

**PSYCHO-ANALYSIS AND INTOLERANCE IN KIRAN NAGARKAR'S
*GOD'S LITTLE SOLDIER***

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Abstract

Today *psychoanalysis* is very familiar for the wide public after it has been either rejected or adulated for a long time. It could even say that therapy was shadowed by the virtues of its application to other domains. Psychoanalysis applied in literature, sociology, anthropology, ethnology, religion and mythology incited the interest of a public that had no inclination towards the clinical realm. Psychoanalysis is no longer clearly defined in the eyes of the wide public. Today nobody knows for sure what psychoanalysis is and wants. Unfortunately no effort is made in order to clarify this crucial aspect.

The main attempt of the paper is to penetrate the mystery of this strange subject matter. Kiran Nagarkar's novel *God's Little Soldier* throws light on the protagonist Zia Khan's psychoanalysis and intolerance. Kiran Nagarkar tracks the record of Zia's human mental development i.e. his free associations, fantasies and dreams, unconscious conflicts, character problems, pathological defenses, wishes and guilt, his mental disturbances. He also exhibits his physiological intolerance and his massive strength of madness through his deeds.

Key words: Psychoanalysis, mental development, physiological intolerance, fanaticism, self analysis, notion of liberty, human predicament, religious fervour etc.

The term *psychoanalysis* is a set of psychological and psychotherapeutic theories and associated techniques created by Austrian physician and a Jewish neuropathologist Sigmund Freud. He discovered psychoanalysis by systematizing ideas and information coming from different theoretical and clinical directions. He believed that people could be cured by making conscious their unconscious thoughts and motivations. The aim of psychoanalysis therapy is to release repressed emotions and experiences. It is commonly used to treat depression and anxiety disorders. The basic tenet of psychoanalysis includes- a person's development is determined by

often forgotten events in early childhood rather than by inherited traits alone. It is the human attitude, mannerism, experience and thought which is largely influenced by irrational drives that are rooted in the unconscious. It is necessary to bypass psychological resistance in the form of defense mechanisms when bringing drives into awareness. This term is related with the human mental development i.e. his free associations, fantasies and dreams, unconscious conflicts, character problems, pathological defenses, wishes and guilt. It strongly refers to psychopathology i.e. mental disturbances of the protagonist. It does correctly the evaluation of his effectiveness. Basically it designates concomitantly three things- a method of mind investigation, especially the unconscious mind, a therapy of neurosis and applying the investigation method and clinical experiences. It focuses on self analysis, which is supposed to be the birth of the psychoanalysis.

Kiran Nagarkar, the recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award, reveals in *God's Little Soldier*, an unflinching exploration of the psyche of a man engaged in the cold, profitable business of terror. He also offers a vision of the writer as the ultimate assassin, the ultimate fundamentalist. He also suggests that the writer is the only saviour in a world that has abused and twisted language, and that is engaged in cutting off its own tongue; perhaps what the terrorist wants to protest is the silence that he has been forced to inhabit." (Niranjana S. Roy, *The Return of Kiran Nagarkar*) Zia, the protagonist of the novel, exhibits the physiological intolerance through his deeds. He is a very compelling character who has the massive strength of madness. He is compared with Dostoevsky's *The Brother Karamozov*. Zia is actually emasculated and weakened by how much the narrator seems to want to do for him. The author has portrayed the psychological portrait of Zia drawn for each equation has only one solution, but also the psychological profile of the countries in which he lives and can play his genius number, the higher praise Allah and God. Especially the first third, set in India, the reader makes the life of wealthy Indian families and their environment to life. In England, in the Californian monastery we follow the hero and his obsession. His fanaticism is sometimes difficult to understand, he nourished but not out of hatred, but of cool mathematical calculus. But the author presents us with people and environment skillfully before, do it in the reader to wake pictures can tell. Thus, the strength of the book is not the depiction of religious fanaticism, but the world in which it thrives. It is an exciting novel that stands out in the first three quarters through vivid narrative of religious experience and its transformation into dogmatism. Unfortunately, this is only possible in the first three quarters of the novel. In the last quarter, when Zia follows the life guards, his neo conservative campaign plans, the book loses its fascination and becomes as a trashy and boring one.

In *God's Little Soldier*, Nagarkar's protagonist even sets about carrying out the fatwah against Rushdie (135). But critical differences isolate Nagarkar from his more internationally recognized counterpart. As Makarand Paranjape points out, the majority of Indian English novelists write from one of two perspectives: either to reveal the psychological interior of the Indian subject, or to display a level of irrefutable, undeniable acumen with the English language itself (15). This is certainly true of Rushdie's writing: its complexity and attention to diction announces his right to write in English; anyone able to wield the language so skillfully certainly should.

In Nagarkar's most recent English novel, *God's Little Soldier*, he addresses the notion of liberty through the voice of the misguided zealot, Zia. As he plans to assassinate Salman Rushdie, Zia thinks: The Prince of Darkness chose to appear at select gatherings and seminars if they dealt with human rights, censorship and the freedom of the press. These were soapboxes

where he harangued his audience, scolded Britain and the other Western nations for not isolating Iran. Behind all that highfalutin talk of democratic ideals, Zia saw Essar help himself to a theory of state-sponsored individual freedom that was tailor-made to suit his predicament while promoting the age-old romantic notion that liberty is license without responsibility. (137) While this diatribe is to be taken with a grain of salt – after all, Zia is shown to be a man who is easily manipulated, capable of fully embracing or completely renouncing his own radical ideals – it nevertheless contains a truth Nagarkar clearly believes. For Nagarkar's books are never written from a viewpoint that he feels is irresponsible. Nagarkar, like the character Amanat, is constantly questioning the status quo in the hopes of finding a better solution. His books are written to encourage the Indian population to interrogate their beliefs. (Rochester, Rachael. *The Empire's Shadow: Kiran Nagarkar's Quest for the Unifying Indian Novel*. December 2011, Arizona State University. Conclusion, 65).

As a student in Cambridge, Zia decides to assassinate Salman Rushdie, the "obstreperous *Midnight's Child*" and the scourge of Islam, and hunts him down, only to be stymied at the last moment. This makes him flee the country. He sets about carrying out the fatwah against Rushdie (135). Later he becomes a guerilla in Afghanistan and Kashmir. In this novel, Kiran Nagarkar addresses the notion of liberty through the voice of the misguided zealot, Zia. As he plans to assassinate Salman Rushdie, Zia thinks: "*The Prince of Darkness chose to appear at select gatherings and seminars if they dealt with human rights, censorship and the freedom of the press. These were soapboxes where he harangued his audience, scolded Britain and the other Western nations for not isolating Iran. Behind all that highfalutin talk of democratic ideals, Zia saw Essar help himself to a theory of state-sponsored individual freedom that was tailor-made to suit his predicament while promoting the age-old romantic notion that liberty is license without responsibility.*" (137) While this diatribe is to be taken with a grain of salt. After all, Zia is shown to be a man who is easily manipulated, capable of fully embracing or completely renouncing his own radical ideals. The novel is a wonderful account of Zia's quest to assassinate the infidel Salman Rushdie. Nagarkar makes Zia believable and complex. Therefore Zia is little more than a caricature. He is the epitome of intolerance, standing for everything the author is opposed to. But Nagarkar makes an interesting disclosure here. Nagarkar says, "*There are things about Zia I respect enormously. Even though he's deluded, you have to admire his tremendous energy and drive in doing the things he believes need to be done. He's far more proactive than the liberal Amanat, who is the conventional good guy. I can't identify with Zia, but I'm ambivalent about him. His intolerance makes me examine my own prejudices and reflect that maybe I'm intolerant as well – towards intolerant people!*" Kiran Nagarkar does not want to portray Zia as a humorous character and as a terrorist. He says, "*Zia is a character it's difficult to laugh at or laugh with,*" he says, "*and I didn't want to trivialize him.*" He also deliberately stayed away from Zia's years as a terrorist in Afghanistan "because I didn't want to write a conventional terrorist novel".

In the second part of the novel, we find that Zia has renounced his precious Islamic faith to become the zealous Brother Lucens, a monk at an abbey. Here his activities include making massive profits on the stock market, running a campaign against abortion, and setting up an organization called *The Guardian Angels* dedicated to the moral rejuvenation of godless and sinful America. At one point Zia comes up with a business plan to bring funds into Concord-Ashton, the base of *The Guardian Angels*. Nagarkar carries on the narration after Zia's speech: "*You may call it a juvenile stunt, but it worked. Word about the tax holiday and other benefits got around...*" "*You may call it a juvenile stunt?*" Late in the novel, when Zia embarks upon his

grand venture to reform the United States, Nagarkar explains: *"What was needed was to turn the world upside down. The very nature of the value system in the country had to be changed. The US had to be taken back, by force if necessary, to a state of innocence and grace." The "value system" indeed! "By force if necessary"!* At such points, we find it is not the novelist who reveals something about the character but the character who reveals something about the novelist.

In the third section of the novel, we come to know that Lucens has taken up with a Hindu godman, Shakta Muni, and has taken on a new name, Tejas Nirantar. Due to Zia's elastic nature and instability, Nagarkar calls him in a mocking tone, *Zia-Lucens-Nirantar*. He remains as avatars. He has only the appearance of independence. In reality, he is a hostage - God's little soldier - to his whimsical creator, who makes him whatever he wants him to be. Nagarkar reveals a particular mental state of his protagonist Zia Khan. Here is how a cold wind blows around Zia: *"It tore him, slipped inside his trouser legs, groped at his crotch, ferreted in his armpits and careened into his lungs."* Nagarkar uses phrases, analogy, shopworn and tacky language to dramatize a particular mental state of his protagonist. It is unusual, tedious and very expressive. He uses various verbs to describe how the cold breeze affected Zia. But this description is essential. In addition to this, he uses analogy, *"Zia became a rod of Uranium0238, inflammable with self loathing and spite."* He depicts the journey of Zia Khan- from the back alleys of Bombay to the hallowed halls of Cambridge, from terrorist camp in the mountains of Afghanistan to a Trappist monastery in Caliphornia. That's the way of Zia Khan, a young Indian from a liberal Muslim family. No matter what kind of world religion he joins, Zia believes to be the chosen one: God's Little Soldier. Novel shows thin line between genuine devotion and fanaticism.

The term *intolerance* means unwillingness or refusal to tolerate or respect opinions, views, beliefs or behaviour that differs from one's own. The word intolerance comes from a combination of the Latin *in-* meaning 'not' and *tolerantem* meaning to bear or to endure. It refers not to allow some people to have equity, freedom or other social rights. It means unwilling to grant equal freedom of expression especially in religious matters. Nagarkar offers an interpretation of his protagonist in his own words, *"Zia is a good man gone really bad."* He also claims, *"Zia's intolerance makes me examine my own prejudices and reflect that maybe I'm intolerant as well – towards intolerant people!"* Nagarkar has a complex and unorthodox insight for his protagonist Zia Khan. He delineates the journey of Zia- first of all, he becomes a monk because the inherent spirit of forgiveness emerging in all men manifests itself as Jesus, tormenting and maddening him till he sees its value and has to become a Christian. Later on, Nagarkar tries to explore the psyche of the extremist which can occur in Muslims, Christian or Hindu. He problematizes the simple views of human predicament. Positive extremist psyche can result in the dedication and single mindedness whereas an anti life ideal of intolerance can become the fanaticism that underlies many of the world's problems today. Thus Nagarkar grapples with important themes that unfold in ways that echo the complexities of life. (The Middle Stage: On Kiran Nagarkar's God's Little Soldier, middlestage.blogspot.in) Amanat's zealot younger brother Zia goes through three avatars of extremism: from Islamic terrorist to Lucens, a Catholic anti-abortion fundamentalist, to a tantric inspired gun runner, Tejas Nirantar. In all of these phases of his life, he kills hundreds of people and destroys innumerable lives. His errors and follies always buttressed by faith in the infallibility of some religious doctrine or the other always end up in human tragedies of colossal proportions.

In Kiran Nagarkar's moral universe, Zia's religious fervour clearly comes under minute scrutiny and is revealed at each step as being pathological. Nagarkar's novel has the sweep and

the ambition to live up to such expectations as the genre of the novel evokes. It explores the fundamental, psychological and political issues and moves rapidly in three continents. This novel not only reveals the religious violence but also the fundamental complexities of the global capitalist world. He has shown the wonderful evocation of a cosmopolitan and liberal Bombay Muslim family, whose younger son Zia Khan turns into a terrorist. Amanat sends a birthday gift for Zia; a novel called 'The Arsonist'. Zia really amazed that his brother, his very own Amanat, was a published author. He thinks, when did he get the time to write the novel? He was supposed to be sick, he was helping his father in the makeshift office at home, soliciting work for himself, designing fail safe helmets for motorcycle and scooter riders. Zia also felt uneasy because he wanted to save Amanat from critics. (142) Nagarkar offers an unrelenting manic questioning and scepticism. As the protagonist, Kabir, in Amanat's novel, *The Arsonist*, puts it, "You were about to kill each other for the sake of a god who you claim is either a Muslim or a Hindu. But Inayat, there is only one god and Her name is life. She is the only one worthy of worship." Towards the end of the novel, in one of his many letters to Zia, his elder brother Amanat worries about the possibility that if every choice is wrong, then there is no ethical right in the universe and we may, like Ivan in *The Brother's Karamozov*, justify any evil act. (Paranjape, Makarand, The pathology of faith, April 17, 2006. Book review of 'God's Little Soldier' by Kiran Nagarkar) Finally Zia's last thought, again derived from the story written by his brother, is: "There is only one God and her name is Life. She is the only one worthy of worship." It's a grand utopian ideal, but Nagarkar believes in it – and while reading his book you believe in it too. Kiran Nagarkar says- "Gurus enable you to see new things. The trouble with Gurus is that you can rarely see beyond them."

The paper focuses the psychoanalytical and intolerance elements which are directly related with Zia, the main protagonist of the novel. Through his life, Nagarkar revealed the various facets such as Zia's mental development, devotion and fanaticism, self realization, notion of liberty, human predicament, religious fervour and Islamic faith.

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