

CHAPTER - V
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This concluding chapter states in brief some of the findings as a result of the critical study of ten short stories in English in the collections entitled *The Lotus Leaves and Other Stories* written by Jai Nimbkar on the accepted theory of the short story form. Though, Jai Nimbkar is a woman short story writer and projected some of the experiences in womens' lives, *it* is not a feminist study of her short stories. But it is a critical generic study based on the traditionally evolved theory of short story form, mainly on the views of the theorists and the practitioners of short story form.

The origin of short story is in the human impulse of the curiosity to know others, self-assertion and love for story telling and listening. Short story literature is different from other types of stories. Story literature is pretty old and we have a variety of story types ranging from folk tales to the epic literature. Oral and written are the two forms of stories. The modern short story is new form of literature having a brief history of hundred and fifty years. Edgar Allen Poe is the father of modern short story. He is also the first theorist giving the theory of short story writing. After

Americans all European writers including the British wrote short stories in their languages. Indians have also written short stories in English and in Indian languages. The mechanical hasty life is the root cause of the origin of short story. Short story provides in short time the aesthetic pleasure. The spread of education and the rise of periodicals helped the development of short story to its present popularity.

There was a marvelous treasure of story literature in India from the ancient times. But the modern Indian short story in English was the direct result of the introduction of English education to Indians in the midst of 19th century. The short story literature in the West inspired some Indians to write short stories in English and Indian languages after the western models. Indian women short story writers also contributed a good deal to short story literature along with men writers. Jai Nimbkar is one of the leading short story writers and novelists in Indian English literature.

Many definitions of short story are being attempted but not a final definition is available. The aspects and the elements of short story as a form of literature are : plot, character, dialogues, setting, theme and narrative technique or point of view. These aspects are common to the novel

and short story, but short story is not a novel. Plot is the selection and arrangement of events in a story with the beginning the middle and the end. A limited number of characters and their interrelationship is important in a short story. The major characters in short story are round characters which grow and develop in the action. Dialogue is a good device to report more information and it helps characterization. The setting of short story serves as a background to a short story. The theme is the highest purpose of a short story writer. It is a sort of conclusion on the human experience narrated and is related to the final impression of the story. The chronological, the flash back and the stream of consciousness are important narrative techniques in the short story. A narration may be in the first person or third person. Usually second narrative method is popular in short story writing. The brevity, the economy and the singleness of effect are very important parameters of short story as a literary form.

Jai Nimbkar has been writing short stories in English since 1958 and they were published in the leading Indian periodicals in English. *The Lotus Leaves and Other Stories* was her first collection published in 1971 by P.Lal, Writers Workshop, Calcutta and the second collection of her short

stories entitled *The Phantom Bird and Other Stories* was published in 1993. Many consider that her *The Lotus Leaves and Others Stories* is a significant contribution to Indian English short story literature. That is why *The Lotus Leaves and Other Stories* is selected for the present study and her other stories are excluded. As stated earlier it is the critical evaluation of the form and content in her short stories. It means it is the evaluation of the form and themes in these stories. A sincere effort has been made here to assess the selected stories on the norm of (the aspects and the essential parameters) short story form and the themes in the selected short stories.

The Lotus Leaves and Other Stories contains ten short stories selected by P.Lal from her published short stories in the periodicals before 1971. They are : *The Lotus Leaves, Quit Yourselves Like Men, Cross-Cultural Communication, A Friend of The Family, With Intent to Kill, Metamorphosis, The Death of a Hero, Unto Each Man His Due, The Mother* and *In Memoriam*.

Jai Nimbkar is interested in depicting the middle class rural and semi-urban life in Maharashtra with realism. She is depicting the sufferings of commoners in general and Indian women in particular. Jai Nimbkar herself states in

her interview by T.N. Geetha that she has no interest in the theory of the short story form, but she is more interested in telling the story than its technique.

A glance at the sequence of the stories gives certain thematic groups which can be convenient thematic groups for the study. For example : Five stories viz. *Cross Cultural Communication*, *A Friend of the Family*, *With Intent to Kill*, *Metamorphosis*, along with *The Lotus Leaves* deal with the theme of man-woman relationship. The last two viz. *The Mother* and *In Memoriam* are about sad mothers and their motherly sensibility. The stories, *The Death of a Hero* and *Unto Each Man His Due* are concerned with the post-independent political control of public departments in India. The stories *Quit Yourselves Like Men* and *A Friend of the Family* are Jai Nimbkar's experimentation in stream of consciousness technique. *The Lotus Leaves* and *Cross Cultural Communication* deals with the colonial infatuation to Indians.

Before discussing the themes, the form and the technique of the genre in these ten short stories is assessed. The ten titles to the stories can be grouped under four groups viz) Simple but meaningful titles ii) Old literary titles iii) Novel titles invented by the author and

iv) Allegorical titles. The titles are not conventional after the names of the central characters or after the main incidents in the stories, but they explicitly refer to the themes of individual stories. The title given to the book is the title of the first story. It seems that the first story *The Lotus Leaves* is more significant to the author to name the collection with it. The theme of Indian woman's restraint and Indian detachment are suggested by the title of the collection.

The plots of these ten short stories are simple and compact. They follow the theory of plot construction - the proper beginning, the middle and the appropriate end which provide very good structure to her ten short stories. Her stories begin with the setting of the action, the introduction of the protagonist or with the use of dialogues. The beginning of her short stories are so natural that the readers are curious to know the further action of the stories. The middle of the ten short stories definitely record the growing conflict in the stories that reach the climax and lead to the proper ending. The end of all these stories definitely gives a sense of completeness of experience in individual stories. Further, the end of her stories are connected with the beginning and that give the unity of action and unity of

effect. Some stories end with a surprise and some with the reversal of the situation. The stories dealing with the theme of political control rotates around the theme of the stories.

Out of the ten protagonists the majority of them are women protagonists. Only three protagonists are not women. All her characters, both major and minor, come from the Indian middle class. All her protagonists in these stories are round characters and display a certain trait of their personality in the course of growing action of the story. Some times, the protagonists undergo a dramatic change. Sarojini's character is its best example. Jai Nimbkar has tried to give the interior psyche of the protagonists in *A Friend of the Family* and *Quit Yourselves Like Men* with the help of the stream of consciousness technique. The characters occurring in these ten stories are from different sections of the Indian society. They are from a poor middle class men and women to the politically aspiring men. In fact, these characters are ordinary men and women. Jai Nimbkar gives full justice and treatment to the characterisation of the major characters. All the characters in ten short stories serve the thematic purpose.

The setting in all her stories is rural and semi-urban setting in Maharashtrian life. The setting or atmosphere narrated in the stories is suitable to the characterisation and some main events taking place in the action. Often she connects the description of the setting to the major theme of an individual story.

Jai Nimbkar has used the conventional method of narration. Her narration in eight stories is chronological and conventional. She uses the third person narrative technique in almost all her stories except one or two stories. *Unto Each Man His Due* is in the first person. *A Friend of the Family* and *Quit Yourselves Like Men* are different from the other stories in their narrative technique.

Jai Nimbkar uses the dialogue in her stories for the progress of plot and development of characterisation. Jai Nimbkar has made artistic use of dialogue in story telling.

All these short stories are shorter in length than the prescribed limit of pages or words by the theory of the form. Along with economy of words economy of events and characters lead to the unity of action and singleness of effect^{in the} stories. The hallmark of these ten stories is that they produce the singleness of effect.

Out of ten stories the five are concerned with the major theme of man-woman relationship. In her interview with T.N.Geetha, Jai Nimbkar states that she is interested in the people's relationship and how they are formed and affected by the social conditioning etc. In the light of this statement from her interview the theme of man-woman relationship is discussed in chapter III. There are four types of man-woman relationship in the five stories. *The Lotus Leaves* and *Cross Cultural Communication* deal with the colonial infatuation of the whites for Indians. *The Lotus Leaves* describes the theme of an American's infatuation for Indian woman. The white's superiority and the Indian's inferiority are minutely brought to the notice by the author and how the infatuation create a spell on Indian women. *Cross Cultural Communication* is different from the earlier one. It deals with an American girl's infatuation for her Indian fiance and how her colonial attitude to Indian life and poverty compels her to break the engagement. *With Intent to Kill* projects amorous love relationship of the lovers. The lovers belong to different castes and have difficulty of funds but amorous love finds out a wrong solution to that and the relationship is broken. *A Friend of the Family* projects man-woman relationship in

psychological excitement for emotional relief of so called beloved Liloo, but how the story ends with her awareness of the futility of such relationship. *Metamorphosis* deals with the deep mark of adolescent calf-love of a postal - clerk and how after passage of time the relationship becomes meaningless.

In addition to the theme of man woman relationship in the other four short stories Jai Nimbkar deals with two dominant themes viz. the theme of political control and the theme of motherly sensibility. In the post independent democratic set up of India there is more political control on different public departments and the victimization of common people. In *The Death of a Hero*, Mr. Tagde a sincere and good teacher becomes a victim of political control of the academic world as the school is headed by a political person as the chairman. *In Unto Each Man His Due*, Mrs. Raut, a poor working class woman has become a victim of political interference in the police investigation of her lost husband. Through these two stories Jai Nimbkar shows how common people suffer in their personal lives due to the political control of public departments.

The theme of motherly sensibility is presented in *The Mother* and *In Memoriam*. In *The Mother* a poor Indian mother is trying her best to save her sick baby in utter poverty but she is sad when she fails. In *In Memoriam* another mother who wishes to keep the memory of her dead son alive through the death anniversary becomes sad by the impulsive picnic of her living son.

To sum up, considering the technique of story writing, all her short stories in this collections are 'short stories proper' and do not deviate from the Western form of short story. But *The Death of Hero , With Intent to Kill , The Mother, Unto Each Man His Due* and *The Lotus Leaves* are more striking stories. The themes and the characters in these stories create deep impression on the readers. Jai Nimbkar takes the cause of the suffering men and women in Indian society and articulate these sufferings effectively in literature. There is genuine Indianness in themes and selected 'slices of experiences' in her stories. As such, Jai Nimbkar's *The Lotus Leaves and Other Stories* is a significant contribution to Indian English short story in the post - colonial period.
