

Tribhuvan University

Adultery and Dispersed Family Relationship in John Updike's *Rabbit Redux*

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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This thesis entitled "Adultery and Dispersed Family Relationship in John Updike's *Rabbit Redux*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr. Rem Kanta Pathak has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Rem Kanta Pathak has completed his thesis entitled "Adultery and Dispersed Family Relationship in John Updike's *Rabbit Redux*" under my supervision. He carried out his research from 27th June, 2008 to 4th December, 2008 A.D. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Supervisor

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Abstract

This thesis observes *Rabbit Redux* as a novel of manner which shows the reality of middle class contemporary American people about marriage, love, sex, morality, American values, etc. in the changing American society of 1970s. The main character Rabbit's wife Janice experiments with freedom by having an affair with a used car salesman Charlie. Rabbit learns about this at a bar where the television repeatedly shows Apollo 11 blasting off to the moon. Updike thus reveals the emptiness in the life of his chief character at the very moment that America is ready to explore a new world in space.

Updike's purpose is ultimately to subvert the authority of all sociological and psychological interpretations of family and marriage by showing the self contradictory nature of outer forces and inner motives of the characters. The family is not only the source of security and mutual affection but if it goes out of the track and family relationships are dispersed, it becomes as a prison. So, this novel exists in the human realms of family rather than the intellectual realms of cold doctrinaire. People in this postmodern world are essentially living in alienation and fragmentation. It shows that there is a lack of binding force. So, they are torn apart. However, they never lament for their solitary and disintegrated lives. Updike's characters are guided by internal motives. They do not follow the established and rational way of life. They defy the natural law and conventions. For instance, Rabbit, the Central character has nothing to live for except food and sexual fantasy. He wanders around from wife to friends to old mistress. Janice, Rabbit's mistress represents postmodernist woman who blur the borderline of family bond fulfilling her desire.

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