

Tribhuvan University

Exploration of Historical and cultural Trauma in James Agee's *A Death in the Family*

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirement for the Degree of Masters of Arts in English

by

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Letter of Recommendation

Gitanjali Shrestha has completed her thesis entitled, "Exploration of Historical and cultural Trauma in James Agee's *A Death in the Family*" under my supervision. She carried out her research. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for Viva Voce.

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled, "Exploration of Historical and cultural Trauma in James Agee's *A Death in the Family*" submitted to the central department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Gitanjali Shrestha has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Acknowledgements

At this profound hour of happiness, first of all I would like to express to my respected and honorable thesis supervisor Mr. Jiva Nath Lamsal for providing me scholarly as well as friendly suggestion and his valuable guidance without whose support, this thesis would not have come this form.

I am very much grateful to my teachers and Head of central Department of English, Kirtipur, Dr. Amma Raj Joshi, for his words of encouragement and he also helped me in that crucial time when I was in dilemma. I would like to remember Mr. Hemlal Pandey and respected person Mr. Badri Acharya for their cooperation and suggestions.

My sincere thank goes to my father Gopal Raj Shrestha, mother Bimala Sherstha and husband Bidur Lamichhane who always encourage me to complete the thesis.

May 2013

Gitanjali Shrestha

Abstract

James Agee's *A Death in the Family* is grounded on the Historical and Cultural trauma of the central child character; Rufus and each and every character of this novel. One aspect of the novel that is notably different than the way life is in contemporary America is the closeness of extended families, with adult children frequently living with or near their parents. When Jay's father is stricken with a heart attack, his son Ralph and daughter Jessie and their spouses are available to be at his bedside; when Jay dies, his wife's brother, her aunt, and her parents are within walking distance; and Great Aunt Sadie, a woman who is herself in her eighties, has responsibility for the well-being of her mother. In rural societies, as Tennessee was in the early part of the twentieth century, it is more common to find extended families supporting each other than it is in urban areas. Traditionally, populations of rural areas have been determined by the need for help: before industrialization, parents on family farms tended to have more children based on their need for helping hands. Here, we can find historical and cultural differences between two families of Jay Follet and Mary. Another one is the cultural differences between country home and city area. Likewise, people are still can't get away from the historical events of civil war. In this novel we find the religious vary between Blacks and Whites too.

Table of Contents

	Page No.
I. James Agee & the issue of Historical and Cultural Trauma- An Introduction	
II. Projection of Historical and Cultural Trauma in James Agee's A Death in the Family.	
III. Historical and Cultural Trauma and Past Memory	
Works Cited	