



## AMALGAMATION OF JOVIALITY, SELF-EXAMINATION AND HUMOUR IN KIRAN NAGARKAR'S SEVEN SIXES ARE FORTY THREE AND RAVAN & EDDIE

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### Abstract:

*Kiran Nagarkar, contemporary Indian English writer, is an efficient personality in handling the varied range of humour. He effectively uses humour for self-analysis, manifestation or critiques on civilization, ethnicity and social customs. His humors assume different shades, tones and textures. It has always been a secretly exhilarating, pleasingly precarious, astonishingly seductive and trustworthy way to make a proclamation, to recount the stories and to make sure everyone's voice is heard. Humour has seldom been used to correct, to restore, to define, to cope with situations, to mirror truths, to discern and to set a value on things, in Indian writing in English. Humour requires a measure of emotional disengagement.*

*Nagarkar has used humour as a mode of survival and as an instrument to understand and empathies with human predicaments and frailties. The sincere attempt of the present research paper is to analyze the amalgamation of joviality, self-examination and humour in Kiran Nagarkar's select fictions as a lay reader.*

**Key Words:** *Amalgamation, Humour, emotional disengagement, joviality, self-examination, social pretensions, human predicaments*

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### Introduction:

The term 'Joviality' is the feature of being positive and celebratory. *Self-examination* is an introspective consideration of one's own emotions or thoughts. Sense of humour is the quality of an individual to find certain things funny. After studying the definitions of these three key terms, let us have a glance on the effective implementation of combination of these terms in Kiran Nagarkar's select fictions. Aristotle defines 'humour' in his own words:

*'Humour is the only exploration of ruthlessness and atrociousness of humour: for a subject which will not bear raillery is suspicious, and a practical joke which will not bear forbidding estimation is forged intelligence'*<sup>1</sup>

Prof. E.B.White proclaims,

*'Analyzing humour means to dissect a frog. Few people are interested and the frog dies of it.'*<sup>2</sup>

Literary experience lies in the minds of the readers, not in the texts. It enters into their consciousness and awakens their memories, thoughts, associations etc. It is highly beyond the imagination to comprehend Kiran Nagarkar's literary or writing style. The reader is completely unable to pin him down to a single style.

### **Joviality, Self-examination and Humour in Nagarkar's Select Novels:**

#### ***Seven Sixes Are Forty Three:***

##### ***Humour: An Emotional Disengagement:***

Kiran Nagarkar's first autobiographical novel *Seven Sixes Are Forty Three* moves between the past and present situations and it makes the readers to difficult to understand the text. This skipping creates confusion in reader's mind. Of course, this humour is of brooding type and can be compared as breathing narrative. For example, the protagonist Kushank Purandare possesses the attitude of humour. Through this, he finds emotional disengagement. In *SSAFT*, Nagarkar has used humour as a mode of survival and as an instrument to understand and empathies with human predicaments and frailties. *Seven Sixes Are Forty Three* (1978) interpreted from Nagarkar's Marathi '*Saat Sakkam Trechalis*' (1974) by Shubha Slee, is a chronicle that agitates and progresses. It has an astonishing narrative approach and rapidity.

##### ***Gloomy and Sinister Humour:***

We find the innermost perception in Kushank Purandare, a lonesome gentleman, whose dealings and thoughts are estranged from each other. Readers can have a glance towards Kushank and Nagarkar's world as multifaceted in which they undertake through disparity and apprehension. Here Nagarkar uses gloomy and sinister humour and some hard hitting certainty. This isolated humour is seen in the incidence where Kushank makes his annotations in hospital, (*SSAFT*: 9)

*'There are two types of populace in the globe: the ill and the fit. The ill person lives in a earth of his own. The fit persons have a communal earth of their own too.'*<sup>3</sup>

The fact is that sickness affects every possible human relationship. Here Nagarkar manifests inexpressive, multifaceted and insensible society to his readers. The unhealthy civilization is distorted by detestation, desolation and unresponsiveness.

##### ***Hilarious Humour:***

The novel '*Seven Sixes Are Forty Three*' sets its tone by this juxtaposition in the opening scene. Here, Pratibha would like to teach a lesson to her husband in order to end his physical assaults, pours kerosene over herself, lights a match and burns herself to death. Kushank carries this information to Pratibha's mother-in-law. The conversation between Kushank and the deaf old woman (the old hag) is quiet hilarious and macabre, (*SSAFT*: 3)

*'Run away?'*

I repeated the message slowly and solemnly. In case she might faint at the sudden bad news.

*'Stop whispering and mumbling. I can't hear you.'*

She burnt herself.

*'Run away? Was nobody home? What did she take with her?'*

*'Not run away, burnt herself.'* I yelled into her ear. Poured kerosene over herself.

*'Good lord! And if the house had caught fire?'*<sup>5</sup>

Through this hilarious situation, Nagarkar wants to convey Kushank's despondency and inability to deal with the illogical ways of life and death.

Kiran Nagarkar talks in a humorous manner about the beggars in India, (SSAFT: 21)

*'The beggars are a race apart. They will digest anything. If their intestines were dissected, they would emerge as toughest. They eat everything: good, bad. Poisonous, they assimilate it all. Overall, a beggar is like a God-with an infinite capacity to absorb'.*<sup>6</sup>

Nagarkar clearly mentions the nature of pure comedy through repugnance of life of Kushank and his friend Raghu. For instance, an embarrassed Kushank meets Chandani for the first time in an awkward condition. In second incidence, Raghu formulates love to a village girl at the underneath of a half dug well and Kushank has to reflect of customs to ward off the girl's distrustful father-in-law and a sniffing Alsatian. These two hilarious occurrences present the novel an additional measurement.

Jai Nimbkar comments,

*'Nagarkar's sardonic pen jots down all micro events. He has mysterious expertise in combining the fantastic with the unexciting, the disastrous with the preposterous'.*<sup>4</sup>

#### **Intermingling of Tragic and Ridiculous:**

Nagarkar juxtaposes the tragic with the ridiculous through the description of the Mumbai suburban trains, (SSAFT: 148)

*'If four million and sixty seven thousand cobalt bombs were dropped on the earth, and if they killed all of humanity, the local trains of Bombay would still have people hanging out of doors and windows'.*<sup>7</sup>

The protagonist Kushank doesn't believe in religion. He feels at home in no religion but speaks it frequently. Consequently Nagarkar speaks about the believers and non-believers with a wry wisdom, (SSAFT: 6)

*'Believers and Non-believers require an audience. The believer has someone up there who will listen to him. The non-believer flings a passionate glance at the sky and says, 'I'm stoic'. But for a human being, stoicism is only an aspiration. He struggles hard to achieve it.'*<sup>10</sup>

Nagarkar talks about God, (SSAFT:26)

*'If the existence of God is in each boulder, then there is a saffron painted rock in the mind of God. Nothing slips out of his sack. He has no eyelids. He had them once, but they fell from disuse. They had no purpose, since he never closes his eyes. He is obsessively greedy, incurably so.'*<sup>11</sup>

#### **Intermediate shade of humour:**

Kiran Nagarkar's humors unsettles the readers and persuades them into the belief that it is never in the absoluteness of black and white but in the intermediate shades of grey that we exist and come to terms with life. For instance, Kushank makes a fantastic plan with six year old Arshad and writes to Okhon of the formation of the new society to spread happiness in the world where it rains Coco-Cola and Gold Spot on birthdays and where a year comprises twelve days so that one can celebrate one birthday every 12 days. Okhon's father answers his letter thus: (SSAFT:101)

*'Okhon is developing in the advanced community where people have comprehended the predominance of judgment and of balanced contemplation. It is hardly surprising that Okhon finds your and Arshad's ideas as nonsensical and absurd'.*<sup>8</sup>

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***Ironical Humour:***

Here Nagarkar wants to convey the absurd movements of daily life which are never looked upon as patent

gibberish. In fact, he relates this term to a fantastical world, (SSAT: 101-102)

*'When almost all lives are patent nonsense, we can't identify what patent nonsense is. What should one call patent nonsense?'*<sup>9</sup>

***Humour with Social Pretension:***

Nagarkar's humor unmasks social pretensions without distortion and through Kushank's search for meaning in life, arrives upon a personal truth which is complex, perplexing and paradoxical. 'What difference does it make?' is the favorite query of Kushank. It is the reflection of Kushank's and Nagarkar's view about the universe. Despite Kushank's moments of deep despair, his quest is life affirming and accepting. Pain and sufferings in life can't make any influence upon him. Again and again he protests that to him life still makes all the differences. In his utter misery, Kushank's positive opinions about the life indeed inspire the readers. He proclaims,

*'Life is still worth living and celebrating. One doesn't throw up ones hands because the odds are against you but merely tries a little harder.'*<sup>12</sup>

***Ravan and Eddie:***

***Vulgar and Amusing Humour:***

In *Ravan and Eddie*, the readers witness wheezing narratives. The humour is crude, coarse, humorous and gloomy. For instance, the protagonists Ravan Pawar and Eddie Coutinho possess the approach of amusement and humour. Through this, Ravan and Eddie find poignant disconnection. In *Ravan and Eddie*, Nagarkar has used humour as a mode of endurance and as an gadget to recognize and empathies with human predicaments and defenselessness. Arland Ussher comments about the humour,

*'Humour is .....hopelessness declining to take itself acutely.'*<sup>13</sup>

***Bawdy and Sarcastic Humour:***

*Ravan and Eddie* (1995) is the dark comedy about two young boys growing up in a Bombay chawl. It is full of bizarre entwines and twirls. It has vulgar language and mockery. Both the protagonists Ravan and Eddie born and grow in CWD Chawls, mirrors assorted India. The chawl houses people of dissimilar religions, civilizations and languages. They both hardly ever meet each other. Ravan (originally Ram) is the child of Shankar and Parvati Pawar. Eddie's father Victor Coutinho comes under the influence of Ravan's mother Parvati. One day, when she is in the balcony with her son in her arms, Victor tries to draw her concentration by calling out to him from the road. All of a sudden, the baby tumbles out of Parvati's hands and while falling towards him, Victor sees a dream of the child Jesus is plunging towards him, the sun behind him forming a astrophysical halo. Here Nagarkar brutally blemishes this glitzy vision, (RE: 4)

*'No one could have uttered with any confidence whether Victor's hands shot up for Parvati's stupid son, or for Parvati.'*<sup>14</sup>

The baby falls into Victor's arms and Victor dies. On the day of his funeral, his pregnant wife Violet is removed to the hospital in the same van carrying his dead body, where she gives birth to Eddie.

Nagarkar describes Parvati's memory of the incident and positively uses a straight-faced prose, (RE: 4)  
*'When she reminded the occurrence in the years to come, Parvati's observation had two words of English, heart and halt. 'Maze heart halt zale'.<sup>15</sup>*

But in spite of her cardiac arrest she had adequate presence of mind to squeal preternaturally. After this, Parvati calls her son 'Ravan' to save him from the malevolence eye or nazar of people. Her word succeeds because her husband is no more than an ineffective remnant. The variance between them over the name 'Ravan' is portrayed entertainingly by Nagarkar, Shankarrao was shattering now. (RE: 11)

*'Which mother will desire her daughter wedded to a desperado called Ravan?'*

*'It makes no divergence. From today his name is Ravan.'*

*'Wait till he grows up and tries to seize every Sita in town. You will be sorry it.'*

*'Mark my words. Every Sita will be chasing my Ravan.'*

*Call him what you want, he will forever be Ram for me. The boy will bothers you all his life'.<sup>16</sup>*

### **Humour: An instrument of Reformation**

The names of the protagonists Ravan and Eddie are representative. Throughout his entire life, Ravan is beleaguered by the quandary of whether he is Ravan or Ram, Good or Evil? A assassin or a sufferer? Later on, Ravan turns into a robber to see *Dil Deke Dekho*, an obsessive vocalist and a great advocate of Tae Kwan do and Eddie became a blackmarketeer in order to be able to afford endless tickets to *Rock Around the Clock*, a fervent RSS member, with a natural flamboyance for the wooden staff and lezim exercises and a abundant fraud whenever it suits its purpose. He is forced into making several declarations to the chief priest. Nagarkar writes about Eddie's affirmation in church in front of Father Agnello, (RE:258)

*'There was no end to Father Agnello's hunger. Nothing was going to please him and Eddie feared he would still be here when the church reopened for six o'clock mass the next morning. ....Eddie's misdeeds had been acknowledged and he was about to be penalized. He rolled at Father Agnello's feet.'*

Here Nagarkar ironically describes the facets of Eddie's recurring wrongdoings and his conspicuous happiness after confession. In fact, after confession, he needs to correct his wicked ways but it becomes fruitless. He has no regret about the sin. Only it's the matter of habitual assertion in the church. He has the undisclosed familiarity of sin in his mind.

### **Humour: Tool of Motivation**

Both Ravan and Eddie are untouched by their miserable scarcity and deficiency. Though their lives are crippled by their difficulty, they exhibit the flexibility to any malfunction to attain their preferred goals. Their enthusiasm for life is worth remarkable. They have life affirming mind-set and their optimistic stance enables them to bear unfairness and mortification. It provides them potency and capacity to chortle at life seems illogicality, i.e. Kushank, Ravan and Eddie are the protagonists who experience this entire idiosyncrasy and embark upon the situation contentedly.

### **Black or Dark Humour:**

The author outlines Hindus and Catholics (Christians) black details of chawl life in Mumbai in an outrageous and comical manner, (RE: 173)

*'Hindu's eat paan, but do not consider that spitting was peeing from the mouth, Catholics do. Hindu's went to municipal schools and did not always go on to college whereas Catholics went instantly to paradise or rather its comparable on ground, St. Xavier's College'.*

In another incidence, Nagarkar gives passionate explanation of the hero Shammi Kapoor,

*'In the course of his one song, he raises and screws up his brow, pulls a face, shrugs a shoulder, runs up his hand over his slicked black hair. Thus his narrow mouth went all over his face.'*

#### **Humour: Effective means to express Temper**

Nagarkar uses humour to express temper at the obtainable pretense, affectation, unfairness, disparity and misery in the society, we live in. (RE: 84) To prove the fact, he juxtaposes the scornful discourse on *Afghan Snow* or *The Great Water Wars* or on the *Meditation on Neighbors* or his *Harangue on Poverty*.

*'To be fair is to be God's selected. Justice was more valuable than immortality, nirvana or even moksha. It was on par with virginity. ....For truly what are prosperity and authority without a fair skin?'*

#### **Witty Humour:**

Nagarkar's humour reflects collective and orthodox remarks through language, faith and doctrines. His humors are packed with perceptive wittiness, piercing annotations and sarcastic projections which are able to massacre the holy cows of Indian society.

Nagarkar displays his keen grave mind by finding some inaptness, inequality and discriminate. He tells the readers to stay away from taking anything on belief, neither gurus, teachers, parents, the author nor themselves.

Nagarkar, during the course of action, comments on the speaking manners of Anglo Indian, (RE: 179)

*'He's a dutty bugger. Tree times I informed him don't climb the tree to gaze at my sas. Leave my sas unaccompanied, men. I inquired him 'gain and again but he din pay attention, so I gave him a smack, straight on the face like. De bugger began to weep like a baby men.'*

#### **Serious Deadpan Humour:**

The narrator portray a somber deadpan humour about the art of tying a langotie,

*'Putting on the white shirt and khaki half pants was a composite ceremony. You tie the string around the waist at the belly button while the tail of the loin cloth trails on the ground.....Now surpass the band of cloth over your crotch once again and fold in the remnants as securely as you can, at the back.'*

#### **Humour: Strong Weapon to Resist Injustice**

Nagarkar demonstrates his distress and disturbance through the occurrence like *'The Great Water Wars'*. He employs the humor as a well-built bludgeon in order to divulge the unfairness of denying an essential amenity like water to the common people. He disapproves the political structure in which the rustic is often victim. Nagarkar asserts, (RE: 69-70)

*'The nature of the municipal tap is feudal. It replicates the Almighty's behavior and irritability but never his kindness since its authority is completely unoriginal. ....You are at its compassion. You are obliged for its reasons and droughts.'*

**Humour as a Patent Nonsense:**

In the episode, 'A Harangue on Poverty' we can visualize Nagarkar's considerations as patent nonsense, 'As recognizable as a clothes line, the majority populace in India squander their whole lives trying to attain but beyond it. It is their greatest ambition. If you are blessed, you may get a glance of it. You can't see the line, you can't touch it and innumerable people are trying to get at it. .... just the translucent give of air, what patent nonsense.'

**Irreverent and Double Edged Humour:**

Nagarkar expressively shows the yoke of an indefinite fault on young Ravan's mind through the cyclical beliefs of assassinating Victor Coutinho, Eddie's father and of Mahatma Gandhi. This devastating experience makes the mind of Ravan as a tormented and he cross-examines, (RE: 46-47)

'When had he exterminate Eddie's father? And how? And why? Did his parents were acquainted with that he was killer? Did he murder Eddie's father first or Mahatma Gandhi? Or he entrusts both transgressions on the same day?'

Nagarkar adroitly uses double edged humor and conveys both tears and laughter. It also works to modify the temperament of our consideration. Nagarkar's disrespectful humor has the ability to connect those who take themselves a little too soberly and over seriously.

**Conclusion:**

Kiran Nagarkar, in the canon of post-independence literature, has productively portrayed the amalgamation of hilarity, self-examination and humour in his well-known select novels *Seven Sixes Are Forty Three* and *Ravan and Eddie*. The present research is a genuine endeavor to give the impression at Nagarkar's technique of narrating the occurrences in pragmatic but entertaining manner. His humors give the gigantic multiplicity and scrutinize the fictional techniques. The humors created demonstrate an enormous and welcome liberation to his readers and are multi-dimensional and multi-faced which machinery as an eye openers.

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**Cite This Article:**

**Dr. Kamalakar Baburao Gaikwad, (2021). Amalgamation Of Joviality, Self-Examination And Humour In Kiran Nagarkar's Seven Sixes Are Forty Three And Ravan & Eddie, Educreator Research Journal VIII (VI), 103-109.**