



Culture as Lived Experience: A Cultural Materialist Reading of Nagarkar's Seven Sixes are Forty Three

Shilpa Sannaveerappanavar ¹, Dr Suporna Mitra ².

¹ PhD Student, Abeda Inamdar Senior College, Pune.

² Associate Professor, DBNP Arts SSGG Commerce and SSAM Science College, Lonavala.

Abstract- Kiran Nagarkar is a significant post-colonial Indian author recognised for his ability to mirror the social and cultural nuances of Indian society through diverse and innovative narratives. By applying Raymond Williams's concepts of cultural materialism and the structure of feeling, this paper argues that Nagarkar's debut novel, *Seven Sixes are Forty Three*, portrays culture not as a static set of rules, but as an active, ongoing, and "lived experience". The research examines how the material and economic conditions of post-independence India—specifically, poverty and the rigid social hierarchies of the lower-middle class—directly shape the characters' personal lives and emotional convictions. The analysis demonstrates how the novel captures a "structure of feeling" characterised by social disarray and metropolitan scarcity. Through the protagonist Kushank Purandare's non-linear and pessimistic narrative, Nagarkar reflects the chaotic reality of modern Indian city life. Furthermore, by focusing on the lived experience of female characters, the paper reveals how entrenched "residual" patriarchal values manifest as systemic domestic violence and the denial of personal autonomy. Characters such as Pratibha, Aarohi, and Chandini represent a broader cultural reality where women are conditioned to accept male authority as their "destiny". Their lives are defined by a "syndrome of silence," where domestic abuse is often hidden behind "four walls" to protect family reputation. Ultimately, Nagarkar's unflinching portrayal of physical and emotional hardship shatters idealised myths of the Indian family. The study concludes that for the marginalised women in the text, the "whole way of life" is defined by mandatory material powerlessness and unheard suffering, making the novel a scathing commentary on the enduring grip of patriarchal structures in contemporary India.

Keywords: Gender Discrimination, Marginalisation, Patriarchal Society, Lived Experience, Structure of Feeling, Domestic Violence.

I. Introduction

Kiran Nagarkar is considered a prominent Indian writer in the postcolonial era. He is known for his satirical, complex narratives that often critique societal norms and power structures. He wrote equally well in both Marathi and English. His work created a body of literature in two languages that consistently challenged the core beliefs, major stories, and power structures that shaped India's past and present. Nagarkar's novels are humorous and dynamic, yet they also reveal how large-scale systems—such as the persistent impact of colonialism and the unjust power structures of contemporary India—influence people's daily existence and convictions. Raymond Williams's concept of cultural materialism offers a framework for understanding culture not as a fixed entity, but as a dynamic, ongoing, and lived experience. Williams's definition of culture as both "the whole way of life" and a site of struggle for meaning, alongside his concept of structure of feeling, helps us understand how Nagarkar's books embed ideology into everyday routines and emotions, rather than only into overt political



discussions. The research is grounded in Williams's principal theories regarding culture and society.

Kiran Nagarkar was born in 1942 in Mumbai into a well-off, open-minded family that had adopted Western ways. His family background was marked by deep thought and intellectual exploration, and though they were culturally rich, he grew up in the more modest English-speaking environment of the Dadar Hindu Colony. This unique upbringing gave him a front-row seat to the contradictions of Indian life, as he moved between the intellectual world of his family and the gritty, everyday struggles of the middle class in Mumbai and Pune. He studied at Fergusson College in Pune and later at S.I.E.S. College in Mumbai, spending most of his life in these two cities and becoming deeply familiar with their social rhythms and hidden problems.

Nagarkar turned his own experiences into stories that reveal society's painful and uncomfortable sides. He was a bilingual author, writing in both Marathi and English, and his work became famous for its dark humour and its refusal to look away from the "evils" of the world. Because he grew up in a middle-class family, he was well-acquainted with the specific hardships of people living in chawls—the crowded apartment buildings where families often struggle to maintain their dignity. He had a deep understanding of the "plight of women" in these environments, noticing how they were frequently marginalised and treated as secondary to men.

His grandfather, Balwant Nagarkar, was a key figure. He was a Brahmin who converted to the Brahmo Samaj religion, a true rebel who broke away from strict traditions. Balwant even participated in the 1893 World Parliament of Religion in Chicago and was the first Indian English Professor at Wilson College. Kiran never met his grandfather but considered him the "spark plug" of the family, as he told *Harmony* magazine in an interview, calling him a mysterious figure with gaps in his life story. Balwant's bravery in changing his own life allowed Kiran to be an independent thinker. This "rebellious nature" was the most important thing his grandfather passed on to him. Because Balwant broke away from strict traditions, Kiran was not forced into a narrow or rigid Hindu upbringing. Instead, he grew up with a feeling of freedom. He believed his grandfather was the reason he could be a modern, non-religious person while still feeling a strong, positive connection to an open, welcoming, and "all-embracing" version of Hinduism.

Nagarkar's family background greatly influenced his writing. His grandfather, who challenged tradition, gave Nagarkar a critical, humorous perspective on strict social and religious rules. Most importantly, his grandfather's leadership role inspired Nagarkar's deep commitment to humanism, leading him to write about complex, imperfect outsiders who constantly question authority. Furthermore, his grandfather's job as an English literature professor is why Kiran Nagarkar is fluent in both Marathi and English and could innovate in both languages. Finally, when his grandfather died early, the family fell into poverty, which helped Nagarkar write realistically about city life.



II. Theoretical Background

Raymond Williams developed the idea of cultural materialism, which argues that you can't separate a culture's practices (such as art and literature) from the real-world material and economic conditions in which they are created. Williams disagreed with older Marxist ideas that held that culture was merely a passive mirror of the economy. Instead, he saw a more active, back-and-forth relationship. In his key writings, such as "Culture is Ordinary" and *Marxism and Literature*, Raymond Williams defines culture fundamentally as a "constitutive social process" through which specific and distinct "ways of life" are created (19). He rejects the traditional Marxist idea that culture is merely a secondary "superstructural" by-product of the economy, or just a classification for "the arts". Instead, he defines it as a "whole body of practices and expectations" and a "lived system of meanings and values" that actively shapes people's entire lives, relationships, and sense of absolute reality (110).

Raymond Williams believed that art isn't just a fancy object for us to look at; it is a powerful way for people to share real, raw human experiences. He argued that traditional theories were wrong to ignore how art acts as a "communication vehicle" for the common meanings we all share. In this view, a successful piece of art isn't something you just sit and watch passively—it's something the audience actually "lives through" and recreates in their own minds. This makes literature a living record that connects us to the people who came before us, much as anthropologists view a culture as a complex web of meanings that must be decoded to understand a community.

Williams's famous idea, "structures of feeling," describes the emotional and lived reality of a particular time—the meanings and values people actually experience before they are officially written down as an ideology (*Marxism and Literature* 131). It captures the emotional and experiential texture of social life. This describes the "vibe" or "mood" of a specific moment in history—those gut feelings, anxieties, and hopes that people experience in their daily lives before they ever become official laws or political ideologies. Williams believed that books are the best place to find these "living" feelings. To make sense of them, he looked at three layers of culture: the Dominant (the powerful ideas in charge right now), the Residual (old values from the past that are still active), and the Emergent (brand-new values and ways of living that are just starting to form). Writers like Kiran Nagarkar sit right in the middle of these layers, capturing the tug-of-war between them.

When we apply this to Nagarkar's writing about India, it fits perfectly because he refuses to write "fairytales" about the nation. Instead of romantic myths, Nagarkar gives us the hard, material truth—the suffocating traffic of Mumbai, the heat, the poverty, and the real-world pressure of trying to survive. By focusing on these gritty details, he shows exactly what Williams meant: the way we see the world is shaped entirely by the actual conditions we live in. Nagarkar doesn't just describe a setting; he captures the "structure of feeling" of a society confronting the messy aftermath of colonialism and the fast-paced pressures of the modern world.



III. Aim of the Study

The main aim of this research is to study Kiran Nagarkar's *Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three* using Raymond Williams's ideas of cultural materialism and "structure of feeling." This study tries to show that culture in the novel is not just about traditions or customs, but about how people actually live their daily lives.

It aims to understand how real-life conditions, such as poverty, class differences, city life, and patriarchy, shape the characters' thoughts, emotions, and experiences. The study especially focuses on how women in the novel experience oppression and how their lives are controlled by social and patriarchal rules.

IV. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is:

- To explain how Raymond Williams's theory helps us understand that literature is connected to real social and economic conditions.
- To examine the overall mood or "structure of feeling" in the novel, especially the sense of confusion, struggle, and disappointment in post-independence urban India.
- To show how everyday life—family rules, financial control, arranged marriages, and domestic violence—reflects deeper social power structures.
- To highlight how women characters like Pratibha, Aarothi, and Chandini represent the real struggles many women face in a patriarchal society.
- To show how Nagarkar's broken, nonlinear storytelling style reflects the chaos and instability of modern city life.
- To challenge the idea of the "perfect Indian family" by revealing the hidden suffering and silence within households.

In simple terms, this study seeks to show that *Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three* presents culture as something people live and feel every day, not just something written in books or preserved in traditions. It shows how power, poverty, and patriarchy shape real human experiences.

V. Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative, textual analysis method. It is based mainly on close reading and interpretation of Kiran Nagarkar's *Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three*. The research analyses the novel using Raymond Williams's theory of cultural materialism, particularly his concepts of culture as a "whole way of life" and a "structure of feeling." The study is theoretical and analytical. It does not use surveys or fieldwork. Instead, it examines the text carefully to understand how social, economic, and cultural conditions are reflected in the characters' lives.



VI. Overview of the Novel

The novel is about a journey through the scattered memories of a young man named Kushank Purandare. He's broke, struggling to find his footing, and living in Mumbai and Pune during the 1960s and 70s. Instead of a traditional story that starts at the beginning and ends at the end, the book feels like you're sitting with Kushank as he randomly recalls memories, jumping from one thought to the next. Throughout the whole book, he's actually talking to a mysterious, unnamed "you".

His Heartbreaks: Kushank has a really tough time with love. In college, he falls for his first love, Aaroti, after they bond over books. It doesn't work out, and he later finds her married to someone else. Later, he falls deeply in love with another woman named Chandani. Unfortunately, her family hates the idea because Kushank doesn't have money. They verbally abuse Chandani, lock her away, and completely break her spirit until she is forced to end the relationship. He also has another partner, Prachinti, who tragically gets sick and passes away.

Watching the Dark Side of the World: Kushank often feels helpless because he is constantly surrounded by violence and sadness. Right at the beginning of the book, he recalls a horrifying night when a drunk neighbour brutally beats his wife, Pratibha. The husband bullies and taunts her until, in a moment of utter desperation, she pours kerosene on herself and lights a match. Even as she is dying in the hospital, she protects her abusive husband by lying to the police so he won't go to jail. Kushank also has to listen to another neighbour, Bhau Kathavate, violently beating his daughters night after night. It traumatises Kushank so much that he admits he secretly wishes the girls would just die so their suffering would finally end.

A Trip to a Starving Village: Seeking purpose, Kushank tags along with his friend Raghu to the village of Nandadhela, which has been completely ruined by a massive drought. Raghu works for a relief group and is sent there to dig water wells—a dangerous job, especially since previous workers had nearly died from food poisoning. Out there, Kushank witnesses the heartbreaking reality of absolute poverty and starvation.

A Chaotic Ending: Things don't neatly resolve for Kushank. In one of the final, chaotic events, he takes the ashes of an older woman named Kaku to scatter them in the sea at Marine Drive in Mumbai. But things go terribly wrong. For no real reason, he gets attacked and brutally beaten by local street thugs. He then ends up locked in a jail cell, where the police and other prisoners beat him up even more.

The book ends without giving us closure. In the very last scene, Kushank is just sitting in a restaurant called Berry's Cafe with the mysterious "you" before he suddenly passes out. We never find out what happens to him after that. Ultimately, it's a very raw, sometimes funny, and deeply sad story about a guy just trying to survive and find a little bit of meaning in an unfair, chaotic world.



Structure of Feeling: Patriarchy and Power in Nagarkar's Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three:

Kiran Nagarkar's first novel, *Saat Sakkam Trechalis* (originally in Marathi, 1974), translated by Shubha Slee as *Seven Sixes are Forty Three*, is a truly important book in Indian literature. Though people often focus on its experimental style and sharp satire, looking through a cultural materialist lens reveals its deepest point: it criticises the massive gap between the official, high-minded goals of society and the messy, real-life experiences of ordinary people.

The novel's title—which uses mathematically incorrect multiplication—is a perfect, startling symbol for this broken social system. In a country defined by rigid class systems and uneven development, the simple search for logic or fairness proves completely pointless. This 'impossible' title suggests a broader societal failure: the promises of progress made after independence haven't been kept for a large portion of the population. Hugely influential in both Marathi and English literary worlds, the book's fresh, modern approach purposefully avoided traditional realistic storytelling to powerfully capture the confusing, isolating, and utterly chaotic reality of modern city life.

The main character, Kushank Purandare, often says, "What difference does it make?" This really captures the book's feeling. His tired, pessimistic attitude, dark jokes, and refusal to follow typical life paths (like getting married or having a stable job) aren't just his personal issues. They show a bigger societal problem where people are dealing with broken promises after colonialism and the ridiculousness of constant poverty. On top of that, the way the book is put together—it's jumpy, doesn't follow a straight timeline, and shifts between memories and talking straight to a secret "You"—mirrors this unstable emotional state, reflecting the confusion, isolation, and uncertainty of that time.

While the "structure of feeling" captures the general mood, "lived experience" grounds the novel in the real, physical hardships. Rather than painting a hopeful, romanticised picture of India after independence, Nagarkar forces the reader to confront the harsh, physical realities of poverty, hunger, and daily insecurity. This difference is most obvious when the narrator, Kushank, travels with his friend Raghu, who works for the international aid organisation MORE, to Nandadhela, a village in Maharashtra gripped by famine. Through this journey, Nagarkar vividly illustrates the "lived experience" of extreme hardship. He does not just give the reader statistics about a famine; he describes the brutal, exhausting physical labour of digging a water well by hand under a deadly sun, and the horrifying reality of encountering starving families on the road.

During a severe drought, Kushank and Raghu undertake the task of digging a well for the villagers. Their struggle is compounded by the harsh physical conditions and oppressive societal norms. The narrative highlights their immense physical labour while simultaneously exposing the corruption of local authorities who seek to profit from the crisis. The Kushank enters the village with a naive, middle-class structure of feeling, desiring to play the "sweet social reformer". When he and other workers were digging a well, he saw that a few young men had arrived and were standing far away. When he asked Raghu if those men could also join as workers, he replied,



"Which son of a bitch in Nandadhela do you think is going to let the untouchables drink from this well? They'll have to fight and force their way if they want the water" (SSAFT, pg.107)

This devastates Kushanak. His friend Raghu, however, understands the deeply ingrained, prejudiced attitudes of the local culture. Raghu bluntly explains that bringing city ideals of equality to the village will not work; he notes that the upper castes will never let the untouchables drink from the well unless they are willing to "fight and force their way" to it.

Williams' theory often explores the gap between official public narratives and felt reality. The Sardar, Bhishander, is a tyrant who exploits the famine by buying the villagers' land for almost nothing. Yet, when Raghu and Kushank outmanoeuvre him by donating his bribe to the relief fund, the official public narrative becomes a lie printed in bold type on the front page:

'Sardar Bhishander's Generous Gift to Famine-stricken Nandadhela – Rs 50,000' (SSAFT. Pg. 112)

This newspaper headline is a perfect example of what Williams meant when he said powerful people control how history is written. The local boss, Bhishander, twists the situation easily. Even though he was actually stealing from starving people, the official public record now makes him look like a generous hero. History will remember him as a saviour, completely erasing the painful reality of the villagers who are still trapped in poverty and thirst. Kushank and Raghu might have felt like they won a small victory by tricking him out of the bribe money to fund the relief effort, but that feeling doesn't last. In a heartbreaking final scene, just as they finally hit water, Bhishander shows up with bulldozers and completely buries the well in just an hour and a half. This shows Nagarkar's ultimate point: the people in charge don't just physically crush the poor and destroy their hard work; they also rewrite the news to cover up their own crimes and make themselves look like the good guys.

Nagarkar doesn't look away from the harsh realities that society usually ignores. He gives us a direct, unvarnished look at the grinding weight of poverty, the deep-seated unfairness of the caste system, and the physical dangers women face, even within the supposed safety of their own homes. Through the way his characters interact and the story's raw, unique voice, he captures what it actually feels like to try and survive in such a punishing environment.

A major part of this "lived experience" is the suffocating presence of patriarchy. In the novel, this isn't just an abstract concept; it is a physical and mental cage. Nagarkar shows how rigid gender roles are used to "confine women to specific domestic spheres," effectively stripping them of their independence and their right to make their own choices. Inside the home, every interaction is coloured by a sense of "secondary status," in which male authority is an invisible yet constant pressure that dictates how women speak, move, and live.

What makes this portrayal so powerful is that it isn't presented as a formal ideology or a textbook lesson. Instead, Nagarkar reveals it as a "structure of feeling." This means it



is something built and reinforced every single day through the tiny, repeated interactions between people. It is the heavy atmosphere in a room, the unspoken expectations, and the quiet ways power is exerted and accepted. By focusing on these specific moments, Nagarkar shows that oppression isn't just a grand political idea—it is the very fabric of his characters' daily lives.

By pulling back the curtain on these private moments, Nagarkar shatters the myth of the "perfect, happy family." He reveals a much darker reality in which the home is not a sanctuary but a place of ownership and control. In this world, male dominance isn't just a series of random, isolated events; it is the very foundation of society. It creates a set of unwritten rules that keep women powerless and confined, making their domestic life feel more like a cage than a choice.

Raymond Williams used the term "structure of feeling" to describe the "atmosphere" or unwritten rules of a culture that people feel in their bones. Nagarkar shows us this through characters like Ajit, a man who uses violence to keep his wife, Pratibha, and even his mother, in their place. For Pratibha, her "lived experience"—the actual reality of her day—is defined by physical fear. When Ajit comes home drunk and starts hitting her, her first instinct is to rush and shut the door. She isn't just hiding a crime; she is following a deep-seated cultural rule that says family "shame" must stay inside the house. This shows how a woman can be trapped in a cage she feels she must help lock from the inside just to protect her husband's reputation.

The most heartbreaking part of this "structure of feeling" is how it makes people stay silent or even side with the abuser. When Pratibha finally can't take the beatings anymore and sets herself on fire, the reaction of her family is chilling. Her mother-in-law doesn't feel sorry for her; she actually blames Pratibha and calls it "God's fairness" or divine judgment.

'So be it. Tormenting an old woman, and what did she get out of it? It's like a judgment from heaven. God is always fair, that's what I say. You can't get away with it, not forever. It comes to all of us.' (SSAFT. Pg. 5)

The above lines aren't just about the physical violence of a husband; it is about an entire social atmosphere that makes that violence seem normal, or even "right." Prathibha's mother-in-law takes the side of her son and blames daughter in law shows how a lived experience of patriarchy can turn even other women into enforcers of the system; because the mother-in-law had to survive the same rigid rules, she uses religion to justify the violence rather than questioning it. Even as Pratibha is dying, she tells the police that no one else is responsible, protecting the man who hurt her. This is the ultimate "uncomfortable truth" Nagarkar shows us: a culture where women are so thoroughly taught that their suffering is just their "destiny" that they end up protecting the very system that destroys them.

Aaroti, who is Kushank's love interest, is a tragic example of how even a woman's own money and dreams can be taken away by the men in her life. She represents what Raymond Williams called "residual" culture—those old, rigid rules from the past that still have a tight grip on the present. On paper, Aaroti is a success story; she is a brilliant



student who earns scholarships through her own hard work. However, her "lived experience" shows that being smart isn't enough to make her free. Her father takes her scholarship money and puts it into a bank account she isn't even allowed to touch, effectively keeping her dependent on him.

This highlights a harsh "material reality": for women in this world, financial freedom is often an illusion, even when they've earned it through their own merit. Even though Aaroti is becoming an educated, independent person, the old "structure" of her family life eventually crushes her future. Because her male guardians have total control over her finances and her reputation, she is forced to give up both her studies and her relationship with Kushank. Her story shows that without the power to control her own money, a woman's education and talent are often not enough to save her from the life her family chooses for her.

The oppression of women isn't just carried out by men; it is often enforced by other women who have already been broken into the system. Aaroti's sister-in-law is a fine example of this, as she acts as a primary agent of this dominant culture. In one of the incidents in the novel, she is educating Aaroti about Bedroom frolics, 'Maybe you'll be married one day, your brother and I will certainly keep trying for you.'.... 'When you are married, you will sleep with your husband. Then you'll remember what I'm telling you now. Men are very strange. (SSAFT. P. 67).

This is a clear example of how hegemonic forces—the big, powerful ideas of a male-dominated society—become part of a woman's practical consciousness. It turns a woman's everyday thoughts and skills into tools for her own subjection, making her believe that her only "job" is to please a man.

The moment Aaroti's brother discovers her letters to Kushank, the family's true material power is triggered. Because she has no agency—no real power to make her own choices—her life is treated like a business transaction. Her brother and father don't just express disapproval; they fundamentally change the course of her life by "making her discontinue her studies." This is the ultimate "residual" rule at work: education is seen as a luxury or a hobby that can be revoked at any moment if a woman "misbehaves" by trying to love someone of her own choosing.

Aaroti's future is decided entirely by these patriarchal figures without her input. Her scholarships, her brilliance, and her personal feelings are treated as irrelevant compared to the family's "honour." By marrying her off to a stranger, the family effectively erases her as an individual. This transition from a promising student to a forced bride shows how the lived experience of a woman in this society is one of constant surveillance, where her dreams are always on loan from the men who hold the keys to her bank account and her reputation.

Chandani's relationship with Kushank offers another painful glimpse of how the family unit functions more like a surveillance state than a support system. In her case, the "structure of feeling" is one of total emotional and physical ownership. Her father, the family patriarch, doesn't just disagree with her choice—he attempts to dismantle her



reality. He starts with "brainwashing," dismissing her deep adult feelings as mere "puppy love," and then pivots to emotional blackmail by weaponising his own "health problems" to make her feel guilty for her independence.

When these psychological tactics fail to break her spirit, the family drops the mask of being a loving household and resorts to "practical experience" of domestic torture. Chandani is beaten "black and blue" and subjected to the "silent treatment," where her own parents refuse to speak to her for days. This creates a terrifying discrepancy between the "official" family image—one of care and protection—and the actual, lived reality of violence. In this world, the home is only a safe place as long as the woman obeys; the moment she tries to love someone of her own choosing, the family reveals itself as an enforcement agency for the social order.

Chandani's story shows that in this society, a woman's love is viewed as a dangerous threat to the father's authority. The family doesn't see her heart as something to be cherished, but as a territory to be conquered. By using both "soft" manipulation and "hard" physical abuse, the patriarch ensures that the daughter's agency is crushed. This reinforces the idea that for women of this generation, the "whole way of life" is a constant negotiation with a power that is willing to bruise their bodies just to keep their souls in line.

The Kathavate family offers a horrifying look at how domestic violence is not just a sudden outburst of anger, but a predictable, lived social experience. In this household, the father, Bhau, doesn't need a reason to be violent; he simply gets an "itch" to beat his daughters at night. This language is intentional—it shows that his brutality is a casual habit, as routine as a physical craving. He drags his daughters across the ground and kicks them in a "brutal manner," turning the family home into a space of systematic exploitation where the male head of the house finds a twisted sense of "pleasure" in dominating the women.

In this patricentric structure, the daughters are pushed to such a breaking point that they frequently threaten suicide. However, the most chilling part of their "practical experience" is that these threats are "taken very lightly" by their father. This indifference proves that in Bhau's eyes, his daughters are not individual human beings with feelings or rights; they are merely property. When someone views another person as an object they own, that person's pain—and even their death—carries no weight.

The Kathavate family represents the total collapse of human dignity within the domestic sphere. It highlights a "structure of feeling" where the home is a site of absolute, unchecked power. By showing how the father can be so casually cruel, Nagarkar reveals that for many women in this society, survival is not about "family love," but about navigating the whims of a man who views their lives as disposable. This reinforces the grim reality that in a world built on male ownership, a woman's life is often treated as having no value beyond her father's or husband's control.

To conclude, *Seven Sixes are Forty Three* is far more than just a fictional story; it is a raw and honest look at the "lived experience" of people surviving on the edges of Indian society. By using Raymond Williams's ideas, we can see how Kiran Nagarkar captures



the "structure of feeling" of a time and place—the actual "vibe" and emotional weight of living through poverty, social chaos, and the broken promises of progress after independence. Nagarkar's own unique background—growing up between a world of intellectual freedom and the gritty reality of Mumbai chawls—allowed him to write as a mirror to these uncomfortable truths.

The novel's greatest strength is the way it shines a light on the old, stubborn rules of patriarchy—the 'old-fashioned' mindset—that still make life difficult for women today. By sharing the sad stories of women like Pratibha, Aarothi, and Chandini, Nagarkar makes it clear that many women feel like suffering is just an unavoidable part of their lives, something they've been taught to see as their 'destiny,' like accepting violence and having no real say in their own lives. It's not just a few bad things happening—like Pratibha hiding her bruises or Aarothi losing control of her money to her father. These are all signs of a larger system where men hold all the power and women are kept down. Nagarkar truly captured what life felt like for these women, showing how their world was emotionally structured around men being in charge. He didn't just share boring facts; he wrote about the real pain—the physical and emotional harm of being attacked or feeling powerless to make even simple choices. Whether he was talking about the harsh reality of domestic abuse or the quiet ways a father limits his daughter's future, his goal was always to show the world as it's truly experienced by those who are the most vulnerable.

Ultimately, Nagarkar uses dark humour and a messy, non-linear style to shatter the romantic myths of a perfect national identity. He forces us to see that culture is a constant struggle for meaning and that for the marginalised, the "whole way of life" is often defined by silence and powerlessness. His work remains a vital reminder that we must look past official stories to find the real human experiences that define our world.

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