

## Violence Against Woman: A Study Of Kiran Nagarkar's Cuckold

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### Abstract

Marriage is an integral part of the social and cultural fabric, and as such, the prince is expected to exert dominance over his bride throughout their marriage and beyond. Because males are so anxious to prove themselves, women are more susceptible to these pressures. When the prince's wife refuses to comply with his demands, he resorts to physical assault against her. How, cultural factors significantly contribute to the instigation of violence against women is shown by the man's violent behaviour against his wife during their ritual. Unbeknownst to him, he is turned into a stereotypical Macho beast by powers beyond his control.

**Key Words:** Physical assault, Violence, Vulnerable, Women, Cuckold.

### Introduction

Cuckold, delves deeply into cultural themes by depicting the country's current and potential future while also drawing attention to historical situations via the narration of a royal narrative. Kiran Nagarkar's Cuckold is ostensibly a historical novel that portrays Indian life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the critical insights it contains are highly pertinent to understanding the social and cultural aspects of modern India. Indian culture has remained mostly unchanged from its inception, despite many invasions by the Mughals and, subsequently, the British. Because of this patriarchal society's ingrained gender norms, the people have always maintained them. Historically, cultural expectations about men's and women's duties and how they should identify themselves have not changed. males are supposed to be breadwinners,

protectors, and progenitors, while women are supposed to be housewives, mothers, and subservient to males.

By depicting the plight of a male who struggles to live up to the societal and familial expectations placed on him as a man. Kiran Nagarkar conveys an important cultural argument informed by patriarchy. There are cultural components of Indian society that not only promote but mandate male dominance over females. Societal gender stereotypes lead to the contempt and humiliation of any man who shows any signs of weakness or hesitation when it comes to asserting his power over a woman. This conception of men and women as a whole includes the economic, cultural, and social aspects of community life. The author Kiran Nagarkar handle these issues in his *Cuckold*.

*Cuckold* follows the story of Maharaja Kumar. A hero of the Rajput tradition, Maharaja Kumar is portrayed in the narrative as a reclusive, self-critical, and moody figure. "The Maharaja Kumar's fundamentally modern sensibility allows one to perceive the Rajput ethos and norms of behaviour from the sixteenth century" (Gadekar 65). In his role as patriarch, he must meet specific standards and adhere to the established code of behaviour that is appropriate for a man, a prince, and a member of the royal family. The prince's failure to gain his wife's affection is the root of the drama. He makes a valiant effort, but his efforts are in vain since it is culturally inappropriate.

In a review of Debleena Majumdar, "The Reluctant Rajput: *Cuckold* by Kiran Nagarkar," notes that: "Maharaja Kumar, is shown to be desperate for her love. Does she really care for him, or is she just playing along because she doesn't believe he's real? Not even when he dresses as Krishna to be with her does the author really address her true feelings for Maharaja Kumar," she says of Kathak. When a husband loses control of his wife, he faces shame from both his family and the community. Women are stigmatised when they show signs of being independent and confident. "I was wondering when you were going to return to my wife, because this midnight visit could only have been prompted by your daughter-in-law," The queen, who is Maharaja Kumar's second mother, says in an expression of her disgust with his wife's actions that causes shame and disgrace to the royal family. "One of our noses has been severed by her. Our izzat, too. "Mud" is the famous

surname of our family. Your nautch girl continues to dance while Chittor burns" (21).

Kiran Nagarkar criticises cultural norms that shackle men and women alike to societal expectations and ceremonial practices. India has strict regulations. The civilization here is governed by strict traditions of loyalty, honour, and chivalry. According to Gadekar, "which are accepted on authority and never questioned" (2015).

Marriage is an integral part of the social and cultural fabric, and as such, the prince is expected to exert dominance over his bride throughout their marriage and beyond. Because males are so anxious to prove themselves, women are more susceptible to these pressures. When the prince's wife refuses to comply with his demands, he resorts to physical assault against her. How, cultural factors significantly contribute to the instigation of violence against women is shown by the man's violent behaviour against his wife during their ritual. Unbeknownst to him, he is turned into a stereotypical Macho beast by powers beyond his control. The aggression shown by the husband and the submission displayed by the wife are illustrated in the following passage:

She placed my foot on her knee to remove my mojari. I raised it and lifted her face up. She did not withdraw her eyes. Did you? Did you actually dance? I don't remember. My foot slammed into her face. It was not the hardest of blows but it knocked her down. ... Her lower lip was cut open, the blood had stained her blouse..., she took my foot in her hands again, disengaged the shoe and brought my toe to her left eye first and then let it touch her right eye. I was her lord and master and she would not do me out of acts of obeisance. She did not ask why or wherefore, nor look aggrieved or wipe the blood from her lip. She was unconcerned whether I kicked her again or not. I must have groaned. (Cuckold 12)

Compassion and understanding characterise Maharaja Kumar. The impartiality with which he examines one of the classic instances of alleged adultery demonstrates his independence from patriarchy. "Elderly, crooked dhobi - I could swear it was the same washer man who so tarnished Sita's reputation and forced Rama to exile her to the wilderness around 2,000 years ago - was now casting doubt on the virtue of his wife" (Cuckold 1).

Kiran Nagarkar is given a outlook into sixteenth-century Indian society and culture. An example of Kiran Nagarkar's meticulousness in portraying a civilization properly is the section explaining the eating habits of the inhabitants of that period. He shows a vivid picture of politics, love, music, and the era's ambiance, as well as modern life and its tactics. Along with this, he discloses every aspect of Maharaj Kumar's life, including his responsibilities as prince, his behaviour at court, social events, and religious ceremonies. Gardens, castles, and towns are described in detail to make this world seem more real. Adinath welcomes the prince to his residence for supper and describes the delectable vegetarian fare: "The food as usual was good without being fussy.... no garlic, no onion, no root vegetables, no mutton, fish, or fowl" (4).

Kiran Nagarkar notes that despite modernization in every facet of Indian society, certain things have remained the same for generations. Meera exemplifies a distinctive facet of Indian culture - the continued strength and complexity of its interaction with both society and the spirituality of the land - in her actions and beliefs. Religion has a significant impact on culture, as has been shown so far. Gadekar observes "It is clear from this novel that women often wed male gods. To be more precise, it is the novel's primary theme that sets in motion the chain reaction of events. The sluggishness of a kingdom driven by antiquated ideas of loyalty and bravery is shown by Kiran Nagarkar" (166).

Because women often wed gods, they may have been used to ignoring their responsibilities to males outside of marriage as well. The author's cultural critique includes this as an essential component. One other thing you may notice in this novel is how dominating males use polygamy. Since Prince Maharaja Kumar is powerless to get his first wife to submit to his will and live with him as his spouse, he is advised to wed another lady. When Maharaja Kumar's wife betrays him, he finds it difficult to demonstrate his manliness. According to a story in the Hindu purana, Meera's devotion to Krishna in Cuckold is an embodiment of Andal's devotion to Krishna. In the Purana, Krishna and Andal are one; in Cuckold, Lord Krishna and Meera are also one.

Just as there are clear cultural divides in modern Indian culture, there were similar ones 300 years ago. A woman may manipulate a man, even while he controls her. This is something that Cuckold makes clear, which means that it hasn't

changed much throughout the years. No matter how long men have oppressed women, cunning and ingenious women have always found a way to dominate or even rule men.

The strength of subversion may be seen by the character of Rani Karmavati. "As queen, she is resolute, unyielding, and productive. One of her comparisons is to the Ramayana's Kai Kai" (Gadekar 71). Women are just as brutal as males when it comes to controlling and dominating men, as the story reveals. A glimpse of the queen's character is shown in the following passage:

It is my second mother who cuts my pointless meandering short. Even the most conjugally happy princes marry several wives. Look at your father. He loves me dearly but he knows his duty. Marriages are political alliances. They are also a safeguard. They ensure a long line of succession and they prevent any queen from getting too big for her shoes. Mother should talk. She's got feet bigger than Chittor, bigger than Rajasthan, bigger than the throne of Delhi. (Cuckold 9)

Oppression of women persists in Indian society Kiran Nagar mentioned in his following novels. The mother-in-law in *Seven Sixes* are *Forty-Three*, the concubine *Lolita* in *The Extras*, and Rani Karmavati in *Cuckold* are just a few examples of the many antagonistic women in literature who prey on other women for their own personal and societal advantage.

Particularly when it comes to cultural practices, many parts of Indian culture are resistant to change. Because Indian cultural traits are not completely free of foreign influences, it is quite distinctive. Also, the cultural perspective has changed significantly over history due to a number of factors. Despite these profoundly influencing factors, the very essence of Indian society's cultural identity has not changed. Many aspects of Indian culture are shaped by the spirituality and religion of the region. Almost every aspect of Indian culture from clothing to marriage customs to language use to dietary preferences is shaped by the country's religious beliefs and practices. The matter of whether a person is a vegetarian or not is not related to their cultural identity, but rather to their religious identity. Only in India's upper class would this be considered unusual.

The religious practices of India's two largest faiths couldn't be more different from one another, although the country's powerful social elite share many commonalities. Even though *Cuckold* takes place in the past, the Indian culture

depicted in the novel has ethnocentric cultural traits. A completely different set of cultural signals is shown by the Muslim sultans and the land's Rajput population, who are essentially Hindus. Ignorance about one another's cultural identities is a common result of these groups' social, cultural, and religious disparities, which in turn makes it difficult for them to trust one another. The effects on military effectiveness of such events are profound: Rosen brings to light the connection between, among other things, "the Indian military's shortcomings in planning and the presence of the caste system: For this reason, Hindu ruling classes often saw no need to help the increasingly multicultural populations living along the borders" (Rosen 117).

Even in modern times, ethnocentric cultural identities are evident in works such as *The Extras*, *Seven Sixes are Forty Three*, and *Raven and Eddie*. Indian civilization has always included the practice of religiously distinct groups banding together under a common flag. Even 300 years ago, this distinguishing trait was still in use.

Culturally, Indian culture has long upheld the expectation that women maintain a certain level of virginity. While the notion of chastity has evolved somewhat throughout the years, the many attributes associated with it have been rather consistent. Looking at how women are portrayed in novels like *Cuckold*, which takes place 300 years ago,

which take place in today's Indian society, it's clear that the expectation that women should abstain from sexual relations has not changed much.

Most members of India's social elite adhere to the view that a wife must remain completely obedient to her husband at all times, even when their own lives are in danger. As an example of these traits, consider Pratibha's willingness to forgive her husband and her regret for having emulsified herself. Another example is Ravan's mother Parvati, who patiently stays by her husband's side even after he chooses to wed another woman, thereby breaking the exact vows of their marriage that she was supposed to remain submissive to him. Similar conduct is seen in Meera and the second wife of prince Maharaj Kumar, as both women persistently acknowledge their husband as the supreme authority over their activities, speech, and lives. Lord Krishna is Lord Meera's master since she is his wife, while Prince Maharaj Kumar is Prince Maharaj Kumar's master because he is her spouse.

## **Conclusion**

We find similar religious impacts on society. Women are required to submit completely and obey without inquiry in the sake of chastity. When males use it, it strengthens the patriarchal social order and ensures that women will continue to be oppressed. Crafted under the guise of culture and rendered sacred in the name of religion, these instruments serve to uphold masculine dominance.

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