

**ANDROGYNY AND MASQUERADE IN THE NINETEENTH  
CENTURY AMERICAN AND ENGLISH FICTIONS**

A Dissertation

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**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

in

**ENGLISH**

By

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## LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

We certify that the dissertation entitled **Androgyny and Masquerade in the Nineteenth Century American and English Novels** was completed by S.R. Indra Bahadur under our supervision and guidance. We recommend this dissertation for the final examination by the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in the fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in **English**.

**Dissertation Committee**

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Professor Dr. Arun Gupto

Supervisor

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Expert

## APPROVAL LETTER

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this Ph.D. dissertation entitled “Androgyny, Gender and Masquerade in the Nineteenth Century American and English Novels” submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, is an original work prepared under the supervision of my supervisor Prof. Dr. Arun Gupto. I have acknowledged the information borrowed from various sources in course of preparing this dissertation. The analytical work of this dissertation has neither been presented nor submitted elsewhere for any degree. The contents of this dissertation have not been published in any form. I shall accept the responsibility if any evidence is produced as the breach of my declaration.

Date:

S.R. Indra Bahadur

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the literary works of the nineteenth century American and English literature in general and five novels – Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* and George Eliot’s *Adam Bede* – in particular in the context of sexual ideology, androgynous potentials and gender as a stereotype and as a masquerade. The sexual ideology underscores the concept of separate spheres for men and women and is enforced by and in a patriarchal system of the society. Accordingly men are projected as masculine and women as feminine.

The main argument of this dissertation is that each individual – male and female – is androgynous because (s)he has masculine and feminine potentials in him/her. In such a case, the gender or gender identity adopted by an individual can only be a masquerade that conceals the presence of androgynous potentials in favor of a gender stereotype.

The aim here is to show that patriarchal culture imposes masculine gender identity on men and feminine gender identity on women notwithstanding the instances that expose androgynous personality as the true identity of each man and woman. The frequent gender disruptions testify that the unacceptable gender traits are in a suppressed state and the so-called gender is only a masquerade.

Some specific works of the renowned writers and poets of the nineteenth century have been analyzed from the perspective of gender ideology to find out whether they have reinforced or undermined the traditional gender norms. The objective here is to show that the nineteenth century American and English literature provides ample evidence for androgynous potentials in a person, consistent endeavors

to maintain gender conformity in accordance with traditional gender norms, and occasional gender disruptions on the part of men and women.

The five novels analyzed in this dissertation are approached through the lenses of various theories of androgyny, gender and masquerade to highlight how these five novels undermine the patriarchal assumptions about gender roles by exposing the potentials of male and female protagonists for gender blending. These characters consciously or unconsciously resist the demands of patriarchy for gender conformity and emerge as androgynies acting in defiance of patriarchal culture. However, some major and minor characters other than the protagonists have been assessed to point out that they successfully assume their gender roles in accordance with patriarchal expectations. As such they prove to be patriarchal men and women who want to preserve the very fabric of social, cultural and traditional values that govern their roles in the patriarchal society. Their failure to go beyond the boundaries of gender norms establishes them as gender stereotypes.

The five novels discussed here also demonstrate that gender identity is a masquerade. The characters projecting the masculine or feminine gender as an identity are witnessed to have concealed the presence of cross-gender traits in them. Consequently the given gender identity functions as a masquerade that prevents the society from perceiving the repressed gender traits in him/her until the given traits flash to the surface in a trying situation. This dissertation makes a two-fold contribution to the field of gender study in the nineteenth century American English literature. First, it explores the complex identity of an individual. Second, it challenges the patriarchal society's trend of imposing a fixed gender identity on an individual who consistently resists the sexual ideology and reveals the possibilities for fluidity, flexibility and multiplicity in our identity.

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