

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

The Marriage between Equals: Gender Relations in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in English

By

Madhi Maya Ale

Roll No: 03/066

T.U. Regd. No: 6-2-288-10-2004

Exam Roll No: 480339

Department of English

Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara

April 2014

Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of English

Letter of Recommendation

This is to certify that Mrs. Madhi Maya Ale has prepared this thesis entitled "The Marriage between Equals: Gender Relations in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*" under my academic guidance, complying with the format as specified by the Research Committee at the Department of English, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara. I, therefore, recommend Mrs. Ale's thesis to be accepted for defense.

Mr. Pabitra Raj Baral
Teaching Assistant
Department of English
Prithvi Narayan Campus
Pokhara

April 2014

Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of English

Approval Letter

This thesis entitled "The Marriage between Equals: Gender Relations in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*" submitted to the Department of English, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara by Mrs. Madhi Maya Ale has been approved by the undersigned members of the evaluation Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Advisor

External Examiner

Head

Department of English
 Prithvi Narayan Campus,
 Pokhara

Date: _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my guide, Mr. Pabitra Raj Baral, teaching assistant at Department of English, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara for his continuous support and academic guidance. Without his valuable guidance, this study would have been incomplete.

I am heartily grateful to Mr. Rajendra Prasad Tiwari, Reader and Head at the Department of English, Prithvi Narayan Campus, for his valuable suggestions and encouragement. I am also grateful to my teachers: Mr. Bishow Raj Adhikari, Dr. Sunita Gurung, Dr. Dhruva Karki, Dr. Saroj Koirala, Dr. Min Pun, Mr. Hom Sharma, and other members of the department for their support and encouragement.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband Mr. Ol Bahadur Rana, family members, my relatives and all my friends, who directly or indirectly helped me during the study.

April 2014

Madhi Maya Ale

ABSTRACT

Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* has been approached from different perspectives. This thesis "The Marriage between Equals: Gender Relations in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*" attempts to examine the mutual relationship and interdependence in companionate marriage. The novel's three characters –Jane, Rochester and St. John Rivers –have different views and ideals regarding marriage and family relationship. Mr. Rochester at first and St. John Rivers attempt to have traditional dynastic type of marriage with Jane. The power of masculinity and conventionality is ultimately defeated by Jane as she gets married with Rochester on the basis of mutual relationship.

This research explains the companionate marriage between Jane and Mr. Rochester by tracing the historical, social and cultural background of Victorian times. The male domineering power of the 19th century is evident in Mr. Rochester and St. John. The social and historical framework of marriage allows me to examine the characters of this novel from the perspective of woman's consciousness. Marriage with love and mutual bond are elements of companionate marriage, which this research attempts to highlight.

This novel has the pattern of women's consciousness which rejects Victorian conventionalities concerning marriage and domestic life. Charlotte Brontë creates a radical form of marriage between equal partners only when Mr. Rochester realizes his mistakes and accepts marriage as based in mutual relationship.

Table of Contents

	Page
Letter of Recommendation	ii
Approval Sheet	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	v
Table of Contents	vi
Chapter One: Jane's Quest for Interdependence in Marriage	1-11
Chapter Two: Victorian Society and Women's Status	11-23
Ideals of Marriage and Women's Oppression	11
Unconventional Writing Spirit of Brontë	15
Jane as the Projection of Brontë's Self	20
Chapter Three: Dynamics of Marriage between Equals	24-52
Rochester's Double Role and Jane's Urge for Mutual Relationship	24
Disclosure of Rochester's Unequal Marriage	34
Reflection of Loveless Marriage in St. John's Proposal	39
Reciprocal Reunion of Jane and Rochester	44
Chapter Four: Companionate Marriage as an Initiative to Familial Intimacy	53-57
Works Cited	58-60