

# **EVOLUTION OF THE INDIAN ENGLISH WRITING PARALLEL WITH THE PROTAGONIST FAMILY OF GHACHAR GHOCHAR**

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In today's times during which modern parameters for judging any country is the level of its emergence as a developing nation in association with its wealth, the number of literary works produced on these lines continues to be very sparse. Apart from R.K.Narayan's 'Financial Expert', published almost immediately after independence, there have not been many writings exploring the direct relationship of money with human beings. Not many in a language we understand at least. The Novella titled Ghachar Ghochar by Vivek Shanbhag, which has been chosen here to trace this trajectory, is a recent attempt to bring forth the fraught nature of the bond between Indian populace and their economics. The reason why this has echoes with the evolution of Indian writing is that it signals a ripening maturity of engagement in the fictional form by a litterateur. It is a story about an Indian family rooted in its recent past and depicts the phenomenal transmutation and change in sensibility that accompanies life after coming into money. India and its writings are otherwise most closely associated with spiritual leanings or post-colonialist anger or a writing accused of being elitist and smelling of colonial hangover in the sense that the story is not its own but trying to achieve an aspirational high. They are written in ironies and sarcasm and in magic realism and obscure language but do not hit the nail on its head. One of the critics said of the language of Indian English used in Ghachar Ghochar- "language real enough for semi-literate and devoid of literary grace". There is no doubt that the involvement of the writer with the translator to give the most authentic experience of this novel is high. Apart from that, the dynamics of the publishing industry in India has taken an upward shift and they are no longer veered only towards top award winning writers of the age. Indian writing has been most diverse in its own languages and by bringing them out in the forum of a more popular medium of English, what is being done is enabling the most original Indian story adaptation. As D.Prasad, a scholar has written in the journal, 'Language in India', "the writers of Indian writing in English have tried to express Indian sensibility in their works. Sensibility can be defined as an unconscious yet habitual stance of mind, heart and soul towards men, things, events, nature and God. It is an innate susceptibility to impressions and reactions. It is like 'rasa' in Sanskrit literature."

Indian verse writing has been challenged over being 'truly Indian' and a question as to whether it is merely a 'whispering gallery of echoes rather than a chorus of authentic voices' has been raised in an essay from the book 'Studies in Indian English literature' by Professor M.K.Naik. . While the above quote speaks for the verses, it is not an un-thought of opinion for several novel-istic renderings. The cause of such concern has to do with a generation of writers finding major influences in their writings in foreign as well as western thought processes and philosophers to some extent. The recent winners of major accolades and awards include 'Narcopolis' by Jeet Thayil (winner of DSC South Asian Prize), Lives of Others by Neel Mukherjee (Nominated for the Booker Prize), Inheritance of Loss by Kiran Desai (Booker Prize winner) and also Lowland by Jhumpa Lahiri. They represent an urge of a fuller life but one that is exiled from the national landscape. Any genre or canon that is consolidated over time is built over some common ground. Indian English writing carried the sentiment but the desires were for the foreign either in the story or seemingly the audience it targeted. For one of the first few times, the Indian novel presents a hope of still an ambitious future but one that the reader might readily be able to identify with. It can be said from this that, the Indian Novel is homeward bound and growing more realistic. Perhaps, it depicts the slide in expectations since independence having adjusted itself to the more naturalistic details. The writings have meandered from the outsider's view as Suketu Mehta has been critiqued of doing in Maximum City and revolutionary bases in many recent novels to entering the domestic and the bourgeoisie as is tactile in the novella Ghachar

Ghochar. Having been exposed to and in touch with the world from the base, the novel trend has now begun to examine the base, itself.

The novelist under the purview of this paper, Vivek Shanbhag has been likened to Anton Chekov and this might yet again raise the energies to ask: another writer revered because of similarity with the canon writer. To this, Shanbhag had the perfect reply: "Literature is not a tennis match where you play against an opponent" but from a very young age this writer compared himself to the best of writers and tried to see where the gap was. In Ghachar Ghochar, he has tried to outline the internal struggles of individuals of a family when social and political freedom is at hand. He like Chekov is advocating for artistic works that tries to understand the dilemmas of the self and liberate it, if possible. If nothing, he lays bare to the understanding of his readers the conflicts within each individual. His belief in Hemingway's Iceberg Theory is also apparent when the story plays out for the most part, below the surface, where he lets these issues simmer there, until one can liberate the self from the struggle of life. Something that is clear when the protagonist's wife goes away from him after trying to resolve many major and minor points of conflict with her husband. The Indian writing in English can thus be seen to be non-dictatorial. This is a welcome breath of air where objective and not moralistic or ideological furnishings are made in the fiction. In this case, the writings stem from an assimilated whole of ideas and any parallel drawn is made by interpreters, each within their own phenomenological experiences.

It can be stated easily that all this while the novels that have been referred to as non-conforming to Indian writing are the one's that have actually been written in English and the translated ones are the few that is proposed to set the emerging trends in Indian writing in English. From the point of view of the writer, Vivek Shanbhag, author of Ghachar Ghochar," a sentence to sentence translation of the story from one language to another is not successful in getting what is essentially Indian writing and then Indian writing in English. It is the tone that one must get right". This means that whichever the language, if the idea has been developed through the fiction, it should be able to get across in any language and that is why translation is such an involved phase or else much can be lost in it. The English language thus expands the reader base but it is the reader themselves who have demanded it and so the publishers line up. As mentioned in the abstract, no piece of writing is entirely unacceptable to the Indian reader as they have grown up amongst contradictions not just between states and languages but worldviews of different countries. Shanbhag has stated in an interview that in our mind, we are always making translations of what is written and implied that language is only a medium but this text like many others in English have extended the reader base beyond a certain region and opened for the reader, the intellect of another countryman. This intellect displays common problems and complex connections with the core of material objects which is money. Thus, as long as the story can be implanted in the minds of its Indian readers, be it mythological, historical or purely thrilling, any writing can qualify as Indian writing. The problems of a nation, the different levels of education at which different Indians persist makes one identify with one character and another with someone else. This indicates a shared comprehension of ideas and co-existence with others which is a common experience of the rich and varied heritage of every Indian.

Some of the socio-economic factors which have gone into the production of content of fiction in the twenty first century have depended upon increasing globalization. Thus, Jagdish Batra in his essay 'Emerging Trends in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Indian English Novel' suggests how the lifestyles and general outlook of the people have changed and become more admissible of the colossal transfiguration taking place at the social plane. Vivek Shanbhag depicts that in the novella through the break-up of a traditionally arranged marriage without much opposition and portrays the failure of the idealism around it, in our country. Of a silent love interest of Chikkappa (Appa's brother), of the wielding away of power from the patriarch and making decisions on what is weighed out to be more correct in the spur of the moment. It also traces the distancing from discussions and full-fledged conversations within the family to confusion almost akin to drama of the Mohan Rakesh's Adhe Adhoore. The present novella form thus witnesses the crumbling of structures and exploration into domains of the prohibited as Malti begins to engage in 'illicit' relationships or when the narrator cannot understand his wife's insistence on an earning through actual work instead of gaining access to money via privilege.

While the argument is that translations have become welcome, the hitch in the point is Perumal Murugan's *Madhorubagan*. Such uproar had never been seen in India before over a novel. It however proves the point that more attention is being paid and that is because the readers are interested. Also, the politics around the book is another matter altogether. It is a novel which expresses a very real indigenous practice in India and the acceptance of this existence can begin from here on. The process has started and there are bound to be some skirmishes before the dominant can be challenged by the residual and emergent as Raymond Williams explained in theory. Why should this example be mentioned when the text in focus is *Ghachar Ghochar*? This was required to emphasize that when a translation is made, to use the exact phrase, a language is 'twice-born'. It faces the complexities of a new and different culture and the receptions can be very varied. In the essay, 'Use of Translation in Indian English Novel' is stated that, "Culture is like gravity. You don't understand it until you jump six feet into the air. Culture can be best understood from the analogy of an onion peeled, thereby, layer after layer. At the core lie the basic assumptions followed by norms of what is right and wrong and finally the products of that culture such as language, literature, food etc". While Murugan was acidly attacked because he let surface the suppressed, Shanbhag in *Ghachar Ghochar* as mentioned earlier works on a sub-surface level and the disruption in a traditionally formed culture is very clear, even here. However, it is clothed in words. When Malati's marriage breaks down, Appa is shown to not be very approving of it and especially of the hooliganism that Chikkappa resorts to in order to obtain Malati's jewellery. Even Amma had hoped that it would be 'salvaged'. The narrator himself thought he heard sobs from Malati's room but didn't go in to make any consolations. The point of disruption is stark when Malati's Mother-in-law throws a provoking statement about the nouveau rich and how even with all the money, one can't buy graciousness. Amma is wounded and tries to defend her family because she doesn't believe she has lost out on the dignity of values just because they have better living standards. Thus, here rings true what A.R Ramanujan has written on how anything that comes into the house, never goes out but may lose themselves among several others. This novella prevents controversy because it pre-empts the discordance and raises and resolves it within the story. Murugan is explicit while Shanbhag erects a glass boundary and besides, upon translation into English, two new passages have been added due to the editor's prodding which may or may not be subversive but is a difference created to cope with the scrutiny of new readers.

While at the beginning, a memory of once in a month eating out of the narrator's family is given where a coffee was a shared luxury, post coming into good times, the narrator does nothing but sit in a coffee shop. He thinks hard about what is right and where he went wrong when his wife sends him off to work. Why does she expect him to earn when earning was easily available? Culture here poses as a customary difference between the upbringing of two individuals in a marriage. The narrator understands the value of money as much as his wife Anita, having experienced tougher times but the grip of his over money has negated for far too long a time period. Anita can be said to have come unstuck from a family that believes in thrift and values money but has not lost themselves to its dominion. Anita comes into the house with hopes for a comfortable living but not unearned. Thus Indian writing is no longer dictating what is culture but like its territorial diversity is exploring all kinds of contrasts. This heterogeneity augurs much richness in further writing.

The subject of the novel- money itself, is very routine. However, Indians on a general level are very cautious about money, probably because of which India faced the recent economic recession with relative ease. The only other precedent novel with this theme by R.K.Narayan, 'The Financial Expert' also depicts a middle class urge to earn money and loss of control after gaining that success. The Appa of the family in *Ghachar Ghochar* is thus portrayed aptly as a warning with typical hesitation about the family's current prosperity because he believes that 'wealth shouldn't strike suddenly but instead grow gradually as a tree'. Earlier, it has been said that a person who spent money also took away from others. As long as this limitation persisted, Appa had a hold on the family but once this was severed, not only did Appa lose control and become a garrulous bloke for the family but the individuals of the family themselves lost any sense of discipline or restraint.

This novella thus presents a curious relationship of Indian's fascination with money and the very potential fall as a consequence of unsteady and sudden growth in wealth. It also delineates many cultural stigmas about India as a Nation and stereotypical ways of writing along with its subject matter. As it is translated, it also covers the questions that appear upon the diversity of literatures in our country. In a very simplistic and brief sans deliberate effort at subversions, it ultimately becomes a sophisticated rendering of a changing trend in Indian English Writing which is ready to stand on its own feet in front of the rest of the world.

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