

## New Image of Women: A Comparison between the Heroines and Other Female Characters of Amish Tripathi and Jaishree Misra

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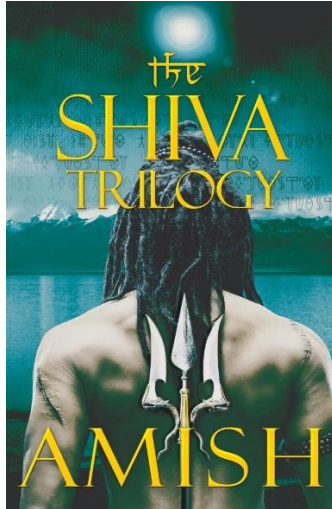
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### Feminism

The image of New Woman is one of the most deliberated topics among the social beings and in all the corners of society as well. The term emerged in nineteenth century and has flourished through twentieth century. The term 'New Woman' was coined by the writer Sarah Grand in her article *The New Aspect of the Woman Question*, published in 1984. The term was later popularized by American writer Henry James. Feminism unveils the image of the New Woman possessed with the mental strength to change the background of the male-dominated society. In the past, women were dependent on their parents, husbands or other male social beings. However, the situation began to change with the growth of educational opportunities and career developments. Women's position in society also began to change through the new legal rights to property, suffragette movement, marital and sexual freedom etc.

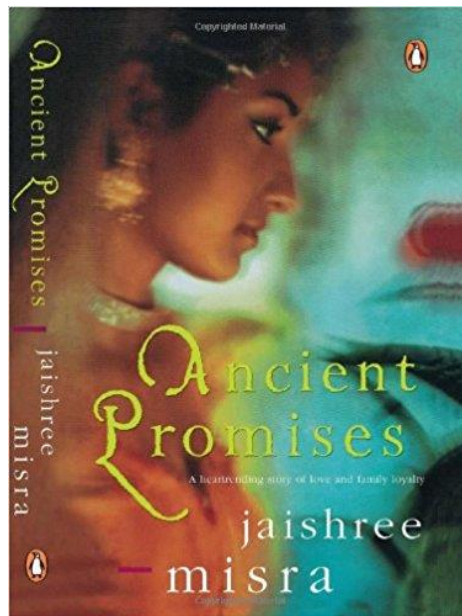
### New Woman in Literature

The image of New Woman was vividly revealed in arts, especially in literature. Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen's plays revealed the new faces of women exceptionally. Nora in *A Doll's House* (1879) is a strong woman and she is depicted as the New Woman herself in the play. Isabella Archer and Daisy Miller are the two other examples of New Women concept of Henry James in his works *Portrait of a Lady* and *Daisy Miller* respectively. The New Woman is the nickname given to Ella Hepworth Dixon whose famous novel is named *The Story of a Modern Woman*. A reader can see other examples of the image of New Woman in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* (1856), Henry Arthur Jones's play *The Case of Rebellious Susan* (1894), George Bertrand Shaw's sensational plays *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1873) and *Candida* (1898), Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary* (1856) and H.G. Wells' *Ann Veronica* (1909). There are two strong women faces in Bram Stoker's great gothic romance *Dracula*; Mina Harker and Lucy. These two female characters discuss the varying modes of women in life as well as society and they reflect the light of New Women.



When the reader comes to contemporary Indian English literature, he or she can catch the feminist ideals of writings from the works of Amish Tripathi and Jaishree Misra. They are the two famous writers of present time India. Amish's three books in *Shiva Trilogy* and two books in *Ram Chandra Series* are celebrated works in the contemporary world of literature. Simple, but powerful style of writing, undeniably great characterization, the notion of interlinking of myths with modern scientific facts and marvelous, subtle and unforgettable background settings are the specialty of this writer. However, it can be said that, the strong characterization is the most beautiful fact which made him a best seller writer. He can vividly portray the difficulties and subtleties of each character in his works. His concept of woman is exceptional. He gives a strong impact of New Woman in his works such as *The Immortals of Meluha*, *The Secret of the Nagas*, *The Oath of Vayuputras*, *Scion of Ikshvaku* and *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*.

### Jaishree Misra



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Jaishree Misra is another great writer in the present era of Indian – English writings who gained the love of readers with her debut novel *Ancient Promises*. The novel is considered as her semi-autobiographical work in which she tells the story of Janaki. Not only Janaki, but Misra's all other women characters are different in their nature and behaviour. In the presentation of each character, Misra holds subtle notions and strong viewpoints depicting women characters in different perspectives of feminism.

### **Amish Tripathi**

Amish Tripathi became the well-known and best seller writer of India by making Lord Shiva, the Hindu deity, from an ordinary tribal head to a super hero and the prophesied evil destroyer – Neelkanth. It is the one sentence definition of *Shiva Trilogy*. However, Tripathi presents the female characters with a keen observation of their behaviour, thoughts and all other activities. The female characters in *Shiva Trilogy* are Sati, Queen Kali, Krittika, Anandmayi etc. They all are presented as powerful persons with marvelously strong words and actions. Sometimes, even the protagonist Shiva may turn to be immobile before the intense stare and determined will of Sati, his wife.

Amish Tripathi presents Sati as a warrior and the real suit of Shiva in all aspects. Sati is the precise label of love, sincerity, loyalty, courage and integrity. She is courageous and is ready to fight to the last breath of hers, but she is the true follower of her custom and tradition. She does not try to change the civilization of her land, even if she is affected with the unfair law of that custom. At first, she belongs to the group of 'Vikarma' people - the untouchables, who lead the life of an outcast. Sati becomes a Vikarma, because she gives birth to a stillborn child. However, when Shiva offers to save the Vikarma people from leading the life of an outcast, Sati replies him infuriately that she does not need his protection and she cannot be saved. Sati's fury shows that she does not like to be compassionated by others. At the same time, when Sati comes to know that her own child and her twin sister are Nagas (the Naga people is also outcast by the rule) she courageously brings them to the palace where she and her family lives.

Sati's love towards her husband is strong and polite. Nevertheless, she is not under the shades of her husband's or other male characters. She has her own opinions and decisions, but always makes sure that her decisions are true and not harmful to others. Sati is a real warrior, because she fights with the enemies even to her last breath. She dies after a long fight between the Egyptian, Swuth who had no respect towards women. However, he exclaims at the courage of Sati and her powerful defense against him. Finally, he says that the killing of Sati will be his life's honour.

Not only Sati, but all other female characters like Veerini, Queen Kali, Anandmayi, Krittika also have their own will and they possess great personality. Queen Kali is also a good fighter and compassionate ruler. She is a Naga and takes the responsibility of caring Ganesh, the Naga child of Sati. Veerini is Sati's mother who loves her family most. She makes the decision to stay with her husband, even though he is wrong, at the time of her own death.

In *Ram Chandra Series*, Tripathi presents Sita, the princess of Mithila, as a powerful and strong-willed woman. She is not only the warrior princess but also the prime minister of Mithila.

### **Jaishree Misra – Hard Realities of Human Life**

Amish Tripathi's stories and characters are related to myths and the background of the story belongs to ancient times. He has created a world of divinity through his novels. On the other hand, Jaishree Misra writes about the harsh realities of human life and her heroines are the true ones who suffer under the male dominated milieu. A reader can find that, in Jaishree Misra's novels depict the female surroundings in their marriages mostly. Her famous novels are *Ancient Promises*, *Rani*, *Afterwards*, *Secrets and Lies* etc. The only historical novel of Misra is *Rani* in which she portrays the life of Rani Lakshmi Bai, the freedom fighter.

The semi – autobiographical novel *Ancient Promises* deals with the life of Janaki; may be the writer's own self. Janaki's sufferings as a dutiful daughter, an obedient wife and a responsible mother are vividly represented. In *Afterwards*, Misra presents the character Maya and her mental agonies in her marriage. Maya is rejected by her father also.

In *Secrets and Lies*, there are four main female characters who suffer at many reasons. Samira and Bubbles suffer with their loveless husbands and unhappy married life. They adjust with their married life, without any complaints, due to the well beings of their children and the present social status where they live. Zeba Khan is Bollywood actress who is always busy, but sometimes she feels loneliness. Anita is also an unmarried woman, who later engaged with a man Hugh, her colleague.

*A Scandalous Secret* is Misra's novel in which she portrays the life of Neha. *A Love Story for My Sister* is an investigative novel by Jaishree Misra in the terms of feminism and female sufferings. *Secrets and Sins*, *Rani* etc are her other notable novels in which she presents the mental agonies and sufferings of women in differently set background and great characterization.

In all the novels of Jaishree Misra depict the courageous women with big deal of sufferings. These sufferings often caused by their own faulty doings or mistakes. However, these sufferings are implemented by their patriarchal surroundings. The female characters of Misra are sometimes weak, but gradually gain courage and confidence to face the harsh realities of life. Janaki, Samira, Bubbles, Neha, Zeba, Anita, Lily, Sonya, Tara etc are fine examples of Jaishree Misra's creative talent. All these females are entirely different in their nature and their viewpoints. They represent the various parts of human lives. Their circumstances and living milieu are pictured in high contrast. However, it is clearly said that the writer gives the vivid image of New Woman through these astonishing characters.

Even if the background, plot and other settings are different, the two writers Amish Tripathi and Jaishree Misra present their heroines and other female characters with great respect and place them in the high extremes. The New Woman concept is fabulously used in their works. Once a reader goes through their works, it will be an unforgettable experience and the heroines acquire a fixed place in the reader's heart.

Woman empowerment is one of the major discussions in the contemporary society. The position of women in the society is much better than that of past times. Now, the women have their own identity and great opportunities for showing their abilities in the society. In the field of literature, there are many writers who have written about the rights of women. Feminists are really grateful towards the writers, because the writers are the main contributors who have raised the position of women in the society, from a very low level to almost an equal level of men, through their writings. Writers like Amish Tripathi and Jaishree Misra are the two fantastic examples who obviously present the image of New Woman.

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