

Tribhuvan University  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Politics of Agency in *The History of Mary Prince*

A Thesis submitted to the Central Department of English  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Arts in English

By

Bishnu Shrestha

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal

February 2011

**Tribhuvan University**

**Central Department of English**

**Letter of Recommendation**

It is certified that Mr. Bishnu Shrestha has prepared this thesis entitled  
“Politics of Agency in *The History of Mary Prince*” under my supervision. I  
recommend this for approval to the research committee.

.....

Saroj Sharma Ghimire

Supervisor

Central Department of English

**Tribhuvan University**  
**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Central Department of English**

**Letter of Approval**

The thesis entitled “Politics of Agency in *The History of Mary Prince*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur by Mr. Bishnu Shrestha has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

.....

.....

.....

Internal Examiner

.....

.....

.....

External Examiner

.....

Head

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Date:.....

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor and teacher Mr. Saroj Sharma Ghimire, Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, for the scholarly guidance, invaluable suggestions and instructions that made this project a reality. Without his constant support this project would not have been possible.

I am obliged to Dr. Ammaraj Joshi, The Head of Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, for providing me an opportunity to work on this project by accepting my proposal. I am equally indebted to Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University for supporting me in many ways. I am equally grateful to my respected teachers Mr. Shankar Subedi, Mr. Pushpa Acharya, Mr. Pom Gurung, Mr. Mahesh Paudel for encouraging me to work on this topic. Thanks are also due to all the resourceful teachers at the Central Department of English for their moral support and intellectual assistance.

Similarly, I could not stand without giving my special gratitude to my father in law's family for helping and supporting in many ways. Thanks, too to my mother Mrs. Suku Maya Shrestha, my brother Mr. Olak Shrestha, my sister Tara Shrestha and all my family members for their continuous support and encouragement without which my dream to be research student would have remained incomplete.

Last but not least, an enormous thanks to my dear and loving wife, Mrs Geeta Shrestha, for her love and continuous support even in critical situation without losing her hope throughout my intellectual adventure providing every heart and soul whenever I needed her.

Bishnu Shrestha

February 2011

## **Abstract**

*The History of Mary Prince* explores into the experiences of a slave woman who is repeatedly sold, victimized and used as sex partner by white masters. Account on her autobiographical description reveals that she is forced to suffer throughout her life due to the extreme forms of domination, brutality, extortion and biases. Despite the resistance and protests, she is unable to get freedom until she willingly sells herself to the service of Thomas Pringle, the white editor. However, Prince has an agency that she appears as the master of her story which comes in her own first person point of view. The text not only reiterates colonial assumptions but also the traditional patriarchy, compasses subaltern and bourgeois class consciousness. This feminist text focuses on women characters trapped in the social and cultural problematic voicing their frustration voices for social change.

Thus, this thesis tries to show how the historical and cultural determination of gender complicates those of race, which crates the new humanity through building a national identity, promote national culture and allow for a process of perpetual renewal. So, for innumerable times, Mary Prince represents the extreme form of colonial exploitation imposed upon a slave woman. Her continuous resistance against colonial domination to achieve her own state of self-determination, decolonization, agency and freedom makes her story not only a feminist text but a typical slave narrative that cuts across the boundaries of gender, race and nation.

## Contents

	Page No.
Recommendation Letter	(i)
Approval Letter	(ii)
Acknowledgements	(iii)
Abstract	(iv)
I. Contextualizing <i>The History of Mary Prince</i>	1-13
II. Postcolonial Theory: Fanon and Gender	14-28
III. <i>The History of Mary Prince</i> as a Slave Narrative	29-45
IV. Conclusion	46-48
V. Works Cited	