother, affectionate friend to other women like Jameela and the modest wife who served her husband lovingly until her death and protected her sons from bad influences.

Besides, being a feminist, Githa Hariharan has dealt with other issues as well. In her interview with Arnab Chakladar, she admits :

I am a writer who is feminist alongwith several other things. But one of the first lesson you learn as a writer that there is some sort of truth, some sort of fidelity to the character that you have to follow.¹

I found that Githa Hariharan has thrown light on the tradition of Indian ayurveda and education. In her view, ayurveda means the 'science of life' which teaches us how to live. To Indian people, Charaka, Sushuruta and Gandhi are safe models. Vasu Master's

father was a practitioner of ayurveda, used the rasayanam, the promotive treatment which purifies blood and strengthened the body. Ayurveda was taught in ancient universities like Takshila and Nalanda where the scholars from distant lands came to study. She has selected archetypes of Charaka, Sushuruta, Shakespeare as well as archetypes of ancient education and ayurveda.

Githa Hariharan has thrown light on traditional systems of education in India. Her protagonist, Vasu Master preferred gurukula education system of ancient times but at the time of Mani's examination, he came to know that traditional education system was futile. Vasu Master's choice of Shakespeare is a victory of formal institutionalized schooling over the gurukula.

I found Githa Hariharan's concern with nativism through the present novel in which she could not forget her native ideals. Though Vasu Master's father is a physician, he makes use of panchangam also. It is a native tradition of Indian people. It is an astronomy to specify the auspicious dates in the year. Vasu Master's love for slokams is also the reflection of nativism. Though Vasu Master studied the works of Shakespeare, he admits that he is

Tamil speaking subhuman where his love for native languages is explicit. Vasu Master's attraction for Marina beach, his nostalgic feeling for Rameshwaram reveals his love for native things.

It is observed that Githa Hariharan is distinct in case of her narrative technique which involves the use of fable, fantasy and dream etc. The pleasure of the novel is enhanced by the use of fables about Grey Mouse, Blue Bottle, Mascot, Spider etc.

On the whole, it can be said that Githa Hariharan's contribution to Indian fiction in English in general, and Indian women writers' fiction in particular, is quite significant and it definitely adds to the rich tradition of Indian fiction in English.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Arnab Chakladar, An Interview, Internet Resource, www.githahariharan.com.