

CHAPTER III

**PATRIARCHY AND FAMILY
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Come Rain (1993) is the latest novel written by Jai Nimbkar, committed to the cause of women. I propose to study the problematique of the novel as reflected in the protagonist's perception of patriarchy to obtain the picture of feminist consciousness in the novel.

Come Rain is the story of an unconventional American girl, Ann, married to a Maharashtrian, Ravi, an agricultural scientist, who was studying in America. After marriage, they come to Ravi's family house in Sangampur, a small town. Jai Nimbkar depicts Ann's stormy relations with her husband and his family through which Ann develops and changes in the novel. The discussion which follows seeks to study Ann's struggle as a woman against the established, patriarchal norms of the society. For the purpose of analysis of the feminist consciousness in the novel, I have tried to study her relations with her husband and his family members; her

perception of other social relations and her views and critical attitudes towards the ways of Indian life.

It has already been stated earlier that the traditionally sanctioned ways of representing women in literature are seen in the prevalent stereotypes like the 'protective mother', the 'worshipping wife', 'Sita-Savitri', 'Pativrata', the 'Kali-Shakti', 'beautiful temptress', 'seductive destroyer', or the 'house-wrecker' 'bitch-in-the-street' or 'prostitute', etc. But as a feminist writer, Jai Nimbkar wants to break away from this stereotypical presentation of women in literature. My hypothesis is that she is trying to present a new role model in this novel. Jai Nimbkar's concept of a new woman is presented through Ann. Ann is a role model through whom she is challenging the patriarchy in Indian society, and through her, she offers an alternative vision and value system. She portrays Ann as a bold, independent woman who wants her own identity in the society without being forced to get defined in terms of others. It seems that Jai Nimbkar has two objectives before her: (1) to offer a critique of the traditional treatment of women in a Hindu family; and (2) to present Ann as a role model.

Thus, I would like to examine Ann's character and her relationship with others at three levels:

- i. before the marriage,
- ii. after the marriage,
- iii. after breaking up of marriage.

Before we go on to discuss the novel, it is essential to understand the typical Indian ethos, especially the familial roles that a woman is traditionally expected to accept. As this is the system that Ann first enters into and later on discards. Family is one of the most important social institution for women. The typical Indian family is a joint family. And the hierarchical structure of authority in the patriarchal joint family which is based on the principle of superiority of the male members over the younger males and females is the most important instrument of social control. According to the ideal typical model of the Hindu joint family, a woman in her life time goes through various role relationships. There are certain ideals for the wife. The advice given to Shakuntala is regarded as an ideal for Hindu wife.

"Serve the elders; adopt the attitude of a dear friend towards thy co-wives, even if offended by thy husband's anger; do not go against him; show courtesy to friends, considerations to strangers and humility in prosperity; in this manner, young maidens attain the station of a house wife."¹

शुश्रूषस्व गुरुन् कुरु प्रियसखीवृतिं सपत्नीजने
 भर्तुर्विप्रकृता पि रेषणतया मास्म प्रतीपं गमः ।
 भूयिष्ठं भव दक्षिणा परिजने भाग्येष्वनुत्सेकिनी
 यान्त्येवं गृहिणीपदं युवतयो वामाः कुलस्याधयः ॥

(शाकुंतल - ४)

It has been argued that the institution of marriage is the gateway to the family. It has been such a pervasive influence that practically every adult has to be married in India,² particularly women. Indian marriage system is very rigid. In the caste-ridden society, it is believed that only marriage with a person of the

same caste guarantees the fulfilment of 'Dharma'. Indian marriage system suffers even today from the institution of dowry or bridegroom price. The amount of dowry a girl takes along with is supposed to enhance her status. A well placed boy is expected to give her a secure future and a leisurely life. So it is prestigious to be the wife of such a man. Money or various gifts from girl's parents are considered as essential. Ann goes through the various role conflicts against this background. Her female consciousness develops through these various roles she is expected to undertake. In order to understand the critical attitude of Jai Nimbkar towards patriarchal social structure, it is essential to analyse Ann's character. However, Nimbkar does not believe that only Indian family society have patriarchal practices. According to her, similar conventions and values exist even in the so-called 'advanced' American society as well. Nimbkar perceives patriarchy to be universally operative in American and Indian societies. This can be seen in Ann's place in her parent's house. It will help us to study and compare the patriarchal values in American and Indian ways as reflected in Ann's relations with her in-laws and her parents.

Ann was pampered by her parents. At first it seems that her American family background is liberated enough to allow her to act freely. Yet her mother, Mrs. Palmer, represents similar ways of thinking as Ann's mother-in-law. Mrs. Palmer believes in the traditional idea of a wife following her husband to the ends of the earth (p.51). Ann's father pampered Ann. He has heart disease which he bears silently. Ann is the youngest of the five children and tends to be rebellious when her mother tries to impose any restrictions on her. She is an independent child

from her childhood. But her mother is worried about her independence and believes that Ann should be more submissive. Her overprotectiveness towards Ann is a typical way of controlling a child's behaviour. As she grew up, she began to be disturbed by her mother's desire to control her. Ann starts living in a hostel because she craves for independence and it is the only way to escape from her mother's obsessive protectiveness and control. The obsessive love and control a mother has for her daughter is common to Indian and American societies. Ann's wanting to escape from it shows her anger against the patriarchal values and traditions.

Mrs. Palmer has been a busy and happy housewife needing nothing outside her home and husband and children. Her father is involved with his work. He spends less time at home. The mother is left alone with the housework and children. And when the children grow up, she is left with a big void in her life. Jai Nimbkar focuses on a typical housewife and her predicament here. All her children are away from Mrs. Palmer. She feels childless and husbandless. She feels as though all her functions as a woman have come to an end (p.72). Being a meticulous housekeeper, is the only thing she can think of.

Through Mrs. Palmer's character, Jai Nimbkar underlines the patriarchal principle that a woman has to play the same role of a subservient wife, which has nothing to do with where she lives, whether in India or in America.

Ann's revolt against the restricting values is represented by her political beliefs. Ann's mother feels that Ann is too young to understand what she is doing.

But against her mother's protest, Ann marches in a demonstration against the Vietnam War. She actively participates in the campaign to register black voters and to establish the right of the children of ethnic minority groups to be taught through their mothertongue. She helps to raise funds for starving Africans.

This shows her political interest as well as awareness of social problems. She is a radical political person. She rejects the politics of capitalism as well as patriarchy.

Ann is rebelling against the restricted roles of woman that patriarchy has structured. Patriarchy assigns domestic service and attendance upon infants to the female and rest of the achievement and ambition to the male. This is the ideology of patriarchy she tries to transcend. She believes that she is free to think and act rationally. She has the ability to think of political problems and not only the domestic problems. But her mother cannot understand why Ann is not interested in sports or painting or music, which are the traditional 'proper' interests of women. Simone de Beauvoir observes that certain virtues are called as 'feminine traits' and traditionally, it is supposed that woman should have these feminine traits. When we see Ann's mother's expectations from Ann, Simone de Beauvoir's observation proves true. According to Ann's mother protesting against something is a negative way of relating to the life (p.74) and women should not be getting involved in such negative tasks.

But Ann seems to be rebellious. She wants to experience all the situations.

Her ideas are revolutionary. She wants to experiment with life. Her decision to marry Ravi is incomprehensible to her mother. The novelist presents us with two world views - those of the traditional parents and of the rebellious children. Ann and her mother do not live in the same world.

Ann does not have superiority complex about America and American views and culture in her mind. She had a boyfriend, called Jack from the same neighbourhood. Jack wants to marry Ann. But she rejects the proposal and marries Ravi - an India. Because she wants to live a different type of life than in America.

ANN'S MARRIED LIFE

Ann's decision to marry Ravi shows that she has the ability to take her own decisions. After marrying Ravi, Ann comes to Ravi's family, which is a typical patriarchal Hindu Brahmin family. Her experiences in the family reveal how the "family has been an institution for the subjugation and enslavement of woman and children."³ Kate Millett argues that the principles of patriarchy appear to be two-fold : male shall dominate female, and elder male shall dominate younger.⁴ Indian family is patriarchal family. So there is asymmetrical power structure, core of the family are the males who trace their descent from a common ancestor. The women are brought as brides and young daughters are given in marriages to unrelated males. Father is the head of the family and a daughter-in-law is at a very low rung of the social status ladder and she has to make necessary adjustments with the mother-in-law by means of undergoing prolonged trials and tribulations. In this context, it is necessary to discuss Ann's relations with her

mother-in-law, her husband and other family members

ANN'S RELATIONS WITH HER MOTHER-IN-LAW

Ann's relations with her mother-in-law shows her consciousness about the dominance of her mother-in-law. It is revealed through various incidents.

Ravi's family includes his mother, father, sister Mohini, brother Mahesh and his wife and children. It is a typical joint family. A strong parental authority is there in Gogte's family and Ravi marries against his parents' wishes. As Ravi's mother Mrs. Gogte is against his marriage, no one in the family makes friends with Ann. They treat her like an outcast. So Ann's attempts to communicate with them fails.

Nobody makes efforts to communicate with her under the excuses of language problem. So Ann wants to learn Marathi to communicate. She achieves this through a tutor. But Ravi's mother takes objection over this because it is an expensive matter. So Ann finds a solution. She discontinues her tuition. As a daughter-in-law, Ann has to make several compromises. But she is not aggressive. She wants to know how much the tuition costs. She asks Ravi whether they can afford it. On this Ravi tells Ann it doesn't matter who pays for what in the joint family (p.23). He tells Ann that he has a claim on ancestral wealth. Ravi's answer shows how he perceives himself as the heir of the family and looks upon his wife as a person dependent upon him. Ann realises that economic dependence on man is the trait of this family and feels resentment towards this dependence.

Ann tries to adjust with the ways of Indian life. She finds the food in her in-law's house hot and spicy. Hence, Ravi suggests certain changes in the food habits. But Ann's mother-in-law does not accept the suggestions since they are for Ann's sake, though things like food also matter much for them. She is not ready to provide a separate cook for Ann. But Ann finally acquires a kitchen privilege. Thus Ann has to strive for the trivial things and Ravi is of the opinion that she is making fuss over such minor things. So these small incidents are different perceptions of Ravi and Ann. What for her is important is a trivial matter for him.

Ann's mother-in-law represents the typical traditional conservative woman. Her bitter comments about Ann's food habit must be read in the light of a mother-in-law's mental framework. "It must be very nice for her to have a husband who changes his life-long habits to suit her instead of expecting her to adopt to the ways of the family. Even in little things, its she who dictates and you who follow like a meek dog" (p.33).

This typical statement realistically reflects jealousy and resentment towards the daughter-in-law. It is taken for granted that girl (wife) should change her life-long habits after marriage, not the husband. Ann's mother-in-law feels that her control over the son is weakening, because Ann is trying to control him as a wife. It reveals the psychology of a woman in a patriarchal society, where enmity between women is perceived as natural. Irawati Karve reports that the pair 'Sas-Bahu' (mother-in-law : daughter-in-law) is described in the North Indian folk literature as "natural enemies".⁵ In a patriarchal family, the relationship between mother-in-law

and daughter-in-law is one of absolute dominance. The authority of mother-in-law stands above that of the husband, i.e. the daughter-in-law must in everything first obey the mother-in-law, only then the husband. It is not the result of individual domination of a strong personality, rather it is an institutionalized role expectation.⁶ That is why, probably Ann does not behave vengefully towards her. She seems to understand that her mother-in-law behaves so on account of the value she has ingrained.

The traditional behaviour of a mother-in-law is again reflected in the changed attitude of her mother-in-law when Ann gives birth to a male child. After the birth of Rahul, Ann finds change in her mother-in-law's attitude towards her. The change over the mother-in-law after Ann is delivered of a son is interesting. In a patriarchal family, mother-in-laws are typical and possessive and they want to dominate through their son's son. This change from a stubborn mother-in-law to a considerate one is acceptable to Ann. She does not mind living with her in-laws probably because she is now accepted and treated like one of the family members. Jai Nimbkar shows that this is not a change of heart in the in-laws. This is brought about because Ann has brought forth a son. Here, Jai Nimbkar tries to expose how patriarchal family defines the status of a woman. "A disliked daughter-in-law is to be treated with kindness and with considerations when she becomes the mother of your son's son" (p.134). The worth of a woman is more if she is married and produces male heirs for the family.

We find that right from the day Ann arrived in India, Mrs. Gogte is prejudiced

against Ann. According to her mother-in-law, the American girl can never adjust to our way of life. She will never become part of our family (p.43). Hence, right from the start, Ann and her mother-in-law have differences. A strong 'caste-bias' as well as lower middle-class claustrophobia about outsiders is there in Indian society.

It is a tradition in India that average Indian mother expects her son to marry and continue living with her. In contrast to this, Ann brings her husband out of the joint family and makes her new home. On this, Ann's mother-in-law reacts harshly. She says "It's not the custom here for a son to make a separate home in the same town where his parents live" (p.59). Nimbkar uses an appropriate imagery of a pet cat. Mrs. Gogte asks why should this girl marry him and come here with him if she didn't want to follow customs of his people? "Today she takes him out of our house, tomorrow she will take him out of the country" (p.59). all the while conveniently forgetting that actually, it is he who has brought Ann out of her country. This shows mother-in-law's possessive love for her son.

We can see that Ann's mother-in-law is not ready to arrange a party for her son and daughter-in-law, because it means publicly accepting them. Ann observes her mother-in-law's attitude even against her own daughter, Mohini, in her marriage.

Mrs. Gogte is the eldest brother's wife, so she occupies a position of honour in the family. Everyone in the family comes to her for advice regarding marriages,

births, deaths and religious observations. And she has lost her status because her own daughter had married against her wishes. It proves that customs and traditions are more important for her than the personal feelings. So according to Ann's mother-in-law, things like falling in love are totally beyond the norm. They believe "You married the man or woman whom your parents in their wisdom had chosen for you, and then you taught yourself to love him or her. Or not, perhaps!" (pp.181-182).

Jai Nimbkar portrays a traditional mother-in-law with all her attitudes and behaviour. She shows the stormy relationship of Ann and her mother-in-law. But though they have stormy relations, her mother-in-law finally brings Ravi's message regarding the settlement in abroad. Ann clears the situation by telling her mother-in-law that actually, it was Ravi who was forcing her to go to America. He had taken a decision which affected their life together without consulting her. Ann wants to act rationally in every situation. She wants to know what her mother-in-law thinks about it. Ann says, "I suppose being an Indian, you think that the husband is free to do anything he pleases, treat his wife in any manner he wishes, but she must still do his bidding, because he is her lord and master" (p.264), which represents the writer's comment on the patriarchal male dominance.

Ann finds that Mrs.Gogte does not think life this. But according to Mrs.Gogte, "It is easier to break the relationships than to build them" (p.264). Generally, Indians are not ready to break the marriages because it is believed marriage is a holy bond. There is impact of tradition on her mother-in-law and she is protecting her

son. She is not really different from Ann's mother as both have the same protective and controlling love for their offsprings. She says, "You are being too hard on Ravi. He intends to be impetuous. He is not cruel. he doesn't mean to hurt you" (p.264). Nimbkar's portrayal of the mother-in-law is realistic and, sympathetic to some extent. Nimbkar does not believe that the enmity between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is natural. On the contrary, there seems to be a common bond of affection developing between them as women, probably as co-sufferers in the patriarchal family. That is why, inspite of her quarrels with Ann, her mother-in-law offers Ann to stay with her.

Thus, through the portrayal of the relationship between Ann and her mother and mother-in-law, Nimbkar delineates some aspects of patriarchal ideology, which result in subordinating women to men and which create enmity among women themselves.

ANN'S CONSCIOUSNESS AGAINST PATRIARCHAL IDEOLOGY AS REFLECTED IN HER RELATIONS WITH RAVI

Jai Nimbkar, through her potrayal of the relation between Ravi and Ann exposes the selfishness, double standards and hypocrisy of men in their dealings with women. She also exposes the "politics of domesticity", which whitewashes woman's subordination in the family and glorifies it greatly.

Ravi is an educated and career-minded Indian. He falls in love with Ann in America. She thinks he is a perfect match for her as he has acquired all the

American ways. But this is not very correct. He was a different man when away from his family, from the parental authority. But she finds him a different man now. After coming to India, Ann thinks that Ravi has neglected her because he spends all the time with his family members and Ann wants to share her experiences in India with him. But Ravi ignores her. The novel opens with Ann's anger against Ravi and his patriarchal family. This is the beginning of her protest against the dominating husband.

Initially, we find that Ravi seems to be different, that he is not a traditional man, because he rejects the practice of seeing a girl just for a few minutes and taking a decision to marry her (p. 14). He does not believe in the traditional marriage institution in India.

In his discussion with his friends, Ravi asks a question. "Do all the girls in arranged marriages get along beautifully with their in-laws?" (p. 14). It is assumed that in arranged marriages the girls are taught to make the necessary adjustments, because of their social milieu. Ravi disregards this idea of arranged marriage. Ravi proclaims loudly that love is the base of marriage and so he prefers to marry a girl whom he loves, though she would not fit in his family (p. 14). Yet, for him, a "love-marriage" is nothing more than a male prerogative to prove his independence. Marrying a 'white' girl also may be a sign of the Colonial complex he has. The act signifies power and prestige for him, in a sense. He is not a romantic hero who is ready to sacrifice his family, caste for the sake of love. Marriage with an American girl grants him certain privileges in that country. He does not look upon marriage

as a partnership.

When Ann wants to share her feelings of maternity with Ravi, Ravi's double standards of behaviour surface. He tells her that he wants to share Ann's feelings at the same time, he tells he is not able to share it. Ann finds that Ravi behaves very strangely after delivery, because he believes that menstruating women and women who had just had a delivery are polluted (p. 129).

Ann moves towards an acceptance of mutual responsibility in marriage. There is the conflict of being both 'oneself' and fitting a role as a 'good wife' and 'good mother'. But Ravi does not undergo any such conflict.

While considering her role as a mother, we observe that Ann has her own ideas about rearing her child, which are different from her mother and mother-in-law. She is concerned about her child's schedule. She argues with Ravi over this. She does not approve the ways of Ravi's family in treating the children. She observes that nobody respects "child's rights" at all. A concept which nobody seems to be aware of it. They have no idea about proper nutrition for a child. Ann observes that even Ravi is not concerned with what is good for Rahul, his son, but with what will make someone else happy. It shows Ann's views about both the parent's role in the child's development. But for Ravi, it is primarily the mother's duty, or the servant's to look after a child. According to Ann, "What's the point of having a child if you are going to have him looked after day and night by a servant"? (p.220).

Ravi embodies the essence of patriarchal ideology. He does not believe that he also should contribute to childcare as a father. It is for him "woman's work".

Ravi insists on calling his son William, because that would advertise the fact that his mother is a foreigner and that would help him gain prestige in the society. Ann tries to expose Ravi's hypocritical nature. For Ravi, the child is a piece of property, possession, but for Ann, it is different. That means Ann plays the role of a caring mother, but rejects the idea of a child as a possession.

Ravi's aversion to her working outside also is quite significant. Ann has interest in teaching the children of working women. So she decides to work for two hours a day. But Ravi takes objection to this. According to him, her work outside the house is only "a spare-time toy" (p.167). Ravi further tells Ann "What's the use of doing social work and allowing your own children to become delinquents" (p.166). Ravi vocalises the traditional middle-class belief that the working woman is an irresponsible mother. But Ann refuses to accept Ravi's views. She wants to live as an independent and responsible human being, who has responsibility both towards home and society. She tells Ravi that she cannot go along with him (p.166). Here Ann's behaviour proves that she is trying to revolt against the values of traditional patriarchal male domination. She refuses to be cast into the role of a traditional mother and wife.

We have seen Ravi's views about marriage. It is through Ravi's views of extra-marital relations, that Jai Nimbkar shows the hypocrisy and double standards

of patriarchy. The portrayal of Ravi's affair with Usha is significant from this perspective. Ravi wants to show how progressive he is by marrying a girl whom he happens to love and yet on the other hand, he has a very traditional attitude while dealing with Mohini's affair. He is a hypocrite as he goes on changing his morals to suit his convenience. This is reflected through several incidents.

Nimbkar shows that Ravi is a hypocrite by exposing his behaviour towards other women and men. We find that Ann is astonished by Ravi's attitude towards the maid-servant, Geetabai. He thinks of her as "a machine which is programmed to perform certain jobs and was beyond the pale of ordinary human intercourse" (p.30). Ravi and his family treat Geetabai like a group as the blacks. And they have reduced her into a class like status and exploit her economically by paying her less. Ann does not approve it. But Ravi expects that she should also accept this and treat the servant in the same exploitative way. Ann refuses to join in this endeavour.

Ravi always keeps telling Ann "You can't apply your values to us. Your society has been built on fluidity, your whole thinking is based on the possibility of breaking down barriers, while our society has functioned for thousands of years by keeping them intact" (p.136). Obviously because that would endanger his privileges. And he is not prepared for to break them, at the cost of his selfish interests.

For Ann, individuality is more important than the patriarchal norms of the

family as a stable unit. While in Indian society, woman's individuality has a secondary importance. It does not mean that she is totally disregarding the values in the Indians society. She is rebelling against the values and norms which are harmful for individuals and especially women.

Ann has rejected Jack's proposal of marriage because she wants something different out of life. She does not want to live 'routine life like all other women'. So she has come to India. For Ann, living in America means to be lulled into believing that nothing of any importance exists outside it. She knows that there is a whole world outside her country which is equally important and wants to see it (p.266). She is not a selfish person like Ravi. But she wants to see the world outside America not as an outsider, but by internalising it, by being in it as an insider.

All these incidents in the novel reveal that the differences between Ann's and Ravi's attitudes are more fundamental. Ann is rebelling against Ravi's domination, at the same time, she wants to expose the patriarchal values, traditions and customs through his behaviour. This is reflected in Nimbkar's portrayal of sexual relations of Ravi.

In the Indian society, sex is supposed to be the most secret thing in the life. Nobody, neither husband nor wife, speaks openly and frankly about sex. Even to speak about sex is supposed to be sinful and immoral. Ann's thinking about Ravi's sexual behaviour seems to be kind of self-exploration of Ann. It is another feminists' site of inquiry.

Jai Nimbkar has presented extra-marital relations of Ravi and Usha. There we can find the double standard in sexual morality for males. A man may go to bed with a woman other than his wife, either simply for pleasure or to get himself a male heir. But a wife is expected to remain faithful to the husband.

We find Ravi's double standard in sexual morality here. Ravi indulges in sexual pleasure with Usha which he keeps secret but he is not ready to accept Ann's pre-marital affair with Jack. Ravi betrays Ann but he wants Ann to remain loyal to him.

After the birth of the child, he starts finding Ann unattractive. Ann realizes that she is missing the physical closeness which has always been an important point of their relationship. Ann starts getting thoughts in her mind, "Did Ravi feel that her body which had borne and delivered a child would never seem the same to him again? Did it disgust him? Or was there something - a lack of response, a self-sufficiency, a smugness perhaps, which put him off? She felt a little scared that may be Rahul's birth was going to mean more far-reaching changes that she was prepared for (p.142).

Warmth and bond between Ann and Ravi starts to weaken. According to the established norms, a woman is the symbol of sex. In this light, Simone de Beauvoir's study of biological considerations about woman seems to be true. She observes that "man can think of himself without woman. She can't think of herself without man". And she is simply what man decrees. Thus she is called "the sex",

by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him, she is sex - absolute sex; no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her. He is the subject - he is the absolute and she is the 'other'.⁷ Ravi looks on Ann as his 'other'. The marriage starts developing cracks as the very foundations of the marriage are weak. Nimbkar seems to argue that a marriage based on power, possession, lust and acquisitive tendencies cannot last, unless, of course, one partner, usually the woman, mutely suffers and sacrifices herself.

Another important critical problem is the economic dependence of the wife. To create an independent identity is more important for woman. It entails economic independence. Because economic dependence on males is one of the cause of women's oppression. Ann seems to know this. It is her intention to find a job and it is one of the reasons why she is learning Marathi. Ann wants to know how much her tuition costs. And she finds that Ravi is reluctant to tell about it. Ann tells Ravi, "Don't treat me like a child" (p.23). She doesn't like such treatment given to her.

Ann is craving for economic independence. She directly tells Ravi "Don't think its my intention to live off your earnings" (p.24). She does not agree with Ravi because he is doing nothing. He is not ready to compromise and accept what is available. And Ann is anxious because Ravi does not care and she has to depend completely on is family. She does not like the patronizing attitude of her father-in-law towards her son. She feels that Ravi should earn independently. It is revealed through her comment, "It just goes against my grain to be under financial

obligation to anyone" (p.24). Ann even does not approve Mahesh's role as a Mukadam. Because he has no financial rights. He has to submit budgets and accounts to his father. Jai Nimbkar seems to advocate woman's economic independence. She believes that once woman becomes economically independent she would become free to some extent.

After coming to India, Ann spends time in adjusting herself to the Indian ways of life. Then she has to spend time on Rahul. She realizes that she has allowed herself to fall into a pattern which she has always despised. She has allowed herself to become the epitome of the suburban housewife (p.164). It reflects Ann's horror of the "housewifely role".

Jai Nimbkar has shown her heroine in different roles. Her ideas and ways while playing her different roles are unconventional. She has to constantly struggle while playing the roles successfully.

Ann fights with her mother for treating Ravi with ordinary politeness. In contrast, Ravi never stands up to his mother but always tries to justify his mother's atrocious behaviour. We observe that Ann's every effort to communicate with Ravi and his family members fails. The novelist has created a new image of woman different from the traditional image of woman.

Ravi's attitude changes after coming to India and she has suffered and held her silence too long because Ravi has pat excuses for everything. She does

not want to remain confined to the four walls of the house. She believes that her marital and domestic duties not constitute to be all and end of all their existence. She has taken course in education for linguistically and culturally disadvantaged children. She wants to work in one of the primary schools. That does not mean she rejects all her responsibilities as a 'good mother' and a 'good wife'. She and Ravi move out of the joint family and set up their own home. That shift gives many responsibilities to Ann. She engages herself in housekeeping, gardening, etc. Even small experiences like shopping for her own house excites her. She is of the opinion that it's such a good feeling being responsible for your own life (p.60). This proves Ann is not like other traditional woman who remains suppressed. When they have been Ravi's friend, Anoop Singh's place, they have discussion about the world culture. Ann expresses her views freely there. But Ravi feels that she is being aggressive and as he wants to meet Anoop Singh for their business purpose. Ravi thinks that this discussion would spoil their relation. But she wants to express her own ideas. She is able to take part in the intellectual discussions and she does not want to play the role of meek housewife. She disregards Ravi's idea and says critically, "In future, when you bring visitors, I will remember to be the meek housewife who has no opinions of her own" (p.153). Here Ravi is trying to prove his male ego.

Ravi arranges a trip to Shri's village for taking trials of crops. Ann also wants to join them. Ravi is hesitant. He makes excuses that it would be tiresome and dangerous journey for a pregnant woman. Ann reacts that she is not a fragile object. Though they consider her as a fragile object, she is strong. She does not accept it.

Ann craves for her own identity. At the beginning when Ann comes to India, she finds that a lot of people do not want to talk with her. They did not show curiosity towards her. Family members and the others did not find anything common between her and them. She was considered only an adjunct to Ravi (p.12) and this irritates her.

One of the important aspects of Ravi and Ann's relationship is her relations with Ravi's friends like Shri and Mr.Pathak. Ravi takes objection against Ann's friendliness to them. These relations matter much for Ravi. So because of all these incidents in their life, at a certain stage, Ann realizes that any simple discussion between them turns into a quarrel. And this makes Ann think the way their relationship has soured. She keeps thinking about Ravi and finds that she has failed to understand him closely. According to Ann, Ravi's behaviour is unpredictable to her.

Jai Nimbkar has shown first Ravi's love and consideration for Ann and then his dishonesty or betrayal of trust. Initially, Ravi is very caring and considerate for Ann. But his male ego and his male power make him hypocritic. He expects that Ann should behave like a traditional wife. It is revealed through her attitudes towards tackling the situations in life. And Ravi thinks that Ann is practical because she is applying her norms and beliefs while tackling the situation. Ravi's anger and resentment about it changes him. She has come to this strange land, away from the standard American life. But she realizes that all her hopes are crushed by Ravi's changed attitude.



There is a lot going on in Ravi's life and Ann has no knowledge of it. Ravi intentionally keeps it as a secret. This makes Ann angry. She wants to explore her own identity as an equal partner for Ravi through the marriage. Ann pleads for the new marital morality based on mutual trust, consideration, generosity and free of pretenses, selfishness and self-centredness. But Ravi's attitude towards marriage lacks this perspective and hence, the marriage breaks.

Ravi's selfishness is also reflected in the final cause of the break. Ravi has sent a letter enquiring about the possibility of job in the U.S. to one of his old friends, Chuck. Ravi is not satisfied with his job in India. He is career-minded and is thinking about flying back to America for a bright future. I think he has seen Ann as a passport to the U.S. and married to her. He does not even inform about his plans to Ann. This hurts her. And as a wife, she expects she should know the things which are going on in his life and especially which concern her. She does not keep silent and asks about it, "You never talk about your work, why not? Don't you feel any need to share things with me? Why are you so secretive?" (p.170).

Jai Nimbkar portrays Ravi as a representative of patriarchal domination in the Indian society. In fact, Ravi's decision of settlement in America is a crucial thing in their life. Because mutual understanding is necessary for healthy ^arelations between husband and wife. But she does not want any suggestions or advice from Ann. He says, "I want to run my life my own way, without your interference" (p.170).

Ravi does not think it necessary to consult Ann. Because in male-dominated society, woman has a secondary place. Man does not approve a discriminating listener. Ann is an intelligent and she wants to know the problems in his work. So that she can share things. Ann realizes that Ravi does not want to share his life. He does not want a discriminating listener who would offer intelligent comments or dare to criticize his actions. He wants a passive listener who would at the most offer sympathy (p.170). This shows that Ravi is not ready to treat Ann as an equal partner in marriage. Because it would have hurt his male ego. And Ann could not and would not convert herself into one.

Ravi has an extra-marital affair with Usha. Ravi wants to continue his love affair and to keep secrecy about it. It means he wants his wife and still wants to enjoy Usha's company. When Ann learns it from Shri. Ann asks Ravi directly about it. She asks whether he intends to marry her. On this Ravi says, "No, I don't want any permanent relationship with her. It is just a passing madness" (p.244).

Here Ravi thinks of Usha as a commodity. He is indulging in sexual relations with Usha not because he loves her but only for the pleasure. And it is obvious that Usha gives consent to it. That means she willingly gives consent to her subordination. He treats her only as a sexual object.

But in contrast to Usha, Ann wants to know why Ravi is interested in Usha because she shows that Ravi himself has rejected her. She tries to understand him as a human being not judge him from a superior position. She thinks, "Did he

want to find out what he has missed?" (p.244). That means Ann sees this relationship as a self-exploration of Ravi himself. But it hurts her very much.

In traditional views, man holds superiority over woman. He expects that wife should be faithful to him and neglects her own identity. Man does not want woman to interfere in his affair and it seems that Ravi is strong on tradition.

ANN'S CONSCIOUSNESS ABOUT THE EFFECT OF MARRIAGE

Ravi's suspicious nature makes him ask Ann the questions regarding her relationship with Jack, her old friend. This starts to create the rift between their relationship. Marriage means two separate things for Ravi and Ann. So Ravi's suspicious nature disturbs her. They quarrel over it. Ann feels more bewildered than angry. The thoughts run into her mind "Could Ravi really consider her involvement in their marriage so superficial that she would indulge in a sexual episode with an old friend whom she met only briefly and casually?" (p.238). So it is clear that he has no trust in her. There is a lack of faith in their relationship. This is the failure of marriage. It is interesting to compare the two relationships: Ravi-Usha, and Ann-Shri. Both are extra-marital relations. But Ravi-Usha is a relationship of commodification, whereas Ann-Shri is a human relation. Ann rebels against commodification of not only women but human beings.

Ann explores the self-centredness of Ravi here. After Ravi's affair with Usha is exposed, he treats Ann with extra-consideration and even gentleness. Ravi wants

to forget it and to resume their normal life. It does not matter much for Ravi. Ravi thinks that he can do whatever with his wife. But Ann cannot forget it so completely and go back to their initial stage. Ann thinks if this is all that marriage is going to be, the "sharing of a roof and nothing else" (p.246). She thinks this is not worth and she even does not think of breaking the relations.

When Ann learns about Ravi's decision of going back to America for the settlement. She is outraged with Ravi. She asks Ravi, "Why don't you ever discuss anything with me. Don't you feel like sharing your thoughts, your plans with me? What does a marriage mean to you? Just two people living under the same roof for the sake of convenience?" (p.260).

Ann at first starts adjusting herself that is the phase of imitation. Then she starts rebelling against it, so it is the phase of protest and from protesting against the situation she starts realizing her inner self. She starts to explore the meaning of relationships at a certain point (stage). She realizes her position. It is a kind of self-exploration.

At this stage, Ann thinks, "Is this what happens when a marriage goes wrong? How and where did I fail? Is it something inherent in our marriage? Yet, Indians seem to believe that almost any two people can, if they have the will to do so, make a marriage work. Can that be true?" (p.249).

The novelist is critical about the effects of patriarchal marriage on both

men and women and the society in which they live. The emotional struggle in Ann's mind caused by the trauma of all the conflicts make Ann a very 'human' person. The conflicts are not "storms in a tea cup" (which is the traditional treatment of such conflicts). Ann thinks their relationship has become meaningless. Something has gone out of their relationship, perhaps forever, and Ann feels an overwhelming sadness for the loss. Because there is lack of trust between them. Yet she finds herself reluctant to face the possibility of ending relationships. She still loves Ravi and she feels certain that he still cares for her. And she has become dependent on his presence in her life (p.246).

So all her attempts to build up a relationship with her husband based on love, companionship and equality fail. She wishes the woman to be respected as an individual in her own right rather than as an object taken for granted and she walks out of the bond of marriage only when it proves a mere bondage than a partnership.

Ravi has taken a decision to go to the U.S. He does not even consult Ann. That means he has left her the choice of following him or staying there, which means either that he has the supreme egotism to take it for granted that she has no recourse but to accompany him. Ravi has treated her as though she is nothing to him. Thus, Ravi wants Ann to accept things, not express opinions separate from him. But Ann raises the question by asserting her right. "Don't I even have the right to protest about it?" (p.261).

It is Ravi who walks out of the bondage of marriage and she thinks the failure of marriage is like a fire or an accident (p.261). The novelist has depicted how marriage in a patriarchal set up can have a slow poisoning effect. Nimbkar thinks that in such a society, for a sensitive woman, marriage can be nothing but a contract, shorn off all the romantic sentiments attached to it.

Ann feels that Ravi might think whether he has married a false image of Ann and has built up in his mind and then discovers the error. Finally, when Ravi's mother comes with Ravi's message for compromising the problem, Ann tells her that it is not just a single incident, but it is his whole attitude, his refusal to treat her as an equal partner, which he has demonstrated again and again. It results in ending the marital relations.

The novelist has shown that Ann is able to think and act independently. She has realized the problems of traditional marriage and has thought over it and then resolved the problem. She has the capacity to solve the problem. She emerges as a new model of woman in contemporary Indian society. She takes a decision to live independently as an individual. She even rejects her mother-in-law's offer to stay with her. She decides to continue doing the same things she has been always doing, that is keeping house, looking after Rahul and go to work.

It does not mean that it does not affect her whether Ravi is living with her or not. Yet she does not break down after he deserts her. She does not want to depend on him. She does not break, but is ready to accept the challenge of being

a single parent. Ann's decision to live in an alien country like India even after the marriage breaks down is extremely significant.

Jai Nimbkar, through Ann, explores the meaning of marriage and woman's status in it. She has succeeded in viewing marriage critically.

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