

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Attack on Bourgeois Conservatism: A Reading of Madame Bovary

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By

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled **Attack on Bourgeois Conservatism: A Reading of *Madame Bovary*** by Bhumi Prakash Bam has been submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University. It has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

Emma Bovary is a victim of circumstance to the extent that her experience of the world is socially constructed. What has to be understood is that she cannot simply run away from home and make her way in the world alone. Men can do that in nineteenth-century France, but not (respectable) women. Her response is to attempt to shape her experience based on radical misconceptions of how the real world works. Her preconceptions of what married life will be like are the stuff of adolescent fantasy, informed by the 19th-century equivalent of mass-media messages of romance and adventure. Written against the background of the collapse of French aristocracy and rise of the middle-class after the French revolution, Flaubert in *Madame Bovary* depicts a middle-class female character Emma and her extramarital adventures, but her affairs are treated with a subtle irony. Flaubertian irony destabilizes the univocal certainty of linear narrative by continuously introducing the possibility of multiple and often contradictory interpretations. This research deals with Flaubert's treatment of the middle class character epitomized by Emma. Her romanticism with a touch of irony reflects the novelists attack on the moral conservatism of the bourgeois.

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