

____FEATURE ARTICLE____

THE POWER OF SIMPLICITY

Inspired By Chetan Bhagat's Visit On Writer's Fortnight 2018 At UWCSEA East



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"There are two winners in life. Those who do it better than others and those who change the game."²

Chetan Bhagat, an 'Authorpreneur', as he called himself came to give us a talk on Writer's Fortnight. Through the medium of his books and movies, his name had been passing around in conversation quite a bit before he arrived at UWC East, Singapore. Since I haven't had a chance to read one of his books yet, judging his books was not an option. Although some of his movies are my favourites. However, the conversation wasn't always positive, but raised a few criticisms as well. Words such as 'overrated', 'cliche' and 'simple' were beginning to float around, used to describe his writing. However, I was determined to only make a judgment when I heard him myself. After all, "Never overlook the power of simplicity."³ Right?

Whilst a fair share of Bhagat's audience absolutely adore the Indian author's work, like every other successful writer, he has his fair share of 'haters' and 'critics'.

¹ UWCSEA East Singapore Photography

² Chetan Bhagat

³ Robin Sharma

Comments such as, "His writing is extremely amateur."⁴, "He isn't a great writer."⁵, and, "If you start delving into other good books, you'll realize that Chetan Bhagat's books don't match up -forget high brow literature, not even as general entertainment."⁶, are common. Ironically, Bhagat doesn't disagree completely.

He isn't the best author. He himself made this very clear when he gave his talk. "I am a best selling author though," he said. In fact, he hadn't always been a writer. He used to be a banker; he used to hate his job. It was only around then that he had begun to write his first book: *Five Point Someone* (published in 2004). When he had first began writing, a lot of Indian authors wrote to win international awards. Those who did were engaging in the eternal struggle to be among the winners, who 'did it better than others'. However, he had a completely different goal in mind.

His goal wasn't winning international awards for his outstanding english writing skills. It was 'change'. Through his simple writing, he wanted to reach the maximum number of Indians he could and influence them towards a progressive society. He wanted to do via entertainment. "Literature does not have to be wrapped up into a book", he said. He himself applied this to his work; he scaled things up by entering the film industry in India: Bollywood. This kept going and soon through forms such as social media, books, films, columns, TV & talks, he was reaching 100 million + Indians. He introduced us to his strategy here: Reinvent by changing the game. The adaptation stimulus for him was the increasing number of Indians learning English. In the end, "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is not that is the most adaptable to change."⁷ And he changed the game.

Funnily enough, even the criticism he faced for his writing eventually became a platform that increased his popularity even further. His simple words did not weave together the best stories, but yet somehow managed to become best sellers. His cliché movies managed to become the favourites of many. All because he changed the game, rather than trying to engage in the eternal struggle of trying to do it better than others. In the end, "Simplicity is the trademark of genius."⁸ Wouldn't you agree?

"Be so busy improving yourself that you have no time left to criticize others."⁹

⁴ Anand Nambiar, Para 1, Who's the most overrated Indian author? – Chetan Bhagat or Durjoy Datta

⁵ Rashi Karwar, Para 4, Who's the most overrated Indian author? – Chetan Bhagat or Durjoy Datta

⁶ Ayushi Mona, Para 17, What is wrong with Chetan Bhagat's books?

⁷ Charles Darwin

⁸ Robin Sharma

⁹ Chetan Bhagat

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