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## Patriarchy and Feministic views in Jaishree Misra's Ancient Promises

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### **Abstract:**

*Feminism comprises a number of social, cultural and political movements, theories and moral philosophies concerned with gender inequalities and equal rights for women. Feminists have divided feminism's history into three 'waves.' To bring up women from many kinds of sufferings and social issues so many feminists and feministic movements are in rise in several places. Of the different kinds of feminism, we concentrate deeply into the radical feminism which is a radical reordering of society in which male supremacy is eliminated in all social and economic contexts. Radical feminists seek to abolish patriarchy by challenging existing social norms and institutions, rather than through a purely political process. This includes challenging the notion of traditional gender roles, opposing the sexual objectification of women, and raising public awareness about such issue as rape and violence against women.*

*In Indian writing in English many male and female writers through their writings show how women suffer in the dominated society and seek to abolish patriarchy. Jaishree Misra is one among them. In Ancient Promises Jaishree Misra reveals how Janu, the protagonist suffers from teenage love, parent's pressure for marriage, cultural variation, conflicts in marital life. Through Janu's character the author reveals feministic views and shows how patriarchy changes the mind of women.*

**Keywords:** *Feminism, Radical feminism, Patriarchy, Ancient Promises, Semi- Autobiographical novel*

In India the bias against women is very prevalent and it is the basic cause for feminism and feministic movements. Boys are preferred any day over girls, in all aspects. Even today in many rural areas the families want only a boy child. So not to a girl or women even to a female infant the society shows its cruelty and here starts patriarchy.

When we look in to the history, the status of women in India was ambiguous. In theory, she had many privileges and enjoyed an exalted status as an aspect of goddess. But in practice, most women led miserable lives as servants to their husbands. In the past, until the independence, Hindu men had the freedom to marry more than one wife or keep mistresses. Prominent members of society such as landlords, merchants, ministers, high ranking officials, scribes and poets visited prostitutes and felt no qualms about it. At the same time, household women were kept in confinement as per the injunctions of the law books, which stipulated that a woman should not meet any men outside her family without a family member present.

To bring up women from all these kind of sufferings and social issues so many feminists and feministic movements are in rise in several places. It gives full support and encouragement to many sufferers. Feminism comprises a number of social, cultural and political movements, theories and moral philosophies concerned with gender inequalities and equal rights for women. Feminists have divided feminism's history into three 'waves.' The first-wave refers to the feminism movement of the nineteenth through early twentieth centuries, which dealt mainly with the Suffrage movement. The second-wave (1960s-1980s) dealt with the inequality of laws, as well as cultural inequalities. The third-wave of Feminism (1990s-present) is seen as both a continuation and a response to the perceived failures of the second-wave.

Of the different kinds of feminism, we concentrate deeply into the radical feminism which is a radical reordering of society in which male supremacy is eliminated in all social and economic contexts. Radical feminists seek to abolish patriarchy by challenging existing social norms and institutions, rather than through a purely political process. This includes challenging the notion of traditional gender roles, opposing the sexual objectification of women, and raising public awareness about such issue as rape and violence against women.

Early radical feminism, arising within second wave feminism in the 1960s, typically viewed patriarchy as a "transhistorical phenomenon" prior to or deeper than other sources of oppression" not only the oldest and most universal form of domination but the primary form" and the model for all others. Radical feminist locates the root cause of women's oppression in patriarchal gender relations as opposed to legal systems or class conflict.

We know that feminist are not only females it also includes men, that is men or women who support and give respect to the ideas of upcoming women's movement are considered as feminist. Different people have different ideas so through their medium of expression they express their views and ideas. In Indian writing in English many male and female writers through their writings shows how women suffer in the dominated society and seeks to abolish patriarchy.

In the contemporary scenario there are many women writers who, through their writings, have been successful in projecting the existing social inequality and evils that faced by women in the Indian society. The list of Indian women novelists comprises Anita Desai, Shobha De, Nergis Dalal, Krishna Sobti, Dina Mehta, Indira Goswami, Gauri Deshpande, Bharati Mukherjee, Namita Gokhale, Ruth Jhabvala, Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Das and many more popular names. These female Indian writers tell the astonishing variety of theme, in a style that poetry and novels are capable of offering. Each writer, in their own way, has tried to convey their thoughts in a distinct personal voice. Most of these women novelists are also known for their bold views that are reflected in their novels. Basically, these are the novels of protest and an outburst of reservations and contaminations. Unlike the past, where the works of women novelists were given less priority and were actually undervalued, classification of feministic or male writings hardly makes any sense today.

In most cases the write ups are written in a confessional and personal note, where their composition acts as a social document as they are themselves sufferers and also agents of social revolution. Among the writers of women's support novelist Jaishree Misra is one among them who writes for women identity and pains of women in the cultural bonds. *Ancient promises* are her first novel and it is semi-autobiographical in nature. In *Ancient Promises* Jaishree Misra reveals how she suffers from teenage love, parent's pressure for marriage, cultural variation, conflicts in marriage life.

Jaishree Misra's *Ancient Promises*, is full of keen emotional observations and culminates in a sane and balanced view of life. Janaki alias Janu, the protagonist of the novel is a Delhi brought up teenage girl but her roots are from Kerala. At the age of eighteen she is married to a Maraar family in Kerala through the alliance brings from her grandmother whose native is there.

The novel begins with the line of "My marriage ended today" that is the divorce of Janu from Suresh Maraar whom she married to. Janu's mother Mani worried about her daughter's life and her granddaughter Riya who is mentally disabled. The base for the above incident is mis matched marriage, cross culture and the parent's immediate and instant decision about the marriage of their daughter who is only in the age of eighteen.

Janu enjoyed her school life and teenage life up to the age of seventeen in Delhi wearing jeans and salwar and round the city like free bird with her father and with her friend Leena and with Arjun when she fell in love, she sits back in the bike without fall into the eyes of her parents with such a faith that her life is with Arjun. Like thunder falls above her head, the love matter was known to her parents and they put so many restrictions to Janu to avoid seeing Arjun. In the meantime, Janu's trip to Kerala in the vacation and Maheswari Maraar who see Janu in the temple brings Suresh horoscope to Janu's grandmother and her whole family convinces and please Janu and get her acceptance for her marriage with Suresh Maraar, very royal and big family with name and fame in Kerala.

Janu through her letter convey this message to Arjun who went to London for pursuing his higher education. After some days and months passed on her eighteenth birthday, Janu's marriage with Suresh take place in Guruvayur temple with all her family members' blessings and she get respect from society because she belongs to daughter in law of Maraar family. With new dreams she walks into the house of Maraar family.

Next morning when her mother in law talks to her about joining B.A. degree course through correspondence during tea time she asks to speak in Malayalam which is only her little known language. Here the variation starts; she is in the situation to change from English to Malayalam, jeans to sari, daughter to daughter in law. She wishes to behave like a good wife but Suresh is always concentrate on her hotel business and tour to many places in the name of business and he could not control his mother who always has a sharp tongued conversation with Janu. Her father -in -law and sister in laws are also not that much mingled with Janu. These things bring Janu a hesitation in the marriage life and she thinks that by giving birth to a child gives new impression on her and it reduces the gap between her and the family members. Here also fate plays a vital role in the life of Janu. She gives birth to a mentally disabled child. This thing totally depressed Janu. She felt that the whole world is against her and she did not know what to do?

With the help of her elder sister in law's husband she took her child to many doctors and then she will come to the conclusion that she might live for her daughter. She spends all her time with her daughter and keeps Riya always happy she does not bother about the words of her in-laws and others. This shows her boldness which emerge from her to keep the child always happy like other children in the world. She gets admission for Riya from the school where the normal students are studying. But after some days she is sent out from the school by stating that she is not fit for studying with other normal students.

Janu wants to get special education for teaching students like her daughter so she collects information from their well-wishers and she came to know that kind of institution is in London and America. She wishes to go there so she sends a letter whether she will obtain any scholarship for her studies. She gets a reply letter stated that she must complete M.A degree. So she continues her P.G. degree and completed as soon as possible and again tried to join the course in abroad. For that she went to interview in Delhi there she meets Arjun and Leena. Her love for Arjun flourish again, this time Arjun has not ready to miss Janu so she advises Janu to get divorce from Suresh.

After completed her interview Janu returned to Kerala with the idea of reunion with Arjun.

"I was both fooling myself and attempting the impossible in trying to return to a previous life. That was mixing up the divine order of things, nobody ever got away with reversing the Karma wheel. But I wanted my one lifetime with Arjun now and thought I'd be able to get away with it if I offered to pay the price a hundred lifetimes over."

So she reveals all the incidents happened in Delhi to her mother and grandmother. They shock very much and being ashamed of her behavior. Janu tell the same thing to Suresh and ask divorce from him. He does not know what to do? He plans to off the Janu's departure from India so he spread a rumor that Janu became mad and she is admitted in the hospital and given treatment like always sleeping. This thing is not tolerated by her mother, after long argument with doctor and Suresh Janu's mother bring her to Allepey and give treatment to recover her daughter.

Here Suresh's patriarchy is shown widely by the author, he went to Janu's house and pleases her not to go London along with Riya. It becomes a very shame to his family. But Janu's mother meet a Lawyer and applies for proper divorce from Suresh to save her daughter from such a hell. Suresh does not accept for divorce so Janu leaves Riya and went to London for studies where Arjun ready to look after her as well as her studies. There Janu spend Ninety-eight days with Arjun and in India Janu's mother tried her best to get divorce for her daughter

When Janu come to Kerala to see Riya, Suresh to her surprise hands over Riya to Janu and leaves away. He also consents for divorce, this thing gives some pleasure to Janu and she starts to dream of her life with Arjun and Riya forever.

Misra has expressed her view on females' pathetic marital life due to mismatched marriage and cross cultured through the character of protagonist Janu in this novel Ancient Promises. There are so many Janus to be rescued from the hands of men's like Suresh in India. All men have a same thought that his wife is always under the eyes of her husband and his family. She only adjusts everything because she comes from some other family while others are from the same family.

Through Janu's character the author reveals feministic views and shows how patriarchy changed the mind of women. If Suresh family and Suresh give enough love and respect to Janu means, there no way to next steps like reunion with Arjun. So here cross the ethics is not considered as a great mistake when we look into the life of Riya and her future. While defining in feminist view Janu accepts Riya's disability as her token of reunion with Arjun.

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