

Tribhuvan University

Subversive Political Irony in Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child*

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
In Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Masters of Arts in English**

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr./Mrs Bamdev Giri has completed his/her thesis entitled “**Subversive political Irony in Doris Lessing’s *The Fifth Child***”: Under my supervision. . He/She carried out his /her research from August 2008 (A.D.) to January 2009 (A.D.). I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

Badri Prasad Acharya

Supervisor

Date: 18th Feb. 2009

Tribhuvan University

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “**Subversive political Irony in Doris Lessing’s *The Fifth Child***”
to the central department of English Tribhuvan University, by Bamdev Giri has been
approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

The Fifth Child by Doris Lessing depicts the social problems created on the basis of the demarcation between right and wrong, good and bad, able and disabled, normal and abnormal, correct and incorrect and so on. At the same time Lessing discloses the fact that the mother, Harriet protests against male domination as well as the decent society by bearing her fifth child, Ben who is somewhat deformed and disabled. Lessing indeed subverts such dangerous hierarchy in which the are ignored and oppressed by drawing the characters, Harriet and her deformed son, Ben. In addition to this, the expectation carried out by Harriet and David gets destroyed in such a way that it eventually takes a new shape as a newly emerged plight that is intolerable and burdensome to all of them which in literary sense is the irony. Meantime love and compassion that Harriet has for this deformed child, Ben subverts the entire morally constituted framework of society which can be termed as the politics of irony. In short lessing gives voice to the voiceless female characters like Harriet and her disabled son, Ben by means of subversive political irony and at the same time subverts the conservative patriarchal values and normalcy.

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