

Tribhuvan University

Quest for an Ideal Woman in Thomas Hardy's *The Well-Beloved*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English
in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in English

Submitted by
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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Ram Asre Chaudhary has completed his thesis "Quest for an Ideal Woman in Thomas Hardy's *The Well-Beloved*" under my supervision. He carried out this research paper from July 2013 to December 2013. I hereby recommend this thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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Supervisor

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Quest for an Ideal Woman in Thomas Hardy’s *The Well Beloved*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur by Ram Asre Chaudhary has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

The Well- Beloved is one of Hardy's 'romances and fantasies' which explores the destructiveness of a man's idealization of women through ageing process of an individual by three generations. It is filled with misguided love, and is closely concerned with the thoughts and feelings of women. It delineates the situation of females in Victorian patriarchal society where they were exploited, subordinated, and undermined by male that means patriarchy defined itself in relation to the supremacy of males over females in Victorian society. Because of such representation, patriarchy undercut the egalitarian standpoint to view woman in the society by placing them as the subordinated 'object' or 'other'. Such marginalization of woman is an inherent tenet of male practice of patriarchy evident in *The Well- Beloved* because it depicts the ego of masculinity in the name of 'desire' or 'imagination' of 'ideal' object and 'perfection' searching for that domain in women. It also explores the resistance of unities of Western discourse or male-centered thinking by females. However, at the end, Hardy's novel *The Well-Beloved* clarifies that all the women, in patriarchal society are not submissive, naïve and weak but most of them are also powerful, authoritative and strong like men.

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