

CULTURAL DISPUTES PRESENTED IN CHETAN BHAGAT'S FICTION

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ABSTRACT

As a result of “Chetan Bhagat’s” impact, people have altered their current reading habits. All aspects of youth culture, including the educational system, romance, adventure, social challenges, and the nature of employment in large organisations, have been discovered by him. He has uncovered almost every facet of youth culture. In the second volume, he addresses the topic of inter-caste marriage, which is a single theme that is quite important. In light of this, it is abundantly evident that despite the fact that young people are more receptive to change, they will be the ones to directly feel the negative impacts of change due to the considerable age difference. The narrative focuses on two main characters, “Krish & Ananya”, who play a pivotal role. Ethnic extremism is a theme that flows throughout the whole of the book due to the fact that the individuals come from a variety of different ethnic backgrounds. From the beginning of the tale until the joyful finish, when they marry and assimilate into one other’s cultures, there are a number of problems that develop along the course of the narrative. In passing, the title of the book makes a reference to the racial and cultural disparities that exist between the traditions of Native Americans from the south and those from the north.

KEYWORDS: Inter-caste Marriage, Cultural Differences, Sentiments of Young Generation, Suffering, Culture.

INTRODUCTION

The release of “Chetan Bhagat’s” debut book marked the beginning of his presentation of a literary canon that was both innovative and new. These canonical works have had a significant influence on the preferences of aspiring readers. “*Revolution 2020, Two States: The Story of My Marriage, Five Point Someone, Three Mistakes of My Life, One Night at Call Centre, and Three Mistakes of My Life*” are only few of the numerous works that he has written. From romance and adventure to social concerns and the educational system, he has discovered practically every

facet of today's youth, including the ways in which multinational businesses impact their lives and the comprehensive answers that are available to them. He has also unearthed the educational system. In the same way that his predecessors "Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan & Raja Rao" did, "Chetan Bhagat" has embraced the creative appropriateness of books written in the English language. But his preference for depicting Indian reality is both an extension and a partial erasure of his immediate predecessors, "Vikram Seth, Salman Rushdie & Arundhati Roy", who revolutionised Indian fiction in English by persistently challenging the norm of westernised appearance as "other" & "substrate." His preference for depicting Indian reality is both an extension and a partial erasure of his immediate predecessors. There are two main reasons why "Chetan Bhagat's" novel *2 States* is so popular: first, the author freely acknowledges that the book is based on his own experiences, and second, it resonates with today's young. The popularity of the book is due in part to both of these things. Though both public recognition of his personal experience and the genuineness of his work enhance his fan base, he insists that originality is more important. The author generously dedicated his works to his in-laws and claims in the Acknowledgement to *2 States* that his own experiences inspired these novels: "In addition, there are a few caveats that I'd like to mention. The events inside my own family served as the first wellspring for my narrative. Please remember that the content presented here is purely fictional. To add to the authenticity and portrayal of contemporary cultural iconography, I have included the names of actual people, places, and organisations". (Bhagat, Interview)

This narrative will revolve only around a Punjabi guy and his South Indian lover, "Ananya"; it will not include any other elements. Before they can eventually turn their intense bond into a marriage, they must each overcome many obstacles. The reason for this is because "Ananya", a typical Tamil Brahmin, and "Krish", a young guy from Punjab, are quite different. Their love for one another and desire to wed complicates an already difficult and perhaps deadly situation, especially given their geographical separation. "Ananya Swaminathan" and the protagonist, a Punjabi boy named "Krish Malhotra", meet for the first time at the campus cafeteria of the Indian Institute of Management Ahmadabad. The story starts here. It just so happens that "Ananya" and the person who works in the mess end up fighting. Luckily, "Krishna" steps in to fix matters and ends up winning over the campus's most popular student in the process. The story follows them as they fall deeply in love and face the uphill battle of convincing their parents to approve of their marriage. The most intriguing part of the story is

how the pair decides to change their behaviour to show their family that they are happy enough to get married instead of running away and avoiding them. “Krish & Ananya” take turns trying to win over their spouses’ families, which leads to the families being friendly with one other. Reason being, they are cognizant of the fact that in Indian custom, the bonds that affix a wedding, not between the couple, but between their respective families, are paramount. Although love weddings in other cultures tend to be less elaborate and more straightforward, “Chetan Bhagat” claims that this is not the case in Indian society. This assertion is stated on the book’s reverse cover.

Love weddings are uncomplicated and straightforward everywhere. A boy’s fantasy is a girl. An emotional bond shared between sexes. The couple exchanges vows. On the other hand, a few of additional steps are required in India: Intimate love between a boy and a girl. Love exists between men and women. To expect a girl’s family to respect a boy’s family is to expect the unexpected.

Undoubtedly, the girl’s family holds the guy’s family in high regard. A guy and a woman are in a committed relationship. They decide to do it. “Krish” chooses to work for the “City Bank of Chennai” as it is where “Ananya” and her family reside. But even though this puts him in close quarters with “Ananya” and her folks, he still has a hard time adjusting. In her pursuit of parental approval, “Krish” goes to extraordinary lengths. Among his many accomplishments, he uses his own bank to support her mother’s performance, helps “Ananya’s” father with his PowerPoint presentation, and plans a dinner party where “Ananya’s” family members would get gold rings. His efforts to win over “Ananya’s” parents are fruitful, and they eventually acknowledge him as their son-in-law. “Krish” pronounces-

“I, Krish Malhotra, would like to propose to all of you. Will you marry me?” I said and held the four boxes in my palm”. (Bhagat: 2009, 183)

As a further step, “Ananya” must get the approval of “Krish’s” family. It all starts with “Krish’s” mother and other relatives’ anti-marriage position, which prevents him from marrying any “Madras” lady. As she reassures the groom that a larger car would be a nice luxury, the guests start to warm up to her. When “Krish” asks her to go to his cousin “Minti’s” wedding to “Duke”, she is first resented. But she starts to win over the bridegroom’s affection as she keeps

calming his desires. As a result, “Krish’s” mum is preparing to welcome her daughter-in-law into the family. While they do have some difficulties in the outset, the couple is able to reconcile and get back together as a married unit. An important part of “Chetan Bhagat’s” writing and subject picks is the discussion of romantic relationships among young Indians from middle-class families. This is shown by the plot of the novel. This fictional piece deftly captures the struggles of young Indians who, despite facing psychological and physical abuse at the hands of their parents, fall in love with someone from a different religious or cultural background - and, more crucially, a different caste system - and wish to marry. The fact that the book’s “Prologue” details “Chetan Bhagat’s” actual marriage to a south Indian woman provides undeniable proof that the novel is based on truth. It probably helped him portray the real-life circumstance since it provides a true sense of compassion. Two protagonists, “Krish & Ananya”, are at the centre of the story. “Krish” is from a Punjabi household in New Delhi, whereas “Ananya” is from “Tamilnadu”. They meet in person at “IIMA” and develop romantic feelings for one other.

The tale becomes entangled in the web of cultural extremes the moment they meet; the plot remains tight until their marriage and the process of cultural digestion brings them joy. The use of frictions and counter-frictions in this piece adds an air of mystery and intrigue, which keeps the reader engaged and susceptible to the author’s psychological manipulations, even if it is a play on those concepts. Their parents approve of their plan to run away together before they do it, instead than the other way around. The younger generation may see them as role models on how to persuade their parents to embrace new moral and family value systems since they are not traditional conservatives but rather cosmopolitans. The younger generation might look up to them as role models. “Chetan Bhagat” has drawn attention to the love affair and the parallel problem of generation gap via the debate of inter-caste love marriage, which is considered taboo in India. The book is structured around this central theme. The generational divide is shown by the very different bond shared between “Krish” and his father, as well as their infrequent communication. This is because, as any typical Indian husband would while punishing his wife, “Krish’s” father is very controlling and impatient, and he goes to tremendous lengths to punish “Krish’s” mother. “Krish”, on the other hand, defies the norm of male dominance in relationships when he falls head over heels for “Ananya” and treats her like the queen she is. There has been a marked change from the usual. Despite being unable to marry outside of his caste, he is resolute in his mission to dismantle the traditional stereotype of the pseudo-son in

conservative families and win over his in-laws. He rejects a wealthy girl's marriage proposal in favour of an educated and well-mannered one, all in an effort to slake his insatiable need for cash. His actions show the next generation that dowry is bad for society and should be abolished.

“Chetan Bhagat” portrays himself in this novel as a writer who is ready to create a society filled with terrible flora, wielding an axe. He has sought to unite generations by revealing the truth about the subtle but significant influence of social concerns on people's actions. Specifically, he shows how modern Indian parents are against interracial marriage and would not adopt a kid from a different ethnic background. A prime illustration of this thinking in rural places may be seen in honour murders, when girls are brutally murdered by their parents or siblings. Suicide ideation and conduct is present in both sexes when individuals are psychologically and emotionally drained. Love marriage, according to “Chetan Bhagat's” book, might be the answer to societal ills including honour killings, dowries, and suicide. “Ananya” deftly avoids the embarrassing situation with the “Minti-Duke” marriage, even though the dowry is on full display. Love marriage is not sinful, but it may solve many societal issues, as “Chetan Bhagat” explains to the Indian people in this book. Cultural differences are at the heart of “Krish & Ananya's” romance. Just looking at the title of the book, “2 States,” reveals the cultural divide. Both the northern and southern regions of India have distinct ethnic identities, which are alluded to in the title of the piece. To begin, “Krish & Ananya's” families are unhappy with the relationship due to cultural differences.

Throughout the book, this clash of cultures is front and centre. The novel opens with “Krish Malhotra” discovering “Ananya” in a state of chaos and the two of them arguing over food, illustrating the striking differences between southern and northern India:

“She stood two places ahead of me in the lunch at IIMA mess. I checked her out from the corner of my eye, wondering what the big fuss about this South Indian girl was”. (Bhagat: 2009, 2)

The fact that “Ananya” laughed in response to “Krish's” offer to lunch is another evidence of the cultural gap that exists between the two of them. “I did not state that I am a Tam Brahmin in practise.” You should be aware of the fact that I come from one of the most ideal high caste societies that has ever existed; this is something that you should know. Do you also constitute a

layperson? The comment infuriates “Krish”, who then begins to raving over the food of Punjab. Despite the fact that I was born and raised in “Punjab”, I have never really visited that state. My formative years were spent in “Delhi”. Despite the fact that chicken is a mainstay in my family’s cuisine, I am not sure what caste I belong to. In addition, I am more adept than those filthy “Tamil Brahmins” in dealing with sambar that is of poor quality. A comical tone is used by “Chetan Bhagat” in order to hammer home the fact that there is a cultural difference between the North and the South. A hilarious turn of events occurs when he convinces “Krish’s” mother to refer to “Ananya’s” family as “Madrasis” and to make racist remarks at the convocation ceremony.

Through the use of this response, “Bhagat” intends to illustrate the traditional mindset of Indians, who are not prepared to let go of their regionalism and are not afraid to criticise one another. In spite of the fact that “Krish”, our protagonist, offers that they be given the name “Tamilians” and makes an effort to explain to his mother the delicate nature of the situation, she absolutely rejects his proposal. She also treats her “Krishna” lover, “Ananya”, with the customary lowliness and derision that she feels she employs throughout the novel to trap her son. This is something that she does throughout the story. It is a racist comment that she makes:

“These South Indians don’t know how to control their daughters. From Hema Malini to Sridevi, all of them trying to catch Punjabi men”. (Bhagat: 2009, 48)

In addition, “Chetan Bhagat” makes the observation that whenever North Indians go to the southern portion of India, they face language and cultural challenges. In addition, he highlights the fact that “Krish Malhotra” had a sense of cultural alienation upon coming in South India: I became aware of the city. A number of vehicles, public buses that were crowded to capacity, police officers who upset, and small stores were selling “vegetables, clothing, house wares, fruits, and souvenirs” were all there. Despite this, there was a feeling that something wasn’t quite right. In the beginning, each and every business was clearly represented by signage written in “Tamil”. Maintaining your gaze fixed on such optical fantasy difficulties for a lengthy amount of time can cause you to have a headache. When used with the “Tamil” typeface, they look lovely. Every single Tamil woman wears a flower in her hair as a hair accessory. Due to the fact that men in Tamil Nadu do not believe in trousers, they continue to wear “Lungis” when they go clothing shopping. There are a large number of movie posters located all across the city.

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Whenever you look at images of the heroes, you find yourself wishing that your uncle might be a famous actor. On the other hand, the heroes are overweight, balding, and have a thick moustache, which stands in stark contrast to the protagonist's amazing beauty. My mother has already brought up the hypothesis that women of "Tamil" descent are more likely to be attracted to guys from "Northern India". An argument and fight are started by a taxi driver when "Krish Malhotra" arrives in "Chennai", and he finds himself in the middle of both of them. By making phone calls to other drivers and speaking "Tamil", the driver was attempting to fraudulently get money from "Krish". When a Sardar came to his aid, it was quite clear that the culture had a propensity to favour those from the North Indian region. In another episode of this series that provides a criticism of culture, there is a little character that makes fun of the culture of "North Indians". In light of the instances provided by the texts, "Chetan Bhagat", a devoted patriot, investigates racism and finally arrives at the conclusion that it poses a direct threat to the unity that exists inside the nation. The book "Krish & Ananya", written by "Chetan Bhagat", is not afraid to criticise and make fun of the narrow-minded ideas held by the majority of Indians, regardless of whether it is the scorn of people from the North & South. This is true despite the fact that the narrative contains elements that are controversial. They are both contemporary and cosmopolitan, despite the fact that they are members of distinct cultural clans in the northern and southern regions of India, respectively. The dispassionate portrayal of the North & South by "Chetan Bhagat", as well as his exploration of the abyss that divides the two regions, elevates this work to the level of a masterpiece. Not only that, but he also provides recommendations on how to avoid cultural disputes during weddings that include people from different states and different cultural backgrounds. After the events of the novel have concluded, "Krish & Ananya" are married, which is the means by which he restores the integrity of the nation.

When it comes to the innovative style of writing, *2 States* has a large following in India and beyond. The story's title was chosen with care to maintain the narrative's tempo, since the two main protagonists are always changing states. This method avoids a monotonous accent by giving the impression that the story is dynamic via the use of shifting locations, displacement, and transfer. With a brief diversion in "Goa", the novel jumps about in time and space between "Ahmadabad, Delhi & Chennai". The photos of several sites in India provide pace to the text and show the hero's life at different phases, keeping the reader curious about what happens next. By depicting these towns as pulsating with passion and offering more than just a glance, "Chetan

Bhagat” shows how keenly he has observed the cultural differences between the North & South via his method of rotating places. The protagonists and antagonists in “Chetan’s” works are representative of the middle class in India. Similar like “Krish’s” mother and aunt, “Ananya’s” traditional “Tamil” parents are also archetypes of aunts in “North Indian” society.

What I like most about this look at “southern & northern culture” is that the author isn’t biased in his contrasting descriptions of the two; instead, he shows the positive and negative sides of each culture, which gives it a realistic air. Everything from the plot to the characters to the dialogue in “Chetan Bhagat’s” books has a cinematic quality. There seems to be a Bollywood setting for almost every incident in this piece. Suddenly, we find ourselves in a “Bollywood film” set on a college campus, where the characters are students. The book begins on the “IIMA campus” with a classic cinematic scene that starts with “Krish & Ananya’s” entrance, while “Krish” tries to mediate “Ananya’s” dispute with the mess in-charge. This moment is quite typical in movies. There are two sets of individuals from different backgrounds who fall in love with each other and encounter cultural and family difficulties on their route to being married. The love story is the core focus of the work, and it contains all the twists and turns you would expect from a “Bollywood film”. In addition, it illustrates how cultural and ethical constraints have an impact on love, as well as how a man responds to certain circumstances, such as when he is required to make apologies with his mother, wife, and girlfriend. Authentic validation of the cinematic aspect of “Chetan Bhagat’s” work is provided by “M. Aarthi’s” paper, which focuses on multiculturalism in the novel *2 States*.

“Much like a formula film, it got emotions, sex, friendship, music, betrayal, exploitation, Indian families on the verge of break-up and then reuniting, elaborate weddings, tearful mother, nosy relatives, spiritually, office politics, just for laugh lines and a predictable ending”. (Bhagat: 2009, 556)

They get so close that they start living together, which is considered to be a socially unacceptable practise in Indian culture, much as it would be in a Bollywood movie. After then, the story follows a number of usual turns that are seen in Hindi films. As the story progresses, the lovers who want to marry across castes and states encounter a number of obstacles. Eventually, after a lot of struggle, they are able to win over their parents’ hearts and bring the movie to a satisfying conclusion. The film adaptation of “Chetan Bhagat’s” novel *2 States*, which

was a huge financial success, was based on the book. This was due to the fact that the narration and setting of the film were entirely adaptable. When it comes to “Chetan Bhagat’s” command of the English language, the book makes use of everyday language in the form of straightforward sentences that are not too sophisticated.

“Chetan Bhagat” has effectively answered these accusations by asserting that language is culturally related and that meanings are contextual. This is in spite of the fact that his detractors have said that his writing is unintelligible because he uses vocabulary that is not considered to be literary. He has avoided using flowery language and metaphors, and the clearest example of his use of regular English may be seen in his previous works. The flavour of Desi, or Indianness, may be seen in his literary style. It is clear from a careful reading of the text that “Chetan Bhagat” employs language that is geared towards young people in order to make his works more entertaining for the people who read them. Take a look at the following passage from the novel, which features a discussion between Masi and “Krish’s” mother:

“I say, meet Pammi once again and close it,’ Shipara masi suggested ‘What are you thinking?’ She said after a minute. ‘Did you know Pammi bought that phone, the one you can walk around with everyone?’ Cordless . . .’ my mother said”. (Bhagat: 2009, 68)

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