

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Subversion of Gender Roles in Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, T.U.

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in English

By

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Letter of Recommendation

Sudip Neupane has completed his thesis entitled, "Subversion of Gender Roles in Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier*" under my supervision. He carried out his research from June 2013 to April 2014 A.D. I hereby recommend this thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Subversion of Gender Roles in Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Sudip Neupane has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

This study analyzes how the presentation of characters and their behavior with each other pave the way for the subversion of gender roles in Rebecca West's novel *The Return of the Soldier*. On the one hand, the reversal of gender roles gives spaces and agencies to women, and, on the other hand, it questions the power and authority of patriarchal society and belief system. The research work mainly focuses on how the feminist awakening of the novelist inspires her to present the characters just opposite to the expectation of patriarchal social system. Everything, in the novel, is revealed through the narration of Jenny. Illness, fragmentation, crisis in masculinity and reversal of gender roles are the main idea of the narration. The major characters like Kitty, Jenny, Margaret and Chris expose the real picture of hegemonic patriarchal society. West subverts the gender roles by giving feminine attributes to a male character, Chris and manly characteristics to females, Margaret and Jenny that ultimately proves that females are also no less than males. They can also contribute to the family and society where as males are also failure to bear their responsibility in many cases. Last but not the least, this thesis attempts to dismantle the gender hierarchy between male and female where even a male can be feminine and a female can be masculine. It further asks for the redefinition of the terms masculinity and femininity from a new framework.

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