

FATHER-SON RELATIONSHIP IN *RABBIT IS RICH*

Yen Chu

ABSTRACT

Rabbit is Rich is one of John Updike's most mature-novels. The fact that it won the American Book Award, the National Book Critics Circle Prize, and Pulitzer Prize proves that it has received unusual recognition in the American literary community since its publication in 1981.

The novel is an authentic record of the decline of America: during the 1979 oil crisis. Using his famous "yes-but" technique, Updike effectively presents the inner terrain of the protagonist, Rabbit, whose trouble is that he has "screwing on the brain."

Rabbit's sexual fantasy undermines his relationships with his fellow human beings and therefore causes agonizing conflicts between them. Throughout the novel, the love-hate ambivalence between Rabbit and his only son Nelson creates most of its tension and sets their nerves on edge. Updike makes the reader feel that this agonizing experience is shared by countless middle-class American families. The gist of this paper is to examine the cause, the nature, and the effect of the father-son conflict expressed in *Rabbit Is Rich*.