

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Undoing Gender in *Middlesex*

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Masters of Arts in English**

By

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Letter of Recommendation

Ms. Maya Acharya has completed her thesis entitled "Undoing Gender in *Middlesex*" under my supervision. She carried out her research from Aug. 2009 to July 2010. I, hereby, recommend that her thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Tribhuvan University
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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled Undoing Gender in Middlesex by Miss Maya Acharya submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan Univeristy, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

Members of the Research Committee

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Date.....

Maya Acharya

Abstract

Exposing the compulsory heterosexuality as a socially constructed category in Jeffrey Eugenides *The Middlesex*, this research work exposes the notion of fluidity of sexual identity. Eugenides creates Callie Stephanides, the protagonist with ambiguous sexual self who goes through multiple sexual identities throughout the novel. Calliope, who changes her name to Cal when she assumes a male identity, puts him in a borderline that lies in between male and female. She claims that she has a male brain but was assumed to be female at birth. She/he insists that from the beginning of her life she had the ability to communicate between the genders, to see not with the monovision of one sex but in the stereoscope of both. Cal's sexual identity as such is a matter of his performativity. It reveals that compulsory heterosexuality as a norm is a means to exclude and dominate other; so the research focuses on dismantling the dichotomies like male/female and heterosexual/homosexual and advocates for a generous space where both poles of the dichotomies can co-exist without silencing and excluding the other.

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