

## JAI NIMBKAR'S TEMPORARY ANSWERS: EXPLORING IDENTITY AND REVOLT AGAINST PATRIARCHY AND SOCIAL NORMS

P. Basheer Khan<sup>1</sup>, K. Shaheen<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor (A), Department of H&S (English), JNTUA College of Engineering Kalikiri, a constituent college of Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University Anantapur. khanenglish999@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Research Scholar, Department of English, Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University Anantapur. kshaheen787@gmail.com

### Abstract

Feminine sensibility is a woman's feelings and emotions about her own problems. It also illuminates her psychology and hankerings. The core tenet of feminism is the notion that women are mistreated in all spheres of society, especially in the realms of politics and the economy, in terms of men. The history of the human species begins with the female, as she is the carrier of the first human chromosome. Regrettably, generations of historians have viewed "Man" as the main character when, in reality, it is the woman who deserves the title. Her work, expertise, and biology, which hold the key to determining the course of events for the whole human race, will determine the course of events for the future of mankind. Jai Nimbkar was born in Pune to a very affluent family of Maharashtrian origin. It is well-known for its social and cultural responsibilities. Her novel *Temporary Answers* demonstrates women's significant role and responsibilities in society, emphasising that women should be granted equal status, defying the constraints of tradition, gender discrimination, and humiliation. This study sheds insight into the novel's depiction of its female protagonist, including her struggle for independence, innate femininity, and defiance of patriarchy.

**Keywords:** Feminism, Discrimination, Feminine sensibility, Society, Subordinate woman

### Introduction

Jai Nimbkar comes from a very sophisticated Maharastrian family from Pune. It is known for its cultural and societal obligation. She was born in 1932 and was brought up in Pune, the cultural capital of Maharashtra state. She is the eldest daughter of Mr. Dinkar Karve and Mrs. Irawati Karve. Nimbkar began her career as a writer from a very young age. She has written novels, short stories, and articles. Her contribution to the literary world is of immense

importance. The female protagonists in her work confront and resist the various social obstacles and rigidity of the societal structure. She explores the theme of marriage within the Indian cultural context. She effectively portrays the female protagonist's pursuit of self-discovery. She is a meticulous craftswoman and a thoughtful, creative writer.

### **Feminine sensibility in Temporary Answers**

The untimely death of Nagendra put a full stop to Vineeta's disillusioned life. She pondered over her past life. She instead of blaming others took all blames on herself for all the happening in her married life. In a typical manner, Vineeta considered herself to be responsible for the sudden turn of events. She now thinks that perhaps Nagendra was attempting to adopt himself to a different way of life therefore he had married her. However, she felt that she was at fault. She failed to recognize her husband's intention. She did not cooperate with him. She felt that her negative approach became obstacle in his way of adopting different way of life. *"Perhaps, when he chose to marry me, he honestly was looking for a different way of life. Unfortunately, I adopted the negative attitude of presenting his way of life without offering him a substitute for it....."* She also felt that she was responsible for turning their marriage into a difficult and troubled one. She thought that she asked for more from Nagendra which he couldn't fulfill. And as she got less than she expected, she began to resent and fight with him. *"Yes I felt I gave all of myself and in return I should have all of him. It was unfair, but then I did not have enough balance to see this. So we had bitter fights."* She did not hesitate to accept that Nagendra was calm and unconcerned, therefore, the fight between them was one sided. Vineeta plainly confessed that she was responsible for fight. She accepted it in the following way:

*"It was I who fought... he was comparatively calm because he was not really involved in the issue, I fought over... I was not a very important part of his life."*

Vineeta felt and admitted honestly that perhaps after marriage Nagendra wanted to change and start a new kind of life than his previous which was self centered life. She also felt that her negative approach, attitude and reaction might have made difficult for him to change. She now felt sorry for not practicing as a doctor. She thought that if she had practiced she wouldn't have to depend on Nagendra. He would have permitted her to have her individuality. But the unfortunate thing was that Vineeta realized what had gone wrong with

their conjugal life only after the death of Nagendra and when it was of no use. But the knowledge she got from her married life proved to be helpful for her to deal with men in her widowed life. She could deal with Vilas, Abhijit, authorities of charity hospital and others successfully. *“Anyway, its too late now for all this wisdom.”*

Vineeta allowed Vilas to help her to start her OPD because she thought that a woman – be she a doctor or anyone else - would need to depend on the sure hands of a man to set up a business enterprise such as doctor’s practice. In fact she was determined that she would not accept any male superiority. However she did not hesitate to accept help from Vilas. Vineeta says:

*“I would have laughed if someone had made a barefaced statement that woman are inferior to men. Nevertheless, somewhere along the way, I must have swallowed the idea. I found it very comforting to entrust my life once again into a man’s hand.”*

Despite accepting Vilas' assistance, Vineeta was determined from the beginning that she would never marry him. But Vilas stuck to his game plan, with the eventual goal of marrying her. Due to his inherent patience, he was prepared to bide his time until the opportune occasion arose to propose to her. Vineeta often entertained the notion of Vilas as her spouse, perceiving him as a convenient and agreeable partner to coexist with, albeit with an imbalance in their relationship. She found it admirable how Vilas skilfully arranged a tray and brewed coffee with a sense of gratitude and efficiency. Despite his diligent efforts, he was not inept. However, Vineeta feels:

*“There was a special intimacy in being alone with him in his flat at one in the morning, and I thought he would probably be a very easy man to live with.”*

She was well aware that the ironic contradiction of a woman's life lies in the peripheral place assigned to her in a married relationship. The marital relationship is rendered futile if the life partner fails to align with the desires and facets of the wife. In Indian society, the emphasis on procreation and their homes responsibilities is traditionally prioritised over sensual gratification in the context of marriage. Historians widely concur that throughout history, the concept of equality between husbands and wives was not recognised. Vineeta has analysed various marital relationships and has come to the conclusion that marriage is a

complex game that often places women in a subordinate position. Vineeta, however, realises that she was looking at love only in her self-centered way.

## Revolt against patriarchy and Social Norms

Nimbkar's female protagonists are very conscious of tradition and traditional values. They don't destroy the harmony of their conjugal life. Her women find out rather middle way to resolve their issues wisely. It doesn't mean that they are docile or feeble. They compromise respectfully but do not submit completely to the patriarchal norms. Her women remain within the boundaries and don't try to cross the boundaries of societal norms or conjugal ethics. Vineeta is the female protagonist of *Temporary Answers*. She faces her predicaments strongly as well as wisely and establishes her identity. She controls her feelings and takes care not to harm her relationship with others. The important thing is that Vineeta while trying to establish her individuality does not transgress other's territory. She is bold enough to choose Nagendra Sohani as her life partner. On one hand, she chose her partner but on the other hand she sought approval from her parents. It shows that she is modern but not ultra modern.

She encounters various problems in her life but fights against it bravely. Vineeta has hesitant approach towards every facet of life. She desires to break the shackles of the social taboos and customs about the widow. But she fears to break entirely away from social norms, customs and traditions. That is why she is in two minds as whether to marry Abhijit or not. Anyhow she very carefully justifies her womanhood in terms of the societal setting in the Indian perspective. She is neither subservient nor ultra modern or westernized. In one of her interview Jai Nimbkar says:

*“The total emotional independence is not really achievable in this sense, because then where would the need be for her to relate emotionally to another person? So, it is relative independence in the sense of release from total slavery.”*

Vineeta is partly traditional and partly modern. Therefore she never feels close to her sister Madhuri who breaks the social norms and elopes with a watchman. Moreover, both the sisters share a room still they do not share their feelings or secrets as other sisters do. Madhuri always places Vineeta in the same category as their mother who is supporter of

tradition. Being widow, Vineeta has to face many problems. After the death of her husband, she is afraid of emotional dependence as a result she declines Vilas's proposal of marriage. Even when she involves with Abhijit, she is in two minds.

Her mother is strict and traditional minded. She wants her daughters to behave as per her wish. She dislikes Kishori, Vineeta's friend because she is a girl of bad reputation. However, Vineeta continues her friendship with Kishori. After Nagendra's death, her mother wants her to marry Vilas but Vineeta declines it. Her mother wants that she should not maintain relationship with Prof. Abhijit, she maintains it. Her mother wants that Vineeta should not be late in the evening but she cannot help for being late. Vineeta to avoid nagging of her mother decides to live separately in the same city and does it. In all these examples, it is her rebellious nature that asks her to go against her mother's wishes. It is her revolt against her mother. Her mother is the embodiment of patriarchy. Therefore, Vineeta's revolt against her mother in one sense can be seen as the revolt against traditional norms and customs because her mother supports and carries tradition and patriarchy.

## Conclusion

Jai Nimbkar's female protagonists vehemently resist the injustices imposed upon them by society, yet they never let their struggles dampen the happiness of their marriages. They consistently employ astute strategies to navigate a balanced path and resolve their issues. They possess sufficient strength and refuse to compromise or succumb to the injustices of male dominance. The female protagonists in her works consistently adhere to the societal limitations imposed on women. Vineeta, the female protagonist of the novel *Temporary Answers* encounter various problems in her conjugal life. She faces all obstacles in her life very valiantly and wisely. She succeeds in achieving her aim to establish her individuality. She controls her emotions and sets up a smooth congenial life with her husband, Nagendra. Moreover, she does not desire to harm other's independence or individuality in her journey to create and enjoy her own autonomy. She is strong and determined enough to achieve her will. She analyzes each and every aspect of life. She thinks in all directions, into the past, onto the present and into the future as well.

## References

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