



Think India (Quarterly Journal)

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Two-Day National seminar on

"Artificial Intelligence, Multimedia and ICT in Teaching, Learning and Acquisition"

sponsored by

Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi
on 23rd and 24th September 2019 at Department of English,
SRI S. Ramasamy Naidu Memorial College, Sattur, Tamilnadu, India



Terminology Usage In Chetan Bhagat's Literary Writing

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ABSTRACT

Popular writings are basically plot-driven and attract broad audience while literary writing is character-driven and it appeals to a smaller, and more intellectual, audience. A work of literary fiction may fall into any category but what sets it apart from pop fiction are such characteristics as excellent writing and originality of thought and treatment that elevate it above ordinary writings. Chetan Bhagat is undoubtedly a writer of popular fiction. Popular fiction is defined by a wide and varied readership that belongs to a mediocre and lowbrow category. The word 'popular' originally meant 'belonging to the people'. While literary fiction aims to hold up a mirror to human condition, popular fiction aims to entertain, thrill and comfort the readers. This difference manifest itself in the plot, character, specifically language and style fictional writing. According to Chetan Bhagat, serious fiction experiments with theme, language and technique. Chetan Bhagat writes his books mainly for all readers. The young people read his novels avidly because they can easily identify themselves with the characters and situations depicted in them and with the issues articulated in a kind of English which they themselves speak and write. Unlike the literary writers, Bhagat does not use any passive sentences in his writing which makes his books such easier to understand for the



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readers whose English is a functional and acquired second language. His books can be read even by those who have very limited English and experience difficulty with the language.

Keywords: Literary writing, Popular fiction, Language experience and Readers.

Language is a system that consists of the development, acquisition, maintenance and use of complex systems of communication, a language is any specific example of such a system. Language is the mien of ideas by means of speech-sounds combined into words. Words are combined into sentences, this combination answering to that of ideas into thought. On that way English is the first or often the only language of communication among the people. English plays a vital role and is used to perform a variety of official, educational, and other roles. Formally English has a status of assistant language, but in fact it is the most important language of India. English symbolizes in Indians minds, better education, better culture and higher intellect in all fields particularly in literary writings. English Language in Indian writing is an honest enterprise to demonstrate the ever rare gems of Indian Writing in English. Wide ranges of themes are dealt with in Indian Writing in English. While this literature continues to reflect Indian culture, tradition, social values and even Indian history through the depiction of life in India and Indians living elsewhere, recent Indian English fiction has been trying to give expression to the Indian experience of the modern predicaments.

India is recognized as the third largest publisher of English language books after the USA and the UK. Traditionally Indian writing in English has been synonymous with literary fiction, dominated by writers who have won prestigious awards like the Man Booker and the Pulitzer or have been highly acclaimed in the West. Interestingly, the West, by contrast, has always patronized the writers of mass appeal in their own countries. The early 1990s of the



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last century marked the turning point in post-Independence Indian history. In its wake, a new, English-speaking, upwardly mobile, highly aspirational middle class has arisen who are less interested in either traditional Indian fiction with its elegant style and perfect English or that which is imported from and endorsed by the West. They lap up instead homespun stories which mirror their own experiences and aspirations and are written in a language which they can easily understand.

While literary writing is character driven and it appeals to a smaller, and more intellectual audience. A work of literary fiction may fall into any category but what sets it apart from pop fiction are such characteristics as excellent writing and originality of thought and treatment that elevate it above ordinary writings. Chetan Bhagat is undoubtedly a writer of popular fiction. Popular fiction is defined by a wide and varied readership that belongs to a mediocre and lowbrow category. While literary fiction aims to hold up a mirror to human condition, popular fiction aims to entertain, thrill and comfort the readers. This difference manifest itself in the plot, character, specifically language and style fictional writing. According to Chetan Bhagat, serious fiction experiments with theme, language and technique. Chetan Bhagat writes his books mainly for all readers.

The young people read his novels avidly because they can easily identify themselves with the characters and situations depicted in them and with the issues articulated in a kind of English which they themselves speak and write. Unlike the literary writers, Bhagat does not use any passive sentences in his writing which makes his books such easier to understand for the readers whose English is a functional and acquired second language. His books can be read even by those who have very limited English and experience difficulty with the language. What Chetan Bhagat is actually doing is to create a healthy culture of buying and



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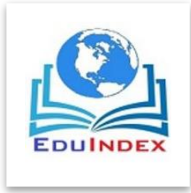
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reading books. He is also challenging writers of more literary bent to pay attention to an Indian readership. Regardless of how simple or artless his books might be, they prod Indian writers to tell stories which are compelling and relevant to contemporary Indian context.

Detractors mock him and disparage his writing on their facebook pages and newspaper articles. Some even say that Bhagat's books are not works of literature by any means; they are not novels either by any standard of novel writing. They are close to comic books devoid of literary refinement or polish, sparkling dialogues, unusual images and symbols, intelligent humour or scathing satire. The readership of his novels includes people from a variety of social strata many of whom have no past history of reading English novels and for whom English is an alien language. He said in an interview: "The profile of people reading my books is shocking from drivers, constables, people who frisk you at airports they are people who you thought would never read anything in English." Bhagat wants to reach out to these people and make a difference in their lives.

Bhagat catches the pulse of the nation by using a language that the youngsters swear by. Literary critics and book reviewers may frown over his use of hip-lingo but Bhagat affirms that it is deliberate. "I can write impeccable English," he says in an interview with *Headlines Today*, "But then I don't want to write something that half of readers won't understand. So I write for the people in their language." Bhagat, like many of the new breed of bestselling authors, is not bothered much about the purity and quality of his language or about the exalted style of the writers of literary fiction. In fact, he dismisses literary writers as either too Western, too high-browed, or too disconnected with real India. In contrast, writers like him write an Indian version of English that everyone is comfortable with. For a popular author connecting with the masses and catering to their demands is a way to achieve success



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and Bhagat follows this religiously. Thus he is not at all a literary writer but a highly successful and popular author who is less concerned with the purity and excellence of his medium of communication than with what is being communicated to his readers.

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