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'Eroticism And Adultery' In Kiran Nagarkar's 'Seven Sixes Are Forty Three'

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Abstract:

Kiran Nagarkar, a recipient of Sahitya Akademy Award, is well known for his enormous variety in his fictional world. He thoroughly examines the range of values, cultural milieus and fictional techniques. His literary career is abundantly filled with his attractive, influential and creative writing, varied subject matter, utilization of literary devices, manipulation of diction, thought provoking narrative style etc.

The researcher wants to highlight the theme of eroticism and adultery in his debut novel Seven Sixes Are Forty Three. The way he handled the subjects like eroticism and adultery are quite remarkable. Through this particular aspect, he visualizes the real portrait of his protagonist as well as minor characters.

Keywords:

Eroticism and adultery, hopelessness, prostitution, sexual harassment, use of vulgar language etc.

The theme of adultery has been used in a wide range of literature through the ages, and has served as a theme for some notable works. It brings intense emotions into the foreground, and has consequences for all concerned. It also automatically brings its own conflict, between the people concerned and between sexual desires and a sense of loyalty. As marriage and family are often regarded as basis of society a story of adultery often shows the conflict between social pressure and individual struggle for happiness. (Wikipedia.com). Augustine of Hippo asserts in Sermons 1-19, "You are not ashamed of your sin in committing adultery because so many men commit it. Man's wickedness is now such that men are more ashamed of chastity than of lechery. Murderers, thieves, perjurers, false witnesses, plunderers and fraudsters are detested and hated by people generally, but whoever will sleep with his servant girl in brazen lechery is liked and admired for it, and people make light of the damage to his soul." (www.goodreads.com)

Kiran Nagarkar's first novel, *Seven Sixes Are Forty Three* (1980) is an explosive, a path breaking experimental and stream of conscious novel. It is considered as a landmark in post-independent Indian literature. It is a surrealistic and nightmarish artistic novel whose experimentalism remains hauntingly tangible. The novel has won a major place in the literature of the language. Nagarkar has set a new trend not only for Marathi but Indian literature as a whole. It is considered as avant-garde and post-modernist work. Nagarkar portrays the themes

like cultural politics of caste, class, religion and gender marginalization, poverty, starvation, illness, pain and sufferings, death, eroticism, adultery, alienation, existentialism, identity crisis, humiliation, oppression of downtrodden, pessimism, untouchability, hopelessness, prostitution etc. through this novel. The novel depicts about the messy life of Kushank, the protagonist of the novel. It renders the cluttered world of a youth trying to understand and cope with the delightful chaos around him in a hitherto unknown style. Being a social realist, he reflects a strong social concern for the oppressed and the marginalized people, their condition, sufferings, starvation, poverty etc. The readers can find varied aspects like the hopelessness of shanty-dwellers, the oppression of landless labourers, the position of women and the subjugation of untouchables in this novel.

Eroticism and Adultery:

Khushwant Singh rightly comments about Kiran Nagarkar's instinct ability as a story teller. "Kiran Nagarkar is a born story teller with an unerring eye for detail and an artist of the erotica".

Kiran Nagarkar employs a distinctive and unobtrusive narrative voice throughout the novel. He focuses on absurd and adulterous nature of his protagonist. Kushank, a jobless fellow, an absurd character, indulges in vague and meaningless activities. His empty mind compels him to commit adulterous activities.

Kushank's attempt to seduce a beautiful Woman:

As *Seven Sixes are Forty-Three* opens, the narrator, Nagarkar describes Kushank's attempts to seduce a beautiful woman. He was fascinated by seeing her beauty. He just made up his mind to do a thing and go hell-bent after it. Nagarkar writes, "You have beautiful hands.' I had to say it in English. I couldn't bear to say it in Marathi. After all, it was my mother tongue. I opened and closed her hand. 'Really exquisite fingers. So delicate. Positively artistic,' I lied" (15-16). The reader is unable to discern which aspects of the text are true and which ring false through the analysis of code switching. As Nagarkar states at the conclusion of the "Afterward" to *Cuckold*, "...storytellers are liars. We all know that" (606). But if English is the language of choice for liars, the audience is left wondering what Nagarkar intends by transitioning away from Marathi. (The Empire's Shadow: Kiran Nagarkar's Quest for the Unifying Indian Novel, Ch.4, Western Disregard, Rachel Rochester, Arizona State University, December 2011). It is a quality that causes sexual feelings as well as a philosophical contemplation concerning the aesthetics of sexual desire, sensuality and romantic love. The term may also refer to a state of sexual arousal or anticipation of an insistent sexual impulse, desire, or pattern of thoughts. As French novelist Honore de Balzac stated, "Eroticism is dependent not just upon an individual's sexual morality, but also the culture and time in which an individual resides." Kushank keeps himself busy in sexual enjoyment and works of adultery. He does these activities willingly or unwillingly.

Kushank: A Victim of sexual harassment:

Sometimes Kushank becomes the victim of sexual harassment. He tries to escape from this situation. Sometimes he behaves like a bastard hopeless. Once he met a beautiful lady in a restaurant. Regardless of women's age, he flirts her. She gripped his hand firmly. She cooed his name with love, breathed shallow sighs. She took his hand on a conducted tour of her body. Kushank says about this sensuous experience, "License my rowing hands, and let them go, Before, behind, between, above, below..." (19) Kushank prayed for release. She would not let him go. He could not resist the temptation and follow the lady, with a lamb ready for slaughter. "Let's do it" I would say finally and plunge in. (19). This erotic experience of Kushank surely reflects his adulterous nature.

Kushank's incapability to understand the motive of the well wishers:

Kiran Nagarkar boldly asserts about Kushank's incapability to understand the motive of the well wishers like a Parsi woman who wish to help him in his authorial career. He reflects the filth and dirt in the mind of his protagonist and his failure in understanding his well wishers like a Parsi woman who encourages him to get success in his profession as a writer. (29). Kushank thought about her loneliness and wanted to commit sensuous deeds with the religious lady who always thinks of his best. She invited him to her flat. She wanted to make him understand about music. But Kushank's mind was concentrated at the sound of shower. In fact, he should be grateful to her but his lust towards her revealed through the listening the water running in the bathroom. His mind might be corrupted with erotic feelings. (31) Thus Nagarkar projects Kushank's corrupt and erotic nature.

Kushank's pretence about sexual aspects:

Kushank sometimes pretends that he doesn't know the things. Once he asked Aaroti, "What is the word for a male whore? Gigolo? Aaroti replied, "Anyone who sleeps around indiscriminately is a whore." (20)

Kushank's use of vulgar language:

Kushank shamelessly stays in the house of his girl friend Aaroti. As a member of the house, he witnesses each and everything of her family. He observes the conflict between Aaroti and her husband. This conflict is tactfully revealed by the author. "The trouser was not going to be found, not today, not tomorrow. And her choli would be lost too. One day her husband would probably go to work without his trousers and Aaroti would go without her choli." Kushank has love for Aaroti. He always has great concern for her. "All I want is for you to wear beautiful saris and look beautiful." (50)

Satish Ranade abuses Kushank for chasing his sister Sita:

In next episode, Sita Ranade's brother Satish abuses and threatens to Kushank for chasing his sister. "You bastard, chasing my sister. If I see you near Sita again, I will break your bloody leg, you hear." (131).

Erotic Love between Kushank – Chandani:

Nagarkar reflects glimpses of Kushank - Chandani Love in an erotic manner. They both go to watch movie to a theatre. There Chandani comments Kushank, "You look so comic concentrating on the film without your glasses! And I forgot all my reservations, shame, and embarrassment and drew her to me." (151). All these incidences suggest Nagarkar's superb style of presenting eroticism in flawless manner.

In next episode, once Kushank and Chandani were at Vitthalwadi temple sitting under a mango tree, a policeman called both of them. The policeman humiliated Kushank and ordered him to come at police station. Kushank asks him, "Why we should go to the police station? What for? What are you talking about? The policemen said, Now look, don't get cheeky with me. Cheeky about what? What have we done? Done? Listen to him. Did I do it then? All that kissing and pawing behind the temple? Right next to the god too. And she isn't your wife or I'd have let it go. I don't see a mangalsutra round her neck! You were about to fuck her, weren't you, when this little boy saw you and called me! And you ask me what for? Come on, you can do all the asking you want at the station". (146) Here Kushank is severely insulted by the policeman for his adulterous act.

Kiran Nagarkar narrates the erotic love between Kushank and Chandani in a superb manner. Chandani asks Kushank, "Shall I undress myself or will you do it? No, I will. Do you remember the first time you held and kissed me? Suddenly you pulled my head down. (175) Kushank recollects his memory about Chandani's love. "I always had a shower as soon as I came to your room and then interrupted whatever you were doing to push my head between your breasts and sleep. When I woke, the first thing I saw were your pink nipples. How often are you going to make love? Till you can't stand me. There's no chance for you, then. I'll never tire of you. You were utterly unselfconscious in your lovemaking. You taught me to make love without haggling over it. You gave happiness so generously, your mind and body had accepted making love so easily and unreservedly that there was no you, no me, no intellectualizing, no preconceptions. The universe within our embrace with Parvati's clasps round Shiva." (175)

Nagarkar describes the erotic experience of Kushank towards his neighbour, Aminara. Kaku forbade Kushank to go at her house. She wasn't wearing choli or a bra like Kaku did. My taut body echoing her yearning, abandoned moans with sharp spasms. Her eyes opened in a toxic haze. Pomegranates burst in the sky. I kept tearing out of myself, my pole vaulting penis arching to a fine breaking point. (189)

The erotic experience of other minor characters:

Nagarkar narrates the erotic experience of other characters like Rashid and his beautiful girl friend. He depicts their lovemaking in a natural manner. This couple does not feel sex as a sin, but take it granted as an enjoyable activity. Rashid shamelessly approaches the girl and does what he wants. "She is a slave to her own questions. So he shuts her mouth with his lips or his hands." We can say that Nagarkar has mastery over eroticism which boldly displays the personal romantic and sexual experiences of the characters. (19-20).

Arvind's evil Eye on Kushank's relative:

One of the characters Arvind had evil eye on Kushank's relative Ursula. He deliberately harasses her and asks Kushank, Hey, has Ankush sent his wife home from the States? Or is she yours? Belongs to both of us actually, we take turns." (33). Here Nagarkar projects the sexual and lustful thoughts of Arvind.

Bold Depiction of sexual experience of adults:

Nagarkar boldly asserts sexual experience of adults. Aaroti shares sexual experiences with her sister-in-law. "When you are married, you will sleep with your husband. The man you see as your brother during the day is a different man in bed at night. Absolutely different. When he wants something, there's no stopping him. The things he does, how he forces me, the tantrums he throws inside me." (63).

Nagarkar boldly mentions that his female character Aaroti fearlessly convey her opinion frankly on sex to Kushank. Once Kushank was going to see a movie, Aaroti asks him, "I want to see that film too" (66) This incidence reveals Aaroti's modern approach towards life. Chandani's bhabhi keeps an eye on each and every move of her as she knows about her love relation with Kushank. This episode Nagarkar describes in his own style. Chandani comments, "And now bhabhi searches me every morning-for hidden weapons! Blouse, petticoat, bra-everything. She never unbuttons my blouse, just thrusts her hand in and has a feel." (68)

Nagarkar depicts the love making between Raghu and Bishander Singh's daughter in a well. He describes them as inanimate objects locked in lovemaking. "Raghu raised himself on his elbow to kiss her breasts. She brought her hands up to hide her breasts and then quickly down between her thighs. Raghu hooted. "You aren't the first naked woman he's seen, you know." (100).

Kushank's friends Sadhan and Ravindra followed a woman in field. Nagarkar describes the woman, "Wiping the sweat with the ends of their saris. No choli's, just the sari hiding the body completely." (113)

Thus the novel communicates the aspects of adultery and erotic love in *Seven Sixes Are Forty Three* in a bold and assertive manner.

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