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Oscillation of Interpersonal Relationship in Temporary Answers

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Abstract

Oscillation is a metaphor used to show tide and ebb of emotions in the interpersonal relationships. It also symbolises instability, indecisiveness and the changes occur in the life a person when tested in different circumstances, it also means moving forward and backward from one position to another to retain individual freedom and societal security. While making any decision in life, we give thoughts to our thought sometimes resulting in reverting decisions. Vineeta, a major and most important catalyst in the novel faces oscillation of interpersonal relationship. The oscillation she faces are the reflections of her own inner conflict in the world of relationships.

Keywords: Ambiguous, interpersonal, oscillation, situationship, fragile, strenuous transient, ephemeral

Introduction

Indian English literature can be divided into different historical epochs which has its own features and silver linings. In the early span of national freedom struggle, politics-oriented themes were major concerns of the fiction writers but after independence, there has been a major shift in the focus. Social issues like human relationships, gender equality and other burning issues of the times have become the major apprehensions of the fiction writers.

Jai Nimbkar is a well-known Maharashtrian author wrote novels of feminine sensibility with realistic approach. Her literary corpus includes, *Come Rain* (1993), *Temporary Answers* (2004), *A Joint Venture* (1998), *The Lotus Leaves and other Stories* and *The Phantom Bird and other Stories* (1993). Nimbkar's works portrays her protagonist as educated, intelligent and capable of analyzing the outside world. The novel summarizes their self-reliance and tendency to retain their individuality. The proclivity to revolt against the vacuous established societal structure, is in the blood of her proponents which resulted into the oscillations in their interpersonal relationships.

"The Oscillating Theory refers to a cosmological model where the universe undergoes an endless cycle of expansion and contraction." (<https://www.universetoday.com>)

The fictions of Jai Nimbkar are apt description of the progressive thoughts of the women who could live without the wedlock. In *Temporary Answers*, we meet Vineeta, the protagonist who faced crucial times after the death of her husband. The first person who came into her life was Nagendra. The relationship between Nagendra and Vineeta was not based on mutual understanding. Their views were different, Vineeta liked monsoon season but it irritated him.

"He couldn't believe that weather could assume so much importance one way or other, in anyone's life." (*Temporary Answers*, p.14)

He was Sales Manager for Navabharat Electronics which had a German collaboration. He was attracted towards her because she was different from other girls he knew. Vineeta wanted to live for him and was happy with her role as a wife. Nagendra loved to be surrounded by people, and Vineeta tried to feel part of them but couldn't. He expected her to be just like other women. He even asked other women to teach her about clothes and make-up and jewellery, Vineeta learnt everything but inside her she disliked to be a part of it.

"But inside I rebelled against it all." (ibid, p.24)

After the marriage Vineeta became very happy but later on, she developed negative attitude of resenting his way of life. Apart from all the differences, she always cared for him because he had become necessary to her. Vineeta's life was going very smoothly till Nagendra died

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of heart attack which resulted into making her life topsy-turvy. Vineeta's husband died when she was only thirty years old, it is a major crisis that upheaved her life, the future just became a mare's nest without any ray of hope. The character of Vineeta is very complex in terms of her interpersonal relationships with other characters. But one thing is very crystal clear that after the death of her husband she became more responsible, independent and created her own aura of individuality. When she needed a car most, she didn't bring the car which was owned by Nagendra in Bombay, instead she decided to buy a second-hand car for her convenience. Her talk with Vilas shows how she wanted to maintain her self-respect.

"I didn't want to take anything that Nagendra's family might feel they had a claim on. I just didn't take a chance for being called a money grabber." (ibid, p.30)

When the idea of starting Health Centre became reality, she felt as if she got her individuality back. Her narrative shows how much she relieved and enlightened.

"Yes, I feel more like a doctor." (ibid, p.24)

After the death Nagendra his friend Navin came in Vineeta's life, he had been always attracted to her. After the death of her husband, he helped her in many practical matters,

"He coaxed me out of my black moods of silent despair and demanded nothing in return."

(ibid, p.136)

Vineeta, being mature, realized that one day he would demand the price of his selfless devotion. So, she came to Bombay, her maternal home where she could get peace of mind but this didn't happen. The familial atmosphere which she had been experiencing since her childhood days was not a healthy and lacked communication between parents and their siblings. The novel describes protagonist's relationship with her father, husband Nagendra, her childhood friend Vilas and Abhijeet Gokhale whom she was very close and lastly Nagendra's friend who helped her after the death of her husband.

The relationship between Vineeta and Vilas didn't develop even though they both liked each other. Vilas was her childhood friend and well-wisher who always cared for her. He was pleasant educated and ENT specialist but was undemanding and Vineeta enjoyed his company. They spent evenings together, going for a drive or a movie or play. Whenever he was around, Madhuri her younger sister who was sulky and bad-tempered cheered up. She doted on him. But their mother had taken for granted that they were in love, when she asked her about their relationship, Vineeta told her that she was not going to marry Vilas. Vineeta knew the real nature of him, to her he would be the sort of husband who would treat her wife like a fragile thing which requires protection, smother her with the good things in life. He would be a baffled person if she rebelled against the playing the role of a house hold pet. He represents the typical traditional male who didn't like the freedom of woman and their independence. Those were the thoughts which occurred in her mind, on the other hand he was not clumsy, she felt special intimacy in being alone with him and she thought he would be an easy man to live with him. When they were alone in his flat, he proposed her and told her that he wanted her as a wife.

He said,

"I had crush on you even when you were twelve, you know..... You must know I care for you. A great deal" (ibid, p.33)

But Vineeta told him that she was not going to marry him. The relationship between Vineeta's father and Abhijeet Gokhale was a strenuous one. Even though they were sharing the same department but there was hardly any communication between them. As their meetings increased, she felt a kind of magnetic pull towards him. The relationship between Vineeta and Abhijeet Gokhale is a matter of great consideration. He was a playwright and a professor of Geography in City College, Pune where her father held the responsibility as a head of the department. But the relationship between them didn't develop into closeness because the two personalities were like two poles on the globe. Vineeta's father was totally controlled by her mother; all the important decisions were taken by her. So, the relationship between husband and wife was not of understanding and mutual love.

When Vineeta's father came to know that his daughter was frequently visited by Abhijeet, he warned her to keep herself away from him because he was a 'villain and breaker of women's heart.' The relationship between Abhijeet Gokhale and Vineeta is called situationship. There is an ambiguous relationship between them, their intentions are unspoken and it lacked communication and commitment. Vineeta developed a close bonding with Abhijeet Gokhale and she decided to marry him but his decision to take a break from the routine life and to go away alone surprised her, so she decided to revert her decision. She thought that the second marriage may affect on their individuality and their freedom because patriarchy is deeply rooted in the societal structure of traditions. The novel throws light on the character of the protagonist, who suffers losses in life, asserts and redefines her individuality. At the end she moulds a new life as a single independent working woman.

Conclusion

Thus, the novel is a psychological journey of the protagonist to redefine herself in the world of male dominance. The novel is an exploration of Vineeta's journey from subjugation to emancipation. In this journey she meets different people who developed storming relationship with her and tried to find out transient answers but she could only develop ephemeral relations with weak ties resulting into 'temporary answers.'

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