A JOINT VENTURE

Rama Mehta’s novel, *Inside the Haveli*, portrays a young educated woman’s experience of an extremely orthodox family and social systems in the haveli of Udaipur. But finally she is able to assert herself, carve out her own identity, synthesize tradition and modernity and emerge as a matured woman.

Jai Nimbkar’s *A Joint Venture* portrays the travails of an educated middle-class housewife in urbanized Pune. The novel portrays a woman who suffers due to the inequality of sexes. Loss of self in marriage is the central theme of *A Joint Venture*. According to T.S. Borate, the novel deals with “… the middle-class [married] woman’s identity crisis in the contemporary male-dominated Indian society…” (Borate, 84) But she is matured enough to face the reality and comes to grips with herself. Thus the novel essentially deals with the place of woman in her family and society and her search for personal identity. It naturally includes the meaning of marriage and its effect on the Indian women.

*A Joint Venture* opens with the startling decision of Jyoti to leave her husband after having spent a happy married life of thirty long years with Ram who is a successful and a well established business man in Pune. She finds herself suddenly thinking, “I’ve had enough. I want to get out.” (Nimbkar, 5) So she tells him, “Ram, there’s something I have
got to say to you … I want to leave you.” (3-4) This is because she realizes that what she has lived all these years has not been her life at all and, in fact, it has been her husband’s life. This realization, perhaps, prompts her to leave him and to live a life on her own. He is scared of Jyoti’s decision which threatens to break their marriage. So he advises Jyoti to think over it again and for that, asks her to take a holiday for about a week at their favourite hill resort, Mahabaleshwar, all by herself. In introspection, Jyoti discovers a newer meaning in her marital relationship with Ram. Even before the week ends, surprisingly, she comes back to Ram to live with him.

The novel upholds the past of thirty years of Jyoti’s life in a flashback that shifts between the present and the past. After a long and seemingly happy and contented married life, Jyoti makes an astounding announcement to Ram, “I just feel I can’t continue living with you, that’s all.” (6) Jyoti, who is now in her early fifties, has been married to Ram for about thirty years. Still she feels that, “This was Ram’s house, Ram’s life. She had only been a participant in it.” (2) He is so shocked by her decision that he asks her whether he beats her or starves her or ill treats her in any way. He pleads with her,

You are upset about something, Jo. It’s something I have done, obviously, or not done. Whatever it is, I am sorry. You know I wouldn’t intentionally do anything to hurt or annoy you. (6)
Ram fails to understand her emotional upsurge that has led to her startling decision. Jai Nimkar tells an interviewer how emotions can play a great role in forming and affecting relationships, “I am more attracted to people and their relationships and the way these are formed and affected by social conditioning and emotional requirements.” (Geeta, 204) Jyoti desperately tries to convince him about the validity of her decision. She tells him, “Ram, you know this is not something that you can argue or apologize away. It’s not a childish whim, it’s something bigger, more fundamental.” (6) Infact, this decision of Jyoti to leave Ram is not sudden and is not the outcome of one incident:

Suddenly life had acquired a new dimension. And then, so gradually that she didn’t know the process had started, the things she had enjoyed seemed only activities that demanded time and energy which she was unwilling to expend. They were done because somehow they were expected of her, not because she chose to do them. Oftener than not, she began to find herself standing outside, watching, weighing, judging, and not part of the ongoing scene. This was a new experience for her. (103)

However, she is persuaded by Ram to agree to spend about a week, all alone at the holiday resort, Mahabaleshwar. In her turn, she wants to “… be left alone to think things out” (14) and also “… to consider whether she can any longer live with the business-husband-life style package which, apparently, she has to accept in its entirety or not at all.” (Futehally, 30)
Jyoti is a lower middle-class Brahmin girl of Pune. She has passed her B.Com with distinction, topping the list in her college, and decides to continue her education with the help of the scholarships and prizes she has won. Meanwhile, her father, a doctor’s compounder, has a stroke which paralyzed him. Being the eldest of the three children, with a brother and a sister Jyoti has to take the responsibility of the family. She has worked as a clerk in a bank and the possibility of marriage, never very close, receded even further. Her not so good looks and added to it her father’s poverty almost ruined the chances of her getting married. “As the sole bread winner of the family, she starts imitating the conventional male-role of working for a living.” (87) When Ram is looking for a girl to marry, his father recommends Jyoti to him as she seems a capable and responsible girl, not a ‘decorative doll’. Ram understands that she is not good-looking. But being practical and calculating, he never opts for a pretty-faced empty-headed wife who craves only for saris and jewels. Even then he is a bit disappointed to find Jyoti sturdily built and dark skinned. Still he has announced on the spot itself his willingness to marry her as soon as possible without dowry in a simple wedding ceremony with both the parties sharing expenses equally. Ram agrees to marry her “… because of her circumstances, more responsible and less spoiled than some girl from a wealthier family.” (29)
Jyoti’s reasons for agreeing to marry Ram are also more or less similar to that of him. She is also very practical and realistic in her approach towards life. She has no illusions about her looks. She knows that her lack of good looks will be a hindrance for her to get married. Almost a dozen eligible bachelors, who have seen her, bluntly refused to marry her. That could be one of the reasons why she has continued her studies even with scholarships and prizes she has won. After her father’s illness, she has to support the entire family and then “… the possibility of marriage, never very close, receded even further.” (28) But when Ram has readily expressed his willingness to marry her, she doesn’t want to turn down the offer and stay unmarried forever. “… she asked herself practically, where else am I going to get an offer of marriage as good as this? And if there is a risk involved in accepting it, I am willing to take it.” (29) After their marriage, he decides to look after the seed business which interests him more than farming. His wish is to expand and modernize it. So he thinks that Jyoti’s commerce degree would be useful to him. The theories and concepts she has learnt as part of her study could be applied in practice in expanding his business and his idea is, to start with, she can help him by keeping proper accounts. When he asks Jyoti to help him in the business, she is initially surprised but realizing her potential, agrees to his proposal.
Ram has not asked her to choose what she would like to do. He has taken her approval for granted. Jyoti accepts it with pleasure and pride. She is willing to learn as he has asked her to. It does not occur to her that he has not asked her whether this is what she would like to do. Even if he has, Jyoti would have happily said yes. From Jyoti’s side, she is interested in performing the male role as she is used to it at her parental home in the form of the sole bread winner of the family. More than that, she thinks, it keeps her on the same footing as Ram’s. She doesn’t realize that Ram’s assurance of shared togetherness is deceptive. Whenever Ram wants to know whether she is happy, she replies him, “Of course. Can’t you see how happy I am?” (37) She has become totally assimilated into her surroundings in a very short time. However, gradually she begins to understand the self-centered and hypocritical attitude of her husband. He even forces an estrangement of Pratap and Smita, their children, upon her, thus denying her a sense of fulfilment as a mother. The author ironically writes:

That was the essence of marriage, the negation of a woman’s life up to that point, and a fresh start made with new people, new ideas and values, a new style of life. This was all in the natural order of things, and Jyoti accepted it without resentment, with pleasure and pride, in fact. She looked at Ram’s shining eyes and his excitement touched her and drew her within its magic circle. She was happy. (32)
After Jyoti’s marriage, she is not expected to take responsibility of any housework as all is done by Atyabai, the widowed sister of Ram’s father. Being free in the house, Jyoti likes the idea of working on the farm and has asked her father-in-law if he would teach her about farming. She displays great eagerness to learn day-to-day things like irrigating, fertilizing and harvesting. Accordingly, while workers are at work, Jyoti not only supervises them but often pitches into help because she feels strange standing over the workers when hers could be another pair of hands working along with them. She has also learned about farming operations.

… she quickly learned to live on two levels – the individual level at which she was sympathetic, kind, helpful, and the professional level where all personal considerations had to be set aside in the name of efficiency and profitability. (40)

Her financial help to the business could not bring any recognition to her sacrifice. “She commanded everything except plain pure respect … there was nothing in it for which she received independent acclaim.” (106) Jyoti slowly gives up her sense of being an individual and moulds herself to suit the needs and principles of her husband. Ram is an ambitious person:

… his relationships were not with people but rather with what the people represented ... all their new friends had been intentionally cultivated because of their position in their field, their social eminence, their proximity to politicians, or simply their value as collector’s items. (105)
In the pursuit of his dream of success, he has neither the time nor inclination to understand his wife as a person. Ram wants Jyoti also to think like him and induces her not to deliberate on such themes that would endanger their marriage. Jyoti feels that her life is centered around her family and her home and nothing more. When she has married Ram, she has hoped for an equal relationship. But very soon she learns that it is only an illusion.

Using Showalter’s model of evolution of female tradition from Bronte to Lessing in her book *A Literature of Their Own*, Borate traces Jyoti’s consciousness from imitation to protest and protest to self-realization and containment. T.S. Borate remarks that:

… the developmental pattern of Jyoti’s consciousness as a woman was similar to the one traced by Elaine Showalter in connection with the English women novelists’s art. Jai Nimbkar, thus, has attempted to project in her novel a woman’s consciousness which has the pattern of Feminine–Feminist-Female phases of development. (Borate, 95)

The phase of protest in Jyoti’s consciousness begins when her husband decides to install a seed processing plant. She will never oppose to the process of growth in business but fails to appreciate the big jump Ram has planned to take. The inauguration of seed-processing plant is nauseating to Jyoti because it means dishonesty, fraud, double-dealing
and hypocrisy. She cannot digest Ram inviting agriculture minister for the inauguration of the plant and throwing a ‘wet party’ for the media persons for the sake of good publicity. It can be said that this inauguration marks the beginning of Jyoti’s phase of protest.

There are so many incidents which bring out the protest phase in Jyoti’s consciousness. One instance is the matter of naming their first child Pratap. Jyoti has considered names like Amol or Siddhartha for her son. But one day Ram asks Jyoti, “What do you think of Pratap?” (74) She is surprised that he has actually considered names and has picked one. Then she is further surprised when, instead of discussing other possible names, he says with finality, “Let’s call him Pratap, then. I want him to become a brave and strong young man … Jyoti sighed. Well, she was not going to fight about it.” (74) Same is the case with sending their children to an English Medium School or buying a costly flat in Pune or even inviting people to the parties. It is always Ram who takes decisions. She is not consulted. Her opinion is not asked for. Jyoti has tried to protest several times for not having been involved in decision making, but Ram has paid no attention to it. When he decides that some-thing is to be done, nobody can oppose him or come in his way. “He went his own way and made his own decisions and did not
find it necessary to discuss them …” (21) Her protests carry no weight. He decides everything ahead of time, including certain things that mainly concern her like hiring of a servant without asking her what she wants to do. Ram also fails to see that Jyoti needs something more than a comfortable life. Her husband does not insult her directly but either ignores or takes her for granted. The sense of dispensability that she starts suffering from as a result of this becomes unbearable. But she tells herself, “Be sensible …” (96)

Now in exile and introspection Jyoti wonders if he has ever gauged the extent of her conflict. She also knows that he can never guess that she sheds tears silently and unknown to him because she is certain that she can never give any explanation for them which would be acceptable to him. She is sure that she cannot receive comfort from him because he cannot understand her pain. Thus Ram fails to understand a lot of things and she never realizes that it is her fault in not making him see that she suffers due to his lack of understanding of her. Jyoti is treated with respect by people, not in her own right, but because she is the wife of a successful man. She doesn’t have an identity of her own. She governs her behaviour to him in such a way that she is a wife who is expected to sustain and support him.
Jyoti, in her enthusiasm to play the role of wife and mother to perfection, finds that she has obliterated that self in her. Their joint venture comes to a breaking point when he is propelled only by business motive, thereby making her lose the sense of adventure that has continued her. “In this way, Jyoti, as she loses her own right, is alienated from Ram. Jyoti is a flame, not Seeta to live on perpetual self-denials imposed upon her by Ram.” (Salunke, 217) Her problem is not marital. The crisis she faces operates at the level of consciousness. Jyoti later realizes how she has allowed herself to be dictated by Ram’s opinions and decisions denying herself, in the process, the precious little things she wanted to do and cherish in her life. As her needs have been ungrudgingly provided in her husband’s house, she has felt happy initially but not now.

The business metaphor implicit in the title is symbolic. If marriage is “A Joint Venture,” the business partners should share the same attitude. If one is a sleeping partner, the active partner, Ram, who has the unquestionable authority for action, should have an implicit faith in the passive one. Jyoti becomes the sleeping partner in the joint adventure run by Ram. Initially it results in happiness for Jyoti because she considers herself a part of that “we” he speaks of. But later, as she realizes that, for the visitors and others, “we” always means “I”, her faith begins to dwindle. She admits that she deserves to be blamed
because it is she who has allowed Ram to take lead in everything. Even when she says her house, her farm and her seed company it is only a way of speaking and it is Ram’s house, Ram’s farm and Ram’s company. The author says,

In fact, she had not consciously allowed it, she had simply accepted it as the natural way. Perhaps that was the crux. Life should be led with conscious intention, not simply allowed to happen. (80)

From the simple, rural surroundings of their enterprise in Shirgao, Ram shifts to their complex, urban, hypocritical and starkly naked business pursuits in Pune. In the village, Jyoti has helped her husband build up their seed business. But in Pune, Jyoti feels like an alien. Ram being practical and realistic, becomes a little bit unethical to promote his business. As their business becomes more and more commercial, their marriage tends to become a mere “joint venture” (Salunke, 220) “Perhaps it had been the flat in Pune that had changed everything.” (99) Their shifting from village to the city represents the change in their relationship. Jyoti, after taking the decision to leave Ram’s house, thinks:

Now it occurred to her that her not wanting to take the trouble to plant a garden here was symbolic. It expressed what she felt about the place. It was barren. Barren of growing things and happy memories. (2)
This symbolism expresses the change in their relationships. She thinks, “What happens to relationships, how do they change?” (84) She answers these questions to herself when she thinks of Ram: “He had always taken in his stride every change in life, effortlessly leaving behind the place he had occupied earlier.” (9) Jyoti is aware that she has never voiced her opinion or exercised her choice. But she hesitates to say that Ram has imposed his will on her. She only says that it had simply seemed natural for him to lead and for her, to follow.

Jyoti accepts the fact that she has been very meek, docile and passive: “…once she accepted the role of meek follower, ineffective protester, passive recipient of whatever credit he chose to give her, she had closed the door to real communication.” (137) But now there is some awareness in Jyoti which make her think and act boldly. She is not prepared to simply accept what comes her way and also when it comes. She thinks that her decision to leave Ram is not arbitrary, but inevitable. “She could not go back to a life which gave her none of the things she thought worth having. She would work out later where she would go, what she would do.” (137) Still she sticks to her decision and does not want to return to Ram.

Jyoti begins analyzing her life. She knows in her heart that her marriage is almost over. She wants to prove herself, her capacity to live all alone by herself. Her confidence is evident when she tells herself, “I
had led a meaningful and happy life before I met him and I can after I leave him.” (34) She is a kind of woman who wants to revolt, but ultimately does not. She is aware of her abilities and she knows that she can expose them openly, but somehow, she does not. She is like a bird who can fly but does not.

In Jai Nimbkar’s other novel, *Temporary Answers*, Vineeta, the protagonist searches for her own identity just as Jyoti does. She decides not to marry Abhijit only to preserve herself from further annihilation. Jyoti is twice the age of Vineeta but remains in a state of ambivalence as regards love and marriage. She discovers meaning in her relationship with Ram and finally comes home to stay with him for good.

*Temporary Answers* is a deep rooted study of Vineeta’s personal problems which are psychological and highly individualized. Vineeta’s love is probably a need, a subtle form of self love or an instrument that could fight with her loneliness that has finally began to dehumanize her. She admits,

> I was only marrying because I wanted to escape from the wall, escape from myself now that I knew I was running away from myself, I would I have to stop running (*Temporary Answers*, 213).

Being a widow, she is an emotionally disturbed woman who is skeptical about marriage. She has lost confidence in her own skill as a doctor and a sense of meaningfulness in life. On the other hand in A
*Joint Venture* when Jyoti enters into marriage it hopes to offer her an equal relationship, which later becomes an illusion of wholeness, in which she stands alone, complete in herself. Vineeta hesitates to get married, whereas Jyoti hesitates to dissolve her marriage. The unresolved crises of Vineeta and Jyoti are apparently two sides of the same problem.

Similar to this novel is Shashi Deshpande’s *That Long Silence*, where also Jaya, like Jyoti, looks at herself and her situation from a changed perspective. The similarities between *That Long Silence* and *A Joint Venture* begin with the fact that their authors are both from Maharashtra and the novels have similar settings in Bombay and Pune. Both the novels are about women from traditional families who have become wives of increasingly successful men. Jai Nimbkar like Shashi Deshpande focuses on the struggle of educated, modern, middle class and urban women in the context of modern Indian society in her novels. Ram marries Jyoti because she is well educated and cultured. Precisely these are the reasons for Mohan to marry Jaya in *That Long Silence*. Not satisfied with her married life, Jyoti like Jaya recalls her past days, her upbringing, the environment in which she is brought up. She wants to mould herself as her husband wills. Though she is an intellectual, she finds herself out of place in the society meant only for men. She, like
Jaya, also seems to lead an enviable life by any standards and also appears to be a satisfied housewife married to an apparently earning man and having two normal healthy children.

After seventeen years of her married life, Jaya goes on an intense introspection of her life in Dadar flat where she has shifted with her husband temporarily and in the absence of her domestic routine. Similarly Jyoti in *A Joint Venture* goes on introspection all alone at Mahabaleshwar after thirty years of her married life and similarly in the absence of her domestic routine. Like Jaya, Jyoti also is greatly disappointed at the secondary position meted out to her. Continuous piling of frustrations, bitterness and disgust with the role of a docile secondary status of a wife are behind the sudden upheaval in both the cases. However, after introspection, both of them come to terms with their conditions and return to family life. This is not to be taken as submission or surrender. Jaya and Jyoti are realistic in their approach towards life and believe that life is to be made possible.

Sita of Anita Desai’s *Where Shall we go this Summer?* also comes closer to Jyoti as she also faces an identity crisis, in her forties, similar to that of Jyoti’s. In both the cases, the conflict results from husband and wife polarity — irreconcilable temperaments and diametrically opposed
view points. Sick of the mundane routine and fed up with Raman, her husband, for his lack of feeling towards her, Sita feels suffocated in her posh flat in Bombay and struggles to break away from it all. Both of them follow the same path to think things over. If Jyoti goes to Mahabaleshwar as a kind of self exile in her search for identity, in silence and away from home, at the suggestion of Ram, her husband, Sita chooses Manori Island as the place, on her own. If Sita’s rebellion proves abortive, same is the case with Jyoti’s. Through a process of self-analysis, both of them give into reconciliation with their husbands. They understand that they have no choice apart from their learning to accept their situation. Both of them realize that life is a continual process of sacrifice, adjustment and compromise and that solution to the problem is to be within the family bondages. Thus they are compelled to arrive at some kind of a compromise with life and return to their husbands. At the same time Sita, like Jyoti, makes it clear that compromise never means total submission and surrender.

In a way, Jyoti also resembles Mukta of Sunita Jain’s A Girl of her Age in exercising choice for a compromise. If A Joint Venture is about man-woman relationship in marriage, A Girl of her Age is about man-woman relationship in love leading to marriage. Sunita Jain’s A Girl of her Age is about the dilemma of Mukta, a young middle-class
college girl, who is unable to decide whether to opt for choice or compromise – choice in the selection of a life partner or bow to conventions and customs and thus make a compromise in marriage. Mukta, a Delhi University student and Chander Mohan, a Ph.D scholar from Kanpur fall in love with each other. Coming from a lower caste, she thinks that she is not acceptable to his orthodox Brahmin parents and refuses to marry him. No doubt it is surrender to tradition. It also reveals that women are capable of supreme self-sacrifice. However, here it is a compromise which is more realistic and more matured. It is not just surrendering to tradition but an adjustment to the reality of the situation.

Like Jyoti, Mukta also follows the path of learning, understanding and adapting. Like Jyoti, she also forsakes her choice of self-assertion. Jyoti’s return to Ram does not make her submissive or subservient. It is the realization and an acceptance of life as a step towards happiness. Same is the case with Mukta, of course, in a different context.

The author carefully distinguishes between Jyoti’s sense of dispensability and that experienced by the modern industrial worker who feels like a cog in a wheel. Jyoti leaves Ram, not for good as she would have liked to do but to spend a week at his suggestion as a sort of compromise, at Mahabaleshwar to think things over. Jyoti has a brief encounter with Aditya Rege, an engineer-businessman at a hotel in
Mahabaleshwar. “Rege’s failure to understand her predicament, and his naivety to take it as her vulnerability indicate not only male insensitiveness but male chauvinism as well.” (Borate, 92) Jyoti questions herself whether she has seemed so lonely and so vulnerable to him that he has dared to make a pass at her. She also entertains doubts whether she should make a compromise in order to keep alive her marriage so that she will not be lonely. Immediately she says, “No … people do live alone. So can I.” (84) Their marriage, their ‘joint venture’, is threatened and almost comes to a breaking point when Ram acts only by business motive. Jyoti has already begun to move away from him and now sticks to her decision.

When Jyoti enters into the Gulmohar Hotel in Mahabaleshwar, ever since her arrival, everyone – the Chowkidar, the room-boy, the waiter who served her lunch, the gardener who offered her the usual rose, even the manager, have asked her, “Saheb has not come? Is he joining you later?” (15) Perhaps it might only be a polite interest, or friendliness born of long association. But she feels that it is the fawning attitude of people in that sort of position developed towards those who pay them well. Due to her sensitive nature, Jyoti is very particular about moulding her tastes in order to suit those of the rest, even if her superior intellect is not satisfied.

98
At Mahabaleshwar, Jyoti now thinks that Ram never had any love for her. He has some feelings for someone who depends on him, someone he depends on or someone who does his bidding. Jyoti thinks that marriage is only a relationship, a mutual convenience. She now realizes that she cannot expect that love should form the basis for marriage. To insist upon love in a marriage will be a tall claim. She reflects:

It can’t be the criterion of a relationship you can’t say you live with someone because you love him. You live with someone because society decrees that people who stand in a certain relationship to each other should live under the same roof. What is the relationship? The word love certainly cannot characterize it. (143)

She reflects now that to be a business partner of Ram is not something she has chosen. Infact she is not given any choice in any matter. “Almost literally, she had merely done what Ram wished her to do. If he had expected her to become a house wife, she would have acquiesced with his wish.” (35)

Vinnie, Jyoti’s friend, one day informs Jyoti at Mahabaleshwar on phone that Triveni seed business is in trouble, facing bankruptcy and that people are thinking that she has left Ram because of the crisis. On the spur of the moment Jyoti decides to return. She tells Vinnie, “I had planned to come back today anyhow.” (138) She also tells her that, “If there really is some sort of crisis, I’ll stick with Ram long enough to see
him through it.” (139) When Jyoti tells Vinnie not to inform Ram about her return, Vinnie, who knows Jyoti all along remarks, “… if you have really made up your mind to leave him, you wouldn’t have wanted to surprise him.” (139)

Jyoti is very happy to be at home. “… God, it’s so good to be home.” (139) Ram is also very happy for Jyoti’s return. Jyoti examines him dispassionately and finds that there is some subtle change in him which has come not about overnight but something which has been going on for quite sometime. Only thing is she can clearly perceive it now. She also realizes that, “I want to leave him only because I am no longer happy or comfortable living with him. That is all. It is enough.” (143) When Jyoti returns home from her lonely holiday, Ram shows repentance which comes as a surprise to her. He is willing to go back to his rural farmhouse because he cannot even imagine his life without Jyoti. She melts at this tenderness, as he repeatedly asks, “You have come back, haven’t you?” (146) She answers finally, with regret as well as relief, “Yes Ram, I’ve come back. I’ve come home.” (147)

Jyoti’s decision to come back to Ram does not indicate her surrender or attempt at reconciliation. It cannot be termed even a compromise. It does not spring from her love for him nor the outcome of her necessity for survival. It is related only to herself as a woman. “Her decision to move back to Shirgao is a result, once again, not of
compromise but of understanding.” (Borate, 94) What ultimately matters, in Ram’s words is “… the real you and me.” (146) Realizing finally that her husband is no longer the same confident and dynamic man of his youth, and seems vulnerable, Jyoti decides to play the role of his protector, which so far he had played for her.

Living her life at a low pitch, she stores up toughness and wisdom, and so in the evening of life, becomes the stronger one, and her mate who had all along been dominant, now seems vulnerable, and arouses her protectiveness, perhaps even pity. (144)

Thus Jyoti changes her decision because Ram needs her in his financial crisis. “Without changing her mind, Jyoti changes her decision.” (Salunke, 219)

Jyoti returns to Ram as she decides to erase the distance between Ram and herself. She knows fully well, at the same time, that they cannot wipe out the past. She also knows that life, somehow or the other, has always to be made possible. She breaks through her illusion in an attempt to exist as an absolute being. Jyoti’s conflict arises firstly from the contradictions between the image of the ideal woman and the new woman and then from the discrepancy between new aspirations and lack of opportunity.

Jai Nimbkar, with her innate pragmatism does not seem to take rebellion against a male-dominated world to the bitter end. Jyoti seems
to have realized that marriage may not offer the best of all possible worlds to a man or a woman, for neither a man nor a woman is complete in himself or herself. They need each other biologically and emotionally to develop a measure of harmony in their relations. She also now learns that “… every freedom imposes its own bondage.” (145)

Jyoti is now a changed person who realizes believes that solution to problems within relationships does not lie in walking away from them. She also now knows that she can retain her identity and assert herself even if she continues to live with Ram. That’s why she feels, “We are not just the same people we were. We can’t just go back and wipe out all these years”. (146) She is in her final stage of evolution of her consciousness-the stage of self-realization.

Jyoti knows that she has to solve her problem herself. She realizes that she is neither inferior, nor superior, but distinct from Ram. She comes to grips with herself and emerges as a matured woman. Jyoti had seen her husband expecting different things from life and almost achieving everything he wanted. But it is otherwise with her. At this stage she goes through an epiphanic experience that makes her find her own identity under the prevailing circumstances. It not only helps her find the woman in herself but also ennobles herself through a sublime emotion she had never experienced before. Jyoti realizes herself.