

Parent- Child Relationship in Jai Nimbkar's Temporary Answers

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ABSTRACT:

Jai Nimbkar, is one of the Indian Women writers in English. She was born on 24th October, 1932 in a middle class Maratha Brahmin family. She did her MA in Sociology and Psychology from Arizona University in USA. Now she dwells in a small town called Phalton, in Maharashtra. She started her career as a creative writer with short story writing and then turned to the novel form. She has written three novels, namely **Temporary Answer** (1974) **A Joint Venture** (1988), and **Come Rain** (1993) and more than seventy short stories in English. She has more concern over urban educated middle class women. So the story in her fiction is centered on women. The present paper throws light on the conflict between Parents- Children Relationship in her novel, **Temporary Answer** in a very heart touching manner.

Key

Protagonist, Vacuum, shatter, impatient, orthodox, frustration, harmony

Temporary Answers is a novel written by Jai Nimbkar, a noted Indian women writers in English. It is a well told story of the emotional experiences of the protagonist of the novel, Vineeta. The story revolves around her, and has an omniscient point of view. She herself narrates the story, which lends a ring of authenticity to the entire narrative.

Vineeta, Madhuri and their Parents

The major parent child relationship that is focused in the novel under study is that of the Athavales and their daughters. Mrs. Sharadabai Athavale is a teacher and a disciplined mother. For her, her home itself is a school, where her own daughters are students. Hence, Vineeta rightly thinks: "I saw mother in the living room, correcting note books. The role of corrector always seemed to fit her so much better than it fitted father" (11). Vineeta is also aware of the fact that her mother is unpopular both among the students and her colleagues. She feels humiliated whenever the girls

comment on her mother's old fashioned clothes and orthodox ideas. The notion that she is not an excellent teacher might have led to her less cordial relationship with her mother. All alone Mrs. Sharadabai behaves more as a teacher than as a mother. Thus she deprives her children of motherly affection. When Madhuri eloped with Sawant, she kept on crying for long.

Mother's relationship with Madhuri is never cordial. Vineeta thinks it is because of 'the usual moodiness and occasional ill temper associated with adolescence, but made worse by Mother's impatient handling of it' (67). The two have constant arguments that lead to increase the tension in the house. Madhuri is fed up with constant nagging and lecturing of her mother, as a result of which she had run away with the cycle-stand attendant, Vilas. Even after her engagement she used to get out of her house, because she feels that her Mother is impossible to live with. She thinks that mother always scolds her and disapproves of whatever she does. She even goes to the extent of saying that her mother does not want her to be happy.

Mrs. Sharadabai has deep concern for Vineeta too. She gives consent to her marriage with Nagendra somewhat unwillingly. When Nagendra dies of a sudden heart attack and Vineeta returns to her parent's home in Pune, she again takes the role of her caretaker. All the while she thinks about her widowed daughter's remarriage. That is why when she comes to know of Vineeta's love and attachment towards Abhijit, she tries to discourage her as she prefers Vilas to be an ideal companion for Vineeta as both are doctors.

Vineeta, however, shocks Sharadabai by selecting Abhijit to be her life partner instead of Vilas. She welcomes her daughter's decisions just to see that her daughter somehow gets settled in her life, though unwillingly. This is evident on the night of Madhuri's marriage, when she allows a chance for Vineeta and Abhijit to be together.

Vineeta thinks: "...Originally she had objected to my associating with Abhijit, now she was throwing us together" (153-154).

This shows that Sharadabai, though she behaves like a dictator at home, is deeply worried and concerned about her daughter's future. She herself expresses this: "I always have time for my children. I may have been a working woman all my life but nobody can say I neglected you" (215). Vinita's father refuses to take sides whenever any argument arises between his wife and the daughters. A comparison of the father and the mother can be found in the following comments that Vineeta makes: 'If father had asked Mother to leave Madhuri alone when something did not seem important enough to fight about, Mother might have been more controlled' (67-68).

There is a tang of jealousy even among the parents. Vineeta's mother always boasts that it is she who has to deal with the crisis but she feels that the daughters love their father more than her. Vineeta, at first, objects to it and argues that one cannot love one parent better than the other. When forced to give a direct reply she says: 'When I was little I may have loved him better. He never scolded or shouted. But now I know, of course, that the scolding and shouting and pushing you did was necessary and showed that you actually cared more about us than he did (104).

Vineeta, thus makes it clear that it is the mother who takes care of them more than the father. But her mother wants to know where exactly she is placed in their hearts. Vineeta rightly comments that as '.... Girls are supposed to love their fathers better than they love their mothers' (104). Though Vineeta has not been able to establish any cordial relationship with her mother right from her childhood, she offers her a gift of ear studs with single pearl circled by tiny rubies. She feels that '...it is nice to give something to someone who had always been at the giving end' (104). This instance, though it does not establish a complete harmony between the mother and the daughter, it certainly brings the daughter closer to her mother than ever before.

The parent-child relationship that is portrayed here thus appears to be lacking in mutual love and understanding as there is a barrier between the two, may be due to lack of communication.

Nagendra and his Parents

The novel does not focus much upon the parents of Nagendra. We have just a glimpse of their relationship with their son only from the observation of Vineeta. The relationship between Nagendra and his parents is very cordial, as

Nagendra pays regular visits to them on every Sunday despite heated arguments with his wife. Vineeta comes to realize the place of Nagendra in his parents' life, when she pays a visit to their house to intimate them about her decision to get remarried. She is shocked to see their miserable condition caused by the death of their only son. They had lost interest in worldly matters.

This clearly shows that both Nagendra and his parents had inseparable bond between themselves. That is why the death of Nagendra causes a total vacuum in their lives which could be filled by anything or anybody.

Abhijit and his Parents

Abhijit's mother is also a loving and care-taking mother caring for her eldest son. Though she goes to visit her other children, she soon comes back to her eldest son, Abhijit, who is in his forty but still unmarried. She is an orthodox mother for whom even her forty year old son is just like a small child.

Mrs. Vengurlekar and her child

The novel also presents the case of a neglected child of Mrs. Vengurlekar, who has planned to go to England to pursue her study in library science for a year. She was excited at the prospect of going abroad and studying something new. Suddenly she comes to know that she is pregnant. Her hopes are shattered and she has to cancel her trip to England. Her frustration results in maternal neglect, which leads to eczema and scabs in the child.

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