

Impact
Factor
2.147

ISSN 2349-638x

Reviewed International Journal



**AAYUSHI
INTERNATIONAL
INTERDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH JOURNAL
(AIIRJ)**

Monthly Publish Journal

VOL-III

ISSUE-VII

July

2016

Address

•Vikram Nagar, Boudhi Chouk, Latur.
•Tq. Latur, Dis. Latur 413512
•(+91) 9922455749, (+91) 9158387437

Email

•aiirjpramod@gmail.com

Website

•www.aiirjournal.com

CHIEF EDITOR – PRAMOD PRAKASHRAO TANDALE

**“THE BONDS OF ROMANCE, MARRIAGE AND FIDELITY IN
KIRAN NAGARKAR’S ‘CUCKOLD’”**

Kamalakar Baburao Gaikwad

Assistant Professor,
MGV’s Arts & Commerce College, Yeola,
Dist-Nashik, M.S.

Abstract:

Kiran Nagarkar is the recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award for his acclaimed novel ‘Cuckold’ (1997). He is one of India’s leading writers who deal with the various thematic, structural, linguistic and historical aspects of his fiction. He fascinates his readers by his timeless quality works. His books are so different from each other; it is difficult to believe that they are by the same author. His writing enhances the reader’s enjoyment. Nagarkar’s novels are so intensely and unselfconsciously located in their milieu. In a true sense, Nagarkar’s productive works can be placed in the larger context of Indian fiction. Thus we can aptly say that his craft and vision is remarkable.

The aim of the present paper is to investigate the romantic relationships and to describe different paradigms for romance described in Kiran Nagarkar’s historical epic novel Cuckold. The researcher wants to make a connection between romantic paradigms and religious faith. He describes the monotheist ideal of romance. The novel represents a heresy within that belief system. Kiran Nagarkar effectively portrays a few general observations and romantic intuitions about romance.

Key Words:

Romance, marriage, fidelity, sensations, emotions, romantic intuitions and paradigms etc.

The magazine ZEIT praised the novel, “...a fascinating, romantic and brilliant book, a powerful epic, which enthrall the readers.” (Gabriel Venzky, ZEIT literary supplement, 12.12.2002)

Introduction:

The present paper throws light on the prominent aspects such as romance, marriage and fidelity. Before studying the aspects in detail, first of all it is necessary to understand the meaning of these terms. Romance is generally a feeling of excitement and mystery associated with love. It is an ardent emotional attachment or involvement between people. It refers to liaisons between people, most often aimed in the direction of sexual conjunctions of one sort or another. The term marriage is legally recognized union of a man and a woman as partners in a relationship. It is the state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife in a consensual and contractual relationship organized by law. It is the mutual relationship of married persons. The last term fidelity implies the unflinching fulfillment of one’s obligations, duties or observances and strict adherences to vows or promises. It is the condition or behavior of engaging in sex only with one’s spouse or one’s partner in a sexual relationship.

Cuckold’ is set in the 16th century and is about the triangular relationship between a prince, a princess, Mirabai, and Krishna, to meet whom the princess leaves court and garden. Her poems

to Krishna are white-hot almost erotic texts. Her husband, the crown prince, is a shadowy, a void, a blank, a hiatus in history. The novel reflects the conflicts of Maharaj Kumar, the saga of love, hatred, passion, mysticism, history, palace life, military formations, politics, friendship war and peace. There is external and internal conflict in the mind of Prince Maharaj Kumar- war with the Sultanates of Delhi, Gujarat and Malwa as an external conflict and listening the truth by his beautiful, new bride Meerabai about her love with the Hindu God, Krishna, as an internal conflict. He becomes the model of hyper-masculinity. He is a valiant warrior who copulates with multiple women outside of his marriage. However, this image is frequently called into question, through instances of impotence, the court's mockery of his reluctance to take multiple wives, and his indulgence of the extramarital activities of both his wives. After the Raj Kumar's second wife, Sugandha, begins to carry on publicly with his brother Vikramaditya, the heir apparent acknowledges the importance of the appearance of masculinity, indicating that a king who cannot impregnate a woman is viewed to be no king at all (Cuckold 499). Still, despite initial reluctance, the Raj Kumar is willing to don the guise of a woman and even embrace aspects of newfound sexuality in the role. Here Nagarkar describes the prince's frustration and introspection. He visualizes the state of mind of Maharaj Kumar, contemplating life, love, and existence of God and claiming his love back from God. Nagarkar's work has always been about the push and pull of this idea with reality. The central figures of Cuckold are the saint-poet Mirabai and her husband the crown prince of Chittor, who is tormented not only by his wife's disengagement from his world, but by the fact that he is himself devoted to the god Krishna, in whose favour 'the Little Saint' has spurned him. The Maharaj Kumar of Cuckold competes with a god. His characters are both symbols and witnesses of human frailty.

General observations of romance:

Kiran Nagarkar first of all, focuses on general observations of romance. The readers of the novel basically pursue the romantic elements like familiarity and pleasure in the novel. In a romance, two characters of an eligible age and configuration enter in the world of romance as romantic partners. A certain pleasurable tension is set up in the reader. Prediction is the part of charm in romance. It is like a favourite melody that can be listened to repeatedly, with variations. The intensity of reader's pleasure lies in his knowledge of monogamous love and romance. They tend to enjoy the romantic themes in a novel. In my opinion, the fervour with which lovers pursue their romantic goal, the intensity of their devotions, the worshipful form their love takes-all of these are indications that there is a considerable mapping of reference points between religious experience and definitions of romance. In the books of many male authors, romance or its more prosaic cousin, sex, is often the only heading under which women enter a narrative. Sex may be fundamental to romance but the two are by no means Siamese twins in literature. Sexual activity is intensely physical while romance can transcend the typical boundaries of time and space to create immortals of anyone who presumes to scale its loftier peaks. True lovers can use their hearts as reference points to triangulate infinity. Male characters are permitted to fall in love now and then but their trajectory across the field of love is accorded less direct attention than that of the female lead in a romance. Female characters often define their entire existence in a novel by the manner in which they resolve the romantic tensions of their fictional lives.

Bonds of marriage and fidelity:

The romantic elements in the novel Cuckold are intellectually woven by Kiran Nagarkar. The readers get a glimpse of the talent for characters that Kiran Nagarkar has employed in his novel Cuckold. By choosing Maharaj Kumar, the husband of Meerabai as his protagonist, Nagarkar is able to

fashion a dazzling narrative infused with multiple layers of philosophical, historical and spiritual meaning. In Cuckold, the love story forms a vital component of the plot and metaphysics of the novel, without dominating or trivializing the narrative as a whole. In this novel, the tale is essentially one of great joy in the bonds of love.

The title of the novel defines itself the bonds of marriage and fidelity. Maharaj Kumar, the protagonist of the novel is shown married to a woman, the Princess, who loves another. Here he is called 'cuckold' specifically because of his wife's sexual infidelity. Most often, in stories about sexual infidelity, there is little momentum beyond that of retribution, revenge, atonement and perhaps a renewal of conjugal vows. The narrative of the novel is intensely romantic and experienced through the perceptions of a man rather than a woman, but from the very outset, it is clear that he defines his entire being through several different channels of love not just the one. Despite the title of the novel, his wife's infidelity will not remain coarsely material. The Princess's lover is divine. Thus the entire plane of the narrative is elevated beyond the mortal and the Maharaj Kumar's jealousy operates on an unexpected dimension. Instead of being a pathetic figure, fit only for ridicule, he acquires a heroic-tragic aura: his becomes a fate shared only by mythological figures. He cannot hope to succeed against a god and yet his love, his forbearance, his struggle to keep his pride intact. Before the introduction of his wife, Maharaj Kumar meets a nine year old, young girl Leelawati. By seeing her, he has designs on her. This would be the faint musk of romance. The indications of familiarity like addressing to the prince, the way she jumps into his lap and the tenderness with which he regards her, are the signs of a precursor to love. (6) Later on, the readers are introduced to the Maharaj Kumar's faithless wife, we see him building up a relationship with Sunheria, the dhobi's wife. (13) Then he trysts with the river Gambhree, whom he addresses as he would a lover. Moreover, he was introduced to sex by his dai, Kausalya. These women remain at the romantic focus of the prince's life all through the book. His second wife Sugandha does not offer the others much competition. (460) The Maharaj Kumar lives in an era when no relationship can exist without its trailing strings of social class, of clan allegiance, of history. There is one level of emotions reserved for form and another given over to feeling. He is shown as the hero of the book His introspection, gaze and degree of involvement is tender with his own needs.

Fictional heroes are often indulged if they have more than one beloved but not if they have them simultaneously. A man who has sex with more than one woman at a time or who profess his love for more than one woman at a time is considered as cad, playboy or gigolo depending on the scale of his indiscretions and the type of material benefit he may get from them. But the Maharaj Kumar in no way resembles these characters. The readers are not given any opportunity to dislike him: he is presented not only as a hero but an extremely likable one. He is permitted to express a feminine dimension in his personality, without ever relinquishing his claim to masculinity. He is utterly different from typical Biblical hero who is undone by his weakness towards a woman like Samson towards Delilah. (Judges Chapter 16) By contrast, here we see Maharaj Kumar, a warrior, a ruler, a manipulator of the affairs of state yet willing to acknowledge without the least blush, his dependence upon the women in his life. His love for them does not incapacitate him nor does he feel the need to defend his love of several women with arguments. He does not acknowledge that he is unusual in having several lovers. His world does not know of another way to be from his lack of guile or guilt. He takes pleasure in women. He is vulnerable and sentimental. He is loyal though he clearly loves more than one woman, he loves each one in her own special niche and to each one, in her niche, and his love is precise and faithful. He is moved by music, he enjoys good food and he has a fine and discerning eye for beauty, evidenced by the quality of attention he pays to every detail of his environment, from the fine texture of a Dhaka Muslim to an antelope as it drinks unhurriedly at sunset. He is even given an opportunity to see himself

in the guise of a woman when, at Holi, he and the Princess exchange clothes. Briefly he turns into a woman. "Could he really get under a woman's skin merely by wearing a ghagara and choli? ...and yet if you assign sex to God, then he or she too becomes finite and incomplete. (495-496) Here Maharaj Kumar does not attempt to unseat his rival in love. The best he can do is to pretend to be the rival, for however long he can succeed in his deception, at least in terms of what his wife believes. For himself, he knows that he will never win against the divinity who occupies the central position in his wife's heart and soul. And he accepts this fact, while continuing to offer his devotion to his wife, alongside the devotions he offers to other women. In the plurality of his favours, he offers a vision of romance that is rarely seen.

Nagarkar's use of Romance in Cuckold:

Nagarkar's use of romance in Cuckold is unique. The entire book is filled with the aura of love. In this novel, there are several potential romances to distract the Prince. It offers the readers a continuous banquet of sensations and emotions. It addresses love in its familiar guise by referring to the yearning of a man for a particular woman's attention, to the favour of jealousy, to the pleasure of conquest by stealth, to the pleasure of being pleased by women who give of themselves with generosity. Here we see the paradigm of religious belief and love satisfies monotheism or monogamy in a true sense. Cuckold offers a fascinating glimpse into the mindset of a man who belongs to a world that has not yet understood the power of monotheist ideals. It points our minds towards a more refined and complex understanding of reality, by reminding us that there can be beauty in knowing that we make choices between the options offered to us. At the end, prince, a pre-cautious and forward thinking man, wants to tell the readers that his heart has always belonged wholly-he makes the point of telling us that he includes all the worlds of reality-to the princess. Thus the novel Cuckold presents a vision of romance, marriage and fidelity that we are rarely permitted to savour. It does without threatening damnation and retribution as a consequence.

Works Cited:

Nagarkar, Kiran. Cuckold. Delhi: Harper Collins India, 1977.

Lukmani, Yasmeen. *Shifting World of Kiran Nagarkar's Fiction*, New Delhi, 2004

Padmanabhan, Manjula. Cuckold: A different Paradigm of Romance. New Delhi, 2004

Lodge, David. *The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy and The Typology of Modern Literature*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 1977.

Chatterjee, Bankimchandra. *Bankim Rachanabali*. Ed. Jogeshchandra Bagal. Vol. I. Kolkata: Sansad, 1980.

Lukacs, George. *The Historical Novel*. Tr. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell. Boston: University of Nebraska P, 1963.

Bhatlekar, Abhijit. 'Kiran Nagarkar's wonder boys', Jan 06 2012. Mint Live

Katharina Granzin, in: the newspaper taz, 29.01.2003.

The Holy Bible, Judges Chapter 16

<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/romance>