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– Srijana Neupane

**Reflection of Masculinity in John Updike's *Rabbit, Run***

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Master of Arts in English**

**By**

**Srijana Neupane**

**Reflection of Masculinity in John Updike's *Rabbit, Run***

**Central Department of English**

**Kirtipur, Kathmandu**

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**Tribhuvan University**  
**Central Department of English**  
**University Campus, Kirtipur, Kathmandu**

**Letter of Recommendation**

Ms. Srijana Neupane has completed her thesis entitled “Reflection of Masculinity in John Updike's *Rabbit, Run*” under my supervision. She carried out her research from 2069/01/10. to 2069/12./20 and completed it successfully. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for the final *viva voce*.

.....

(Supervisor)

Date: .....

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

**Letter of Approval**

This thesis entitled "Reflection of Masculinity in John Updike's *Rabbit, Run*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Srijana Neupane has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

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Internal Examiner

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External Examiner

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Head

Central Department of English

T.U., Kirtipur

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## **Abstract**

The novel, *Rabbit, Run* presents the male characters superior to female characters in terms of physicality, intellectuality and sexuality due to their active and built physique, rational thoughts, correct decisions and sexual pervasiveness along with weak timid and parasitic women with lack of sense of responsibilities and experiences in life. Alive to the mood of inner-directedness, Updike's Rabbit considers himself as a person in the process of becoming. He realizes his responsibilities towards his wife, son, parents and even parent- in- laws. The male characters become successful to continue the masculine ethos set up by the traditional masculinity. On the other hand the female characters hold the inferior position in the areas of physicality, rationality and sexuality. All the males in the novel possess the prestigious status in the society. They are all engaged in job whereas the females are jobless and some of the women like Ruth and Margaret are found to be involved in under rated jobs like prostitution. Since the protagonist continues the traditional norms and values of masculinity, he is the masculine hero holding the social position and priorities and the women being tender and docile are accepting male suppression and oppression.

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## I. John Updike and Gender Issues

This research aims to focus on the American Author John Updike's novel, *Rabbit Run*, a story of American families in mid nineteenth century. In particular, it is an attempt to explore by unveiling the privileged position in terms of physicality, intellectuality and sexuality vis-a-vis the conventional ideology of masculinity. Its major focus is on the male protagonist Harry Rabbit Angstrom who represents the traditional form of masculinity. Since 1950s in the era of feminism, some female characters like Janice and Ruth try to resist the masculine ethics but the resistance is not valued. Their resistance is always undermined and neglected whereas the masculine ethics always seem to be working as the guiding force in the society. The masculinity as a set of values, practices or disposition operates in the novel through the portrayed of the protagonist Harry Angstrom endowing with the physical, intellectual and sexual strength. The novel reflects masculinity ethics.

Drawing upon the concepts of gender studies and traditional ideology of masculinity, the important contribution of this project rests on the reflection of masculinity, the product of traditional masculine values. The male characters are presented to be sexually, financially and intellectually stronger than females. Though there are many responses from scholars about the novel from different angles and various perspectives, but no such criticisms appear to analyze the novel from gender studies viewing through the lance of masculinity. The issue of masculinity is yet untouched, the gap which is filled by this research. Evidence for proving the theme of reflection of masculinity in the novel has been assembled from three inter-linked concerns. The first is the physicality. This is signified by a huge, muscular body with a good height and a good look. A specific concern hence is the perception that men

have built and attractive physiques, athletic qualities and aggression which the women lack. The second is the intellectuality. Intellectuality or rationality which has been always linked with the masculine traits can be clearly observed in the novel. This includes practically empirical documented concerns relating to the position of men in the fields such as study, work and in some important decisions related to life. The third is sexuality which incorporates the various issues related to sex life. Male characters in the novel are endowed with the continuation of traditionally consumed men's prostitution and performance.

Masculinity is a culturally variable elaboration of sex as a hierarchical point where male is coded superior and female inferior. Relative to the total culture as a whole, the masculine personality tends more to the predominance of instrumental interests, needs and functions, presumably in whatever social system both sexes are involved, while the feminine personality tends more to the primacy of expressive interests, needs and functions. We would expect, by and large that other things being equal, men would assume technical, executive and "judicial" roles, women more supportive, integrative and "tension-managing" roles. Men are expected to demonstrate the manipulative skill in interpersonal relations formerly reserved for women under the headings of intuition, charm, tact, coquetry, etcetera. They are asked to bring patience, understanding, gentleness to their human dealings.

Reflection of traditional form of masculinity can be traced in the major works of John Updike. His protagonists are males with traditionally defined masculine ethos. In the works of Updike, we can notice that his male characters hold the dominant position in the society whereas the females are always doomed to suffer in the patriarchal society governed by the masculine rules. The pervasiveness of patriarchal ideology is one of the major features found in his novels. Masculinity operates in the



manners, behaviours and activities of the people. Updike has constructed a social system based on the authority of the male head of the household. It is a power relation in which a woman occupies a subordinate status as worker whose production is exploited and appropriated by males. The female characters under masculine ethics, whatever their class and race, have been assigned to the tasks of social reproduction like child bearing, child rearing, house keeping, food preparation, of ill and dependent, emotional and sexual services. In such social system men exercise power. Pervasiveness of traditional form of masculinity can be in Updike's another novel, *The Centaur*. Updike's *The Centaur* won the US National Book Award For fiction. The story concerns George Caldwell, a school teacher, and his son Peter, outside of Alton, Pennsylvania. The novel explores the relationship between Caldwell and his anxious son. George is a football player and soldier in World War I. George and the other character Peter share the desire to get out, to escape the hometown. This masculine desire for escape appears Updike's famed "Rabbit" novels too. Similarly, Updike's one of the famous novels, *Terrorist* is also centered on the story of a male, Ahmad Ashway Mullah, an American born Muslim teenager devoted to Allah who conforms the traditional masculine ethics. *Of the Farm* is Updike's novel captured by the ideology of conventional masculinity. The protagonist of this novel is Joey Robinson, thirty five years old who is also another traditional figure bestowed with physical, intellectual and sexual power. Updike continues the presentation of conventional masculinity in his novels through the portrayal of characters who perform the role of socially assigned gender roles. Mary O'Connell examines the role of traditionally constructed masculinity in Rabbit tetralogy- *Rabbit Run*, *Rabbit Redux*, *Rabbit Is Rich*, and *Rabbit at Rest*. She writes "Rabbit tetralogy comprises the longest and most comprehensive representation of masculinity in American literature" and places

Updike firmly with the precursors of the conventional masculinity. In the novels, O'Connell finds substantial evidence to demonstrate patterns of psychological and physical abuse towards women.

Men's powerful position as dominant and their maleness has been clearly displayed through the demonstration of women's suppressed and oppressed position in their family and society. Giving the continuity to the traditionally idealizing traits of masculinity, the protagonist Rabbit is presented to be a responsible person. Guided by the reason and family responsibilities, he is always in search of a solution of the problems in his life. The masculine provider ethics and the role of the father has been clearly displayed through the exposure of protagonist's success to provide, protect and control to his wife and children. His activities are the conformation to the conventional ideology of masculinity. Rabbit is a seeker; he always seeks something greater and more meaningful than the world he lives in. He knows some things are considered sinful, such as alcohol, gambling and cigarettes whereas his wife is alcoholic and a smoker. This clearly visualizes the intellectual power of this man. He is also aware that cheating on his wife and leaving his family are sinful but he runs, only to find a way out. When he leaves one job, he also succeeds to find another one quickly. Rabbit, who is now twenty six year old is a former high school basketball star. His basketball coach, Marty Tothoro who is also an another male character in the novel praises Rabbit for his star quality. Rabbit Angstrom, so named because of his broad white face and a nervous shutter under his brief nose watches the boys playing. He wears a business suit. He joins in the game and becomes a high school basketball star again. He always wants the things neat and tidy whereas his wife, Janice often turns the apartment into a mess. When once Rabbit plays golf with Mr. Eccles, initially he struggles to perform but he strikes one ball perfectly. Besides his athletic

quality, Rabbit has a magical sexual power over most of the female characters in the novel. His sexual power compels the girls to surrender themselves before time. Sex becomes more than simply an act of lust, though it is never quite associated with love, instead, it emerges as an almost religious process, through which two humans strike to seek or create an invisible bond. In this regard, Amulya Kishore Purohit States, “Rabbit, a former high school basketball hero, fights despair and achieves self-actualization principally through his virility.” This very comment on protagonist clearly indicates the traditional masculine traits in the novel. Purohit appreciates his quality and gives heroic traits to the protagonist. Rabbit's sexual life has been defined as the process of self actualization.

Throughout the novel Rabbit is shown in constant race seeking a way out of the problems in his life. When his wife escapes the problems with the help of drink and cigarettes, he always turns to find the solutions. At one point when Janice asks him a cigarette, he replies he threw his pack into a garbage can and he is giving it up. Here Janice says, “You threw it into a garbage can! Holy Mo. You don’t drink, now you don’t smoke. What are you doing, becoming a saint?” (12). Janice’s lines show that she lacks rational power. She seems quite irrational when she makes fun of Rabbit because he has left the habit of smoking. On the other hand Rabbit possesses intellectuality. Rabbit joins the game and plays perfectly and when one of the kids says it is his “Luck”, he proudly replies, “Skill” (7) because Rabbit believes that he is a skillful person. Rabbit impresses everyone with his logical power and he sounds confident in his work. Similarly Rabbit's sexual power can be visualized at Ruth's apartment when he begins to kiss her. First she tries to escape this but “when at last he lets her hands win, and lifts the washrag, she stares at his, says nothing, and closes her eyes” (87). It clearly shows that the females can't resist the male insist. They finally

give them up as Ruth does. She closes her eyes and accepts the situation though it is not her choice. The protagonist Rabbit is bestowed with overwhelming masculinity. The few resistances from the females in the novels such as Janice and Ruth are just the fruitless efforts. On the ground of above evidences it can be easily understood that the novel is not more than the continuation of traditional masculine strength in terms of physicality, intellectuality and sexuality.

A broad and close observation of the novel unfolds the superior and oppressive position of male characters, including the protagonist, to their submissive wives and other women. It is clearly visible in criticism where David Meddendorf argues, "In *Rabbit Run* Harry sounds like a man with genuine experience for whom God really is just down the next fairway" (645). Heddendorf praises Rabbit's manly qualities. He further tells that even God is with Rabbit because of his genuine experience. This is how domineering male behaviours are justified in the society by other males. The novel and the above criticism have vividly exposed the so called domineering masculinity. Here, the comparison of a man with God figure can be noticed as masculine power in the society where the female are given the position of not greater than the animals. The terms in the novels which are used to refer the female characters are sometimes the words referring to the animals such as monkey, dog and horse. This comparison of females with animals and males with God figure is nothing other than the display of masculine power. The traits and qualities like fixity, determination, aggression, physicality, intellectuality and sexuality are only stuck with the male characters like protagonist and others. The females are shown to be nothing and just weak and timid in the absence of males. The provider ethics of masculinity also prevails in the novel. Only the males have been provided the power of job, money and property which is another evidence for masculinity. This shows

that 1950s American society was entangled in the wire of masculinity. The insights and approaches developed in the field of gender study have provided the necessary tools. It helps to examine how Rabbit is a masculine hero. As the evidence unfolds, it has become apparent that John Updike has continued the socially constructed masculinity providing the masculine traits in the male characters in the novel.

The novel opens on the image of boys playing basketball. Rabbit Angstrom watches the boys playing. He is twenty six and becomes a high school suit. He joins in the game and becomes a high school basketball star again, feeling "liberated from long gloom"(8). He leaves the game but continues running through his home city Brewer, Pennsylvania. He reaches his apartment where his pregnant wife Janice is watching television. Rabbit is repelled by the untidiness of the house. Sensing his irritation, Janice tells him not to run from her. Rabbit leaves and walks to his mother's to collect Nelson, his son. When he sees his son being fed, he walks away, gets into his car and heads towards south. Later he turns towards home and stops at his coach apartment building and sleeps there, telling Tothero that he has left his wife because she is an alcoholic. After some time Tothero organizes a date for Rabbit and himself. Rabbit meets his date, Ruth at a Chinese restaurant. Over dinner he tells her that he served in the Army in Texas. Ruth knows Ronnie Harrison, who used to play basketball with Rabbit. Rabbit is shocked because Harrison is naughty.

Ruth lives alone in an apartment and does not appear to have job. Rabbit offers to help her towards the rent. At Ruth's apartment they begin to kiss. Rabbit asks her not to use any contraception. She reluctantly agrees and they sleep together. For the next few days, Rabbit and Ruth live together. Rabbit goes to Eccles's house and encounters his wife lucky. As they drive to the golf course, Eccles tells Rabbit that he saw Janice with her Peggy Connacht. As they play golf, they discuss Rabbit's

desertion; Rabbit sees himself as a quest figure. Eccles offers Rabbit a new job, gardening for Mrs. Smith. They play golf. Initially, Rabbit struggles to perform but he strikes one ball perfectly. The second part of the novel opens on the garden of Mrs. Smith, where Rabbit now works. Mrs. Smith, an elderly widow flirt with him. On the other hand Ruth becomes pregnant but she has resolved not to tell Rabbit. After some days, Rabbit and Ruth meet Ronnie Harrison who tells he and Ruth went to Atlantic city together. Being angry with Ruth, he asks her to perform the same sexual act she performed on Harrison. She reluctantly agrees. When Janice goes into labor, Eccles calls Rabbit who leaves Ruth in bed and walks to the hospital. They have a baby girl. There is again a reunion of husband and wife. The days pass slowly in the apartment. Janice returns. Once Rabbit tells Janice to have a drink to relieve her nerves; they argue. He tries to make love to her, but she reminds him that she cannot have sex with him for six weeks. Rabbit leaves. Janice drinks whiskey to fill his absence and accidentally drowns her baby in a bath tub. Rabbit, when he makes a call to Eccles, knows about the incidence and goes to the Springer's house where Janice is sleeping. Mr. Springer tells Rabbit that they are all to blame. Rabbit puts Nelson to bed and leaves for apartment. Next day they dress for the funeral. Eccles perform the service. At the cemetery, Harry tells Janice not to look at him; "I didn't kill her", he proclaims (302). He tries to placate Janice by recognizing that she didn't mean to kill Rebecca. Seeing the horror on his mother's face, he turns and runs. He goes to Ruth who tells him that she is pregnant. She tells she will marry his if he divorces Janice. Bewildered by the decisions that lie ahead of him, he finds comfort in walking around the block. The "sweet panic" grows "lighter and quicker and quieter" and he runs on (316).

The present work is largely based on the concept gender studies and traditional ideology of masculinity. As this study describes precisely in terms of masculinity in

the novel, it revolves around Rachel Adams and David Savran and the traditional theory of masculinity. The book *Masculinity Studies Reader*, edited by Adams and Savran identifies a growing body of scholarship devoted to addressing this historical imbalance by locating man and masculinity as the explicit subject of analysis. In his book, *Gender Studies*, he states how masculinity functions in the society. He explains the various forms of masculinity projected in the society. This project has been dedicated in answering the main question, "How does John Updike represent the traditional form of masculinity in *Rabbit Run*?" Regarding the novel, the research has been divided into 3 parts. The first chapter of this research paper briefly provides the birds eye view of the research focusing on what types of factors that encouraged to see novel from this very perspective of masculinity. It also includes views of some cities which are related to the sense of masculinity in the novel. The second chapter is the combination of the embedded theoretical tools and elaboration of masculinity in the novel in the detail form of textual analysis. The last chapter has concluded the entire efforts carried out in his research.

## II. Reflection of Masculinity in John Updike's *Rabbit, Run*

The novel depicts the five months in the life of a 26 year old former high school basketball player named Harry 'Rabbit' Angstrom, and his attempts to find a way out to existing problem in his life. Harry Angstrom turned husband and father, against the backdrop of 1950s America and the other male characters in the novel are always found to be attempting to prove themselves to be stronger than female characters in terms of physicality, intellectuality and sexuality. Almost all the male and female characters in the novel are constructed based on the parameters of traditional form of masculinity and gender roles. Despite of very little resistance from the female characters, the male characters are presented to be stronger than females and the males are always suppressive, oppressive, domineering, aggressive and with better physical, intellectual and sexual power. This imbalance in power and position in which males are presented to be more powerful than females is not other than the continuity of masculine ethics. Presence of masculine traits in the male characters contributes to the theme of reflection of masculinity in this novel.

Masculinity is a social system which is based on male supremacy in which females are given subordinate position. In this regard Anne Cranny Francis states: "Masculinity consists of the current practices and way of thinking which authorize, make valid and legitimize the dominant position of men and subordination of women. This domination exists through institutions such as the family, corporate, business, government and the military" (16). Here, Anny Cranny Francis defines masculinity as the practice of male domination in the society. As defined by Anny Cranny Francis, the presence of traditional form of masculinity can be observed in the novel since Updike has created a society based on hierarchy where males are physically, intellectually and sexually superior. The reflection of masculinity in this novel, *Rabbit*



*Run* is attempted to analyze in relation to three key areas of concern mainly. These area of concern include physicality, intellectually and sexuality. In particular, it is an attempt to explore the situation of stereotypical gender roles and man's privileged position in terms of above three different areas of concern. The traditional male values, practices and traits prevailed in 1950s American society despite of little resistance from the females. The voice of females has been suppressed, oppressed, neglected and ignored. The claim of the reflection of the traditional form of masculinity in the novel is attempted to justify mainly in relation to the stereotypical gender roles, man's privileged position and the dominated women whose resistance is not valued. The evidences have been grasped in relation to the areas such as physicality, intellectuality and sexuality analyzing in the following key areas of concern.

Physicality is one of the most important term related to masculinity where the male body has been used to manipulate the females in all the institutionalized areas of life including education, health, work, law and order which thereby generates specific kinds of knowledge about the body. The traditional concept of masculinity assumed men strong, tall, broad, athletic and impressive body whereas female as weak, short pale and timid body. Women are stereotyped as emotional nurturing and sensitive while men are taken as strong and authoritative. Women are expected to be obedient, submissive and dependent to their husband. In this regard Cicero has said, "A man's chief quality is courage." Cicero, giving the quality of courage only to males, seems to be denying this trait to females. This is exactly the masculine ethics. Supporting Cicero's idea Uodike seems to be giving the traits of courage and strength to his male characters only. As defined by the traditional masculinity, it focuses on the organization of masculinity and men's lives as privileged over women's and as violent

and aggressive. Bravery, strength, vigour, courage and warrior have been simply reinforced as the stereotypical masculine images. The protagonist, Rabbit is described as "so tall, he seems an unlikely rabbit" and he wears "double breasted Cocoa suit" (6). Here it is clearly visible that Rabbit conforms to the conventional assumptions of masculine physicality as a strong, attractive and domineering male. On the other hand his wife has been portrayed as 'a small woman whose skin tends toward alive and looks light as if something swelling inside is straining against her littleness' (10). The male characters are bestowed with active body whereas the females are given passive body. The females are mainly confined to household activities, shopping and beautifying themselves. Femininity in general has come to be associated with consumption. Anyone who struggles through the grocery shopping each week, and hunts down bargains to clothes a family will no doubt be surprised at the association shopping and consumption with passivity. Yet from common opinion to Marxist theoretical analysis, production is generally configured as active and consumption as passive. Performing the work of adorning the body and home have come to be crucial practices in the contemporary construction of the woman as subject. The very conventional assumption of gender role has been continued in the novel through the male characters characterized by masculine ethics. In the novel there are eight major characters. They are Harry Angstrom (Rabbit), Rabbit's wife, Janice, Jack Eccles, Jack's wife, Lucky, Ruth Leonard, Marty Tothoro, Margaret and Mrs. Springer. Almost all the male and female characters follow the traditionally assigned gender roles in the areas of life and they are given the physical description in discriminated way.

In the beginning of *Rabbit Run*, the Protagonist Rabbit is seen as an active male with impressive physique as defined by the traditional masculinity whereas

Janice and other female characters are given very weak and passive body. This active body of male characters in the novel has been used to dominate the females where as because of their weak and timid physical structure, the females are doomed to suffer in every activity. Similarly, the other characters, Mr. Springer and Mrs. Springer are also given unequal physical description. Mr. Springer is Janice's father who wears a tiny knotted necktie and laundry – fresh shirt. His little sandy mustache has been trimmed so often his upper lip has kind of shriveled under it" (206). Whereas Mrs. Springer is a plump, dark, small-boned woman with a gypsy look about her' (155). Reverend Kruppenbech, a minister and the male character in the novel is coloured with very strong physical description. "He has a massive square head, circuit. He is a man of brick as if he was born as a baby literally of day and decades of exposure have baked him to the colour and hardness of brick" (114). All the characters in the novel share the physical description as prescribed by masculinity.

Similarly Margaret, a female character in the novel has "the shallow density, that stubborn smallness" like Janice. All the male characters mostly including protagonist conform to the male values or masculine qualities. In this regard, Kay M. Polan and Charles S. Areni present ideal picture of male saying. "Traditionally masculine gender identity is said to encompass personality traits such as independent, assertiveness, instrumentality and competitiveness". (365). As stated above, the protagonist, Rabbit meets the criteria of masculine ethos. He follows male values, practices and traits, adopts and exposes the masculine traits being independence, assertive, instrumental, powerful, strong and hard and well built in physicality. On the other hand the female characters like Ruth, Janice and others expose the feminine traits being quite opposite to males. This is very situation is reflected in the novel where the female character posses weak physically and the male characters possess

the strong and built physique. The close observation of the physical description of the characters in the novel clarifies that even the physical attributes conform the traditional masculinity where the position of males is domineering and the female is dominated. The strong and built physique of the males is used for manipulation.

Rabbit, being portrayed as the central figure of the novel possesses the athletic quality. Athletic quality is one of the traits which is always attached with males and masculinity. Besides Rabbit, the other major male characters like Marty Totho and Jack Eccles are also good athletes. No one of the female characters in the novel are presented as athletic figures. Rabbit need to continually "run" certainly reflects, among other things, his past as a star athlete. It is perhaps the end of his reign as a basketball champ that prompts him to search for meaning ebe where in sex, in religion. One gets the impression, especially during Rabbit's recollection of a game at Oriole High, that basketball once served the same role for Rabbit as the church does for so many of his peers: a way of instilling his life and his action with meaning. He tries to communicated with what was so special about this game and the sport itself to Ruth and Margaret in the Chinese eatery, "I get this funny feeling I can do anything, just drifting around, passing the ball and all of a sudden I known, you see. I know I can do anything" (21). Rabbit is confident of his strength. Boastfully he says that he can do anything. The novel begins with Rabbit joining a kids' basketball game and ends with him running: the sheer physicality of sports seems to represent the athletic traits in males which highlights the traditional form of masculinity in the novel.

The beginning of the novel itself establishes Rabbit as an athlete when Rabbit joins the basketball game with the boys. He catches the ball on the short bounce with a quickness that startles them and plays with the ball very enthusiastically. First it

appears the ball will miss because though he shot from an angle the ball is not going toward the background. The ball drops into the circle of the rim artistically.

"Hey!" he shouts in pride.

"Luck", one of the kids says

"Skill," he answers. There is no response. (7)

Rabbit's athletic trait justifies that the protagonist conforms the masculine traits. He has that strength to make others speechless. Rabbit believes in his own skill rather than the luck.

Rabbit is often praised in the novel for his athletic quality. Yet in his time Rabbit was famous through the country, in basketball in his junior year he set a B league scoring record that in his senior year he broke with a record that was not broken until four years later, this is, four years ago. Tothero introduces him repeatedly: "Fred, this is my finest boy, a wonderful basketball player, Harry Angstrom, you probably remember his name from the papers, he twice set a country record, in 1950s and then broke it in 1951, a wonderful accomplishment". (54).

Rabbit, always seems to be longing for his sports life. Once when Rabbit goes to Eccles house, they both drive to the golf course. As they play golf, through struggles to perform first but later he strikes a ball perfectly. Rabbit's athletic quality is also praised by David Heddendorf. He states, "Sure enough in Rabbit, Run Harry hits a gorgeous lee shot". Heddendorf appreciates Rabbit for his shot. he says Rabbit hits a gorgeous shot while playing golf with Eccles. But we don't see females taking part in sport activities and competitions.

Marty Tothero and Ronnie Harrison, the other male characters in the novel are also very good athletes. Marty Tothero was also once sports man and he is Harry's basketball coach where as Ronnie Harrison was the competitor of Harry. The another

character, Jack Eccles is a golf player who once plays golf with Rabbit. He usually plays golf with his churchgoers so he can be pal to them. Tothero basketball coach is often praised by Rabbit in the novel. "He was terrific," Rabbit says to Tothero. "He was the greatest coach in the country. I would have been nothing without him".

Rabbit admits that Tothero has a great hand in his athletic career. It also depicts how the protagonist Rabbit and other male characters in the novel have strong physicality. Most of them possess athletic quality and this quality is enclosed in them from the childhood itself. We can notice that Rabbit's son Nelson also loves to play. The male characters seem to be aware about the fact that games and sports keep our mind, body and heart healthy.

In traditional concept of masculinity men are supposed to be strong, powerful and dominant in the family and society. The Collin's Thesaurus defines masculinity as male, manful, manlike, manly, virile, bold, brave, butch, gallant, macho, muscular, powerful, robasque, red blooded, resolute, robust, stout hearted, strong, vigorous, well built. This very definition of masculinity seems to empower man endowing the qualities of violence and aggression as a means to dominate and control women who are weak, submissive and subordinated. Traditional concept of masculinity assumes power and violence are some of the instruments of male to overpower women proving the superiority of masculinity over femininity. Tim Edwards supports this idea by asserting that "from the point of view of too for many people's men's prosperity towards violence is a direct outcome of their maleness or in short their biology men have always been more violent than women and always will be; it is in their nature" (44). These lines too consolidate the ideal that majority of violence is committed by males. The similar situation can be observed in the novel. Where the male characters including the protagonist are rather violent and aggressive and the females become the

victim of the physical and verbal violence from the side of men. The following dialogue in the novel displays the verbal violence of the protagonist upon his wife.

Rabbit asks, "Where's the kid?"

"At your mother's".

"At my mother's? The car's at your mother's and the kid's at my mother's Jesus. You're a mess". (13)

Rabbit sounds very violent, His language exposes the rude male violence upon the females which is just the continuation of masculinity. Rabbit is angry because Janice has left their child at her mother's but he doesn't try to understand the situation. The female characters in the novel have no other options than to endure the domination and violence. The resistance from the females is not valued. Like the traditional figure of violent and aggressive male, Rabbit's aggression is visible when the author reveals his character:

Ruth is in no humor to see it, "well you are a nut," she says. It annoys him that she is too dumb to see that he is really sore. The way she shook her head "No" at him when he was gagging it up annoys him; his mind goes back over the minute again and again and every time snags on it. He is angry about so many things he doesn't know where to begin; the only things clear is he's going to give her hell. "So you and that bastard went to Atlantic city together". (189)

The aggression of the male characters is quite obvious in various situations. Rabbit can't stand to hear that Ruth and Harrison had once gone to Atlantic city together. Ruth's every word and behaviour annoy him,. Rabbit is just simply angry about so many things and this conforms that he wants to assert his masculinity. Similarly, when Rabbit encounters his sister Mirriam with her date on her arm in a restaurant

distressed by the sight, approaches her and asks her what she is doing in such a seedy place. Confronted by Mirriam's companion, Rabbit forcefully shaves him away and walks brusquely of. This incident shows the violent attitude of the protagonist.

Violence and aggression are pervasive in almost all the male characters in this novel. The female characters become the victim of the males violence. Throughout the novel, we can visualize that the females are begging with the males for the normal behavior but the males in the novel are totally guided by the traditional masculine ethics which always dooms the females suffer. Janice, Rabbit's wife begs with Rabbit many times for not to leave the family and home but, Rabbit, being violent and aggressive doesn't listen to his wife and goes out.

Warrior has always been the archetype of man. The male characters in the novel possess warlike quality. Updike's male characters have experienced war.

"No, I think of the war as world war Two"

"So do I! So do I! Do you really remember it?"

"Sure, I mean I was pretty old. I flattened tin can and bought war stamp and we got awards at grade school".

"Our son was killed"

"Oh he was old, he was old. He was almost forty. They made him an officer right off."

"Still —"

"I know, you think of only young men being killed."

"Yeah, you do." (145)

Mrs. Smith had lost her son in the Second World War. Similarly Rabbit says he got tin can and bought war stamp. They also discuss that the war took the lives of men. It shows that only men participated in the war because the society denied the women for



this act believing that they are not strong enough to participate. This is how the male characters in the novel conform the masculine traits of courage, responsibility, fixity and determination. It is visible that only the male characters seem to have that strength to participate all sort of hard and difficult works as stated by Kristen Dellinger:

What does it mean to be masculine! It means obviously holding male norms, values and following male behavior. Male norms stress values such as courage, inner direction, certain forms of aggression, autonomy, mastery technological skill, solidarity, adventure and a considerable amount of toughness in mind and body. (17)

Patricia Sexton associates masculinity with solidarity, adventure and toughness in body and this association is seen in the novel in which Updike gives warlike qualities only to males presenting the women to be weaker than men.

So far we have discussed about physicality, one of the tools to prove the reflection of traditional form of masculinity in the novel. The another important angle to expose traditional masculinity in the novel is intellectuality. This angle is related to the sphere of educational enlightenment. Traditionally masculine gender identity encompasses the masculine virtues of rationality and intellectuality having quest for knowledge for carrier development. Masculinity legitimizes, maintains and justifies the male monopoly of positions of economic, educational, social and political power and keeps women powerless by denying them the educational and occupational means of acquiring economic, social and political and social power. The very conventional idea of masculine supremacy in terms of educational access continues in the novel due to the limitations and boundaries created by the masculine society. The ideal picture of male as the bearer of reason and intellectuality being leader of his family

and society is portrayed here. John Updike presents the traditional and conventional figure of male characters regarding the academic and intellectual gain. The intellectual traits of farsightedness, right judgement, and correct decisions are portrayed to be male's qualities.

Intellectuality or rationality is an important topic that is mostly linked with male and masculinity. M.H. Abrams points out masculine nature and traits saying, "the masculine in our culture has come to be identified as active, dominating, adventurous, rational, creative, the feminine by systematic oppositions to such traits has come to be identified as passive, acquiescent, timid, emotional and conventional" (235). Masculinity idealizes man endowing superior intellectuality or rationality. Quite similar to the traditional ideology of masculinity, there is the superior position of the male characters including the protagonist in the novel. The close observation of the issues and the study of the characters in the novel conforms that intellectuality is attached to males than to female characters. The novel established male and intellectual where as females as less intellectual. Not only this much, we can notice that female characters are often compared with animals or the irrational creatures. This unfair comparison is a very strong evidence for us to prove the theme of masculinity in the novel. The presence of intellectuality in the male characters and especially the protagonist in the novel is supported by Amulya Kishore Purohit:

Every choice of Rabbit's is a "growth" choice, which makes him an existential personality. He shows the decided personal growth and maturity of a self-actualized person. If self actualization is an ongoing process that ha no ending. The novel's ending. [H]e runs, ah; runs, runs" (249) emphasizes. Rabbit's attainment of the state of dynamic

equilibrium and his continuing march toward the self that he really is.

(230)

The intellectuality of the protagonist is highly praised by Purohit. The activities of the protagonist have been justified in the name of personal growth and maturity of self-actualization. Rabbit's act of running is his intellectual desire to grow and gain something important in life. It shows that Rabbit is a real traditional masculine hero endowed with intellectual quality. He succeeds to meet the criteria of masculine ethos as described by traditional masculinity. On the other hand the female characters in the novel are presented to be submissive and less intellectual than males, Rabbit, possesses the ability to think in a logical way and understands things where as Janice happens to make big mistakes because she is not able to make the correct judgements. In the novel, wife escapes the problems with a drink but the husband runs to find out the solution. Janice's smoking habit can be visualized from the following lines:

Janice asks, "Harry, do you have a cigarette? I'm out."

"Huh? Oh the way home I threw my pack into a garbage can. I'm giving it up." He wonders how anybody could think of smoking with this stomach on edge the way it is. (11)

Similarly, the another female character in the novel, Ruth is also a smoker which is stated in the following narration, "she draws a cigarette from the turquoise pack of Newport's and hangs it between her organize lips and frowns the sulphur tip as she strikes a match, with curious feminine clumsiness" (59). The smoking habit of Ruth and Janice, the major female characters in the novel depict the lack of rationality in females which supports the theme of masculinity in the novel. The male characters especially the protagonist conform the traditional ethics of masculinity because of his rational, intellectual and responsible behaviour towards his family. Rabbits, being

aware of the fact of smoking cannot be the solution of the existing problems in his life gives up this smoking habit and he is always in search of an appropriate way out. But Janice his wife lacks personal growth and maturity. She frequently shows childish behaviour in the novel. Instead of being serious toward the problem, she asks for cigarette. It shows that the female characters lack seriousness and maturity. In addition to smoking Janice has alcoholic habit. Despite of talking about the crisis in their marriage and the family, Janice escapes the problems with the help of cigarette alcohol. It proves that she is irrational and irresponsible wife.

Rabbit, discovering the crisis in his marriage and family life because of his wife's smoking and alcoholic Rabbit, decides to run from his family in search of solution. Since Rabbit is presented as a traditional masculine hero, he possesses the quality described by conventional masculinity. He endows the masculine ethics like rationality, intellectuality and responsibility. He knows that smoke and alcohol can not be the ultimate way out to his problems so he runs out to erase the crisis in his life. Janice thus is an escapist who tries to avoid her responsibility and hide her weaknesses whereas Rabbits is a masculine hero with fixity, determination, mission and destination. Rabbit's rationality and intellectuality is reflect in the following dialogue between him and Tothero, his old basketball coach in the course of his journey for a perfect solution to his problems:

"I need your advice," Rabbit says, and corrects himself. "What I really need right now is a place to sleep."

What's happened to your home?"

Well, it kind of went."

"How do you mean?"

"I don't know. My wife's an alcoholic."

"And to have you tried to help her?"

"Sure, How?"

"You asked me for two things," he says, "Two things. A place to sleep, provided, Harry, that when you wake up the two of us have a serious, a long and serious talk about this crisis in your marriage" (445)

Rabbit and Tothero, the male characters possess intellectual strength. Rabbit is in a journey with reasonable mission, ambition and destination. This mission is to find out a way out to the crisis in his life. Rabbit is not a escapist like Janice but he tries to seek the solution. So he goes to his old coach, Tothero for advice. They are going to solve the problem of crisis in Rabbit's marriage through discussions. It displays the fact that the novel reflects the traditional form of masculinity. Rabbit and Tothero, both the major male characters in the novel are very intelligent. When Rabbit tells him about the alcoholic habit of his wife. Tothero assures him that they will have a long and serious talk about the problem. It shows Rabbit is very serious about the crisis in his life and he truly wants to solve the problems so that he can again continue the better family relations. This incident shows that the protagonist conforms the masculine trait of intellectuality. In this regard David J. Fekete states, "In it, Harry Angstrom confronts the vortex of vacuous genres from the modern age, which is at its end, and seeks an appropriate vocabulary to give voice to his institutions as society is beginning to speak in new ways" (27). Rabbit is aware about the changes in the society so he is learning to speak in new ways appropriate to the changing society. He selects the correct vocabulary to give voice to his intuition which emphasizes the fact that he is very intelligent and matured. The traditional figure of masculine hero is portrayed in the novel.

The male characters in the novel possess the masculine trait of intellectuality. Their intellectual quality has been portrayed in various forms. The male not only make the right judgements and correct decisions, they also fulfill their responsibility in every field. Rabbit, a husband and a father does not ignore his responsibility rather he is a responsible husband and father. The females in the novel often escape the responsibilities in their life and seek for the alternative way but the males are aware about their duties and responsibilities. Anne Cranny-Francis and Wendy Waring state, "women are stereotyped as emotional, nurturing, sensitive whereas men are taken as removed, rational, responsible and authoritative" (145). It empowers men as commander, provider, protector of women and women are defined to be obedient, submissive and dependent. Their definition clearly gives subordinate position to women. According to the traditional form of masculinity, the males are thought to be more responsible for their family, wife and children, women, being irrational lack the sense of responsibility. Males are expected to bear the family responsibility as a son, brother, husband and father. The conventional role of gender role seems to be deeply rooted in the novel. The protagonist, Rabbit and other male characters are traditional figure of masculinity. Traditional concept of masculinity assumes husband as a head of his family. He is expected to support, protect, control, console to his wife and children when it is headed and the same notion seems to be confirmed through the portrayal of a masculine husband and a father in the novel.

Rabbit, Tothero, Eccles and other male characters in the novel are bestowed with masculine trait of responsibility. Rabbit's matured and responsible behavior is disclosed in the following line. "He wonders where his son slept, what Janice has done, where his parents and her parents haunted" (42). It visualizes that Rabbit is a traditional masculine hero who has the capacity to realize his responsibilities. It shows

that Rabbit is a responsible father, husband, son and son in law. He is not only worried about his parents, his is also equally responsible for his parent in laws. He truly represents the traditional masculinity. In comparison to the males, the female characters are less responsible. They do not understand their responsibilities, rather they try to escape the responsibilities with the help of cigarettes and alcoholic drinks. The females are alcoholic where as the males are intellectual and responsible. When Rabbit leaves his family in search of solution to be existing problems in his life, he is much worried about this family members, his wife, parents and children. Rabbit does not leave the home willingly the situation corrpels him to do so and he, when reaches to Tothero for advice wonders how his son has slept. He knows his family is undergoing a big crisis but as a responsible father, he runs to collect the advice from his old coach Tothero so that he can settle the crisis. It shows that Rabbit reflects the traditional masculinity in the novel.

The traditional form of masculinity is reflected in the following telephone conversation between Jack Eccles, a minister and Rabbit at the time of her wife's delivery. Rabbit sounds to be a responsible husband and father.

"Harry your wife has started to have the baby. Her mother called her around the eight and I just go in"

"Yeah," the other breathers in the far corner of the darkness, "I guess I ought to go to her,"

"I with you could."

"I guess I should. It's mine I mean too."

"Exactly, I 'll meet you there. It's St. Joseph's in Brewer, You know where that is?"

"Yes sure I can walk in ten minutes."

"You want me to pick you up in the car?"

"No, I'll walk it."(197)

Rabbit is very excited during the delivery of his child. He is not a man who escapes the responsibilities. He is pleased to hear that his wife is going to have a baby. He says he should go to his wife because it is his child too. When Jack asks if he wants him to pick him up in the car, Rabbit replies he does not because he just prefers to walk there because of excitement. Mr. Eccles says he is very proud of Rabbit which even adds to the beauty of his masculine traits. The society expects males to be more intellectual than females. Conforming to the same traditional notion of masculinity, we can realize that the female characters are not given the responsible position in the novel neither they are given some intellectual tasks in their life. The female characters in the novel are just confined to filthy household chores and they lack maturity. The tone of maturity and rationality with sense of responsibility can be felt in the male characters only.

When Rabbit reaches to hospital to see his wife, he reacts so gently as a responsible husband. His gentle behaviour can be perceived when he approaches his wife with much love, care and affection:

"Hey," he says, and goes over to kiss her, intending it so gently. He bends as you would bend to a glass flower. Her mouth swims in the sweet stink of either. To his surprise her arms come out from the sheets and she puts them around his head and presses his face down into her soft happy swimming mouth. "Hey they it easy," he says (210)

The masculinity ethics can be noticed during Rabbit's talk with Janice. He possesses the sense of responsibility which enables him to behave so gently with his wife. He realizes that just after the delivery, her wife is much weak and delicate and because



of which he kisses her softly . Traditional gender role is at function her as the presence of husband or male makes a woman complete and happy. Janice also seems to be very happy to see her husband there as hugs her husband lovingly. Being a father figure Rabbit console her to take the things easy. It shows maturity, responsibility and proper judgement of the protagonist are the indispensable elements of traditional masculinity and these elements exist in the male characters in the novel.

Responsibility as a masculine trait is portrayed in the novel through the protagonist. Rabbit is not only a responsible husband, he also fulfills his responsibilities as a father. During the time he spends with Tothero, he is more concerned about his family. He is a strong and bold husband, who is successful to carry his responsibilities of consoling his bereaved wife, son and parents. In this apartment, before going to bed, Rabbit stands Nelson in front of the toilet, running the faucet and stroking the taut bare bottom until wee-wee-springs from the child's irritated sleep and jerkily princes into the bowl. Then he wraps a diaper round Nelson's middle and returns him to the crib and braces himself to leap the deep gulf. The traditional form of masculinity is reflected here when Rabbit establishes himself as a responsible father. At the time of Jane's death Rabbit does not step back to fulfill any of his responsibilities. He comforts his wife and performs the funeral functions, appropriately. He goes to the cemetery. He and his father and Janice's father and the under-taker's man carry the white box to the hearse. It clearly depicts that Rabbit succeeds to fulfill all the responsibilities as defined by the traditional form of masculinity.

Traditional concept of masculinity assumes husband as a provider to his family. It is his responsibility to look after his family and provides the necessary support and care. The ideal image of masculine hero is presented in the novel through

the portrayed of responsible father and husband. The female characters here seem to be irrational and irresponsible and they don't bear the family responsibilities as the males in the novel. The female without male's characters are timid and weak and they can't bear even their own expenses. The females here totally depend upon males for the economic support. They depend either upon their husbands or fathers where as a man is expected to be a good husband and responsible head of the family who plays the role of provider, protector and guardian of his family. Rabbit conforms the masculine trait of independent man. He is responsible towards his role in the family. The protagonist, Rabbit, is portrayed as a masculine hero and as independent man who fulfills also his duty in his family whereas females are presented to be parasitic dependent. Rabbit sounds to be a careful father when he is worried about his family. Rabbit earns money to feed his wife and child and to fulfill their necessary demands. Rabbit's responsible behaviour has been further illustrated in a situation when his wife couldn't pay the apartment rent for so long:

"I thought Nelson and me would move into our apartment."

"I'm not sure you can. We didn't pay any rent on it for two months."

"Huh? You did not?"

I didn't have any money."(223)

The male characters are responsible in the matter of earning and payment. The females are not capable of earning for their family. When Janice says that she does not have money, we come to understand that in the novel only the males possess the quality of earning and looking after their family. Janice has to depend upon either her husband or her father. The females are only parasitic dependent. Later we come to know that Mr. Springer, Janice's father had been paying rent on the apartment all along, it turns out, he is personal friend of the landlord and had arranged it without

troubling his daughter. Rabbit does not only pay for his family, he also does not hesitate to pay at a restaurant. When the other friend leave, the waiter asks them about the payment and then Rabbit quickly replies that he is going to pay the bill. Ruth asks him if he is rich both he answers he is not. In every situation we notice that males pay for the expenses. When the Ruthy tells that she is stuck with all the rent, Rabbit is ready to help her:

"Well I'll tell you, why don't you let me give you something toward your rent?"

"Why should you do that?"

"Big heart, "He says, "Ten?"

"I need fifteen."

"For the light and gas, OK, Ok." (75)

Ruth besides Janice is also not capable of paying the rent of her apartment. The females always seek help from the males. More strikingly, Rabbit also pays the bill of her food, light, gas and other necessities. The males here conform the masculine ethics. Similarly, the females also follow the traditional gender role. We don't see themselves engaged in some important works. They are rather confined within the walls of their house. Only a few females earn for themselves and that too by engaging in some filthy and low rated jobs like prostitution. We further discover that Janice used to do the job as sales girls before their marriage but after her marriage she is stuck with the household activities. It provides that the male characters including the protagonist are more intellectual than females. All the males in the novel have their jobs and they are earnings. Rabbit in a situation says, "I demonstrate in a kitchen gadget called the Magipeel Peeler in five and dime stories." Rabbit frequently changes his job. Later he works in Mrs. Smit's garden. The another male character in the

novel, Mr. Springer, Janice's father is a businessman, The minor characters like Mr. Carolin and Mr. Ferry earn money for their family. Mr. Curalin has a job in Cleveland, Ohio and Mr. Ferry owns a shoe factory. On the other hand even the major female characters are jobless. As expected by the traditional gender role women are limited with the private sphere and house. They are only the typical housewife's. They are confined with in the household works like cooking, washing and cleaning and are economically dependent upon their husbands. I substantiates the argument that the characters in the novel continue the traditional gender role and the conventional division of labour where man works outside to earn money for his family whereas the females stay at home involving themselves in household chores, watching television or doing their makeup. Janice often forgets her other works while watching television. At one point, while watching television, "Janice gets up and turns off the set when the six-o'clock news tries to come on" (13). It depicts that Janice does not have any interest in watching news. Rather than watching the informative and news programmes, she is interested only in other programmes. It also proves that Janice is incapable of making right judgments and selections. She spends most of her time in make up which again justifies her irresponsible behaviours.

The sense of responsibility is only limited to the protagonist and other male characters in the novel. The females are just the parasitic dependent upon males. They don't even realize what responsibility is Rabbit's sense of humour and his correct indg can be felt in the following lines:

"Sell the car. Simplify your life. Get rich quick."

He explains. "You see, my wife's old man is a used car dealer and when we to married he sold us this car at a pretty big discount. So in a

way it's really my wife's car and any way wince she had the kid I think she ought to have it". (99)

Ruth being a female quickly makes a foolish decision and suggests Rabbit to get rich quickly selling his car but Rabbit who is always endowed with fixity and determination makes a sensible decision. This masculine ethics don't allow him sell the car gifted by his parent in laws. He thinks the car should be with Janice since she had child and the car actually belongs to her. It visibly shows that the Rabbit conforms the masculine ethics of responsibility. Though he is now a little further from his family but he always behaves broke a responsible man.

Besides his responsible behaviour, Rabbit is always a tidy worker. When Janice is presented to be very careless in every work, Rabbit works very carefully. Rabits' Janice's contrast in behaviour can e clearly sensed from the careful attitude of Rabbit and negligence of Janice:

Carefully he unfolds his coat and goes to the closet with it and take out a wire hanger He is careful not to kick the wire, which is plugged into a socket on the other side of the door. One time Janice who is especially clumsily when pregnant or drunk, got the wire wrapped around her foot and nearly pulled the set, a hundred and forty Jane dollar, down smash on the floor, Luckily he got to it while it was still rocking in the metal cradle and before Janice began kicking out in one of the panics. (10)

Rabbit is a order loving man and he works tidily whereas his wife is too much careless. Janice moves clumsily and entangles herself with the problems whereas Rabbit makes sure whether his activities will have result. It's because the females are less intellectual than men. Tothoro, the another man in the novel also has a tidy room.

In the six boxes are arranged shirts in their laundry cellophane, folded undershirts and shorts, socks balled in pairs, handkerchiefs, shred shoes and a leather backed brush with a comb stuck in the bristles. From two thick nails some sport coats, jarringly gay in pattern, are hung on hangers. He cares for his clothes. The newspapers and all kind of magazines, from the National Geographic to engage crime confessions and comic books, are stocked around.

Rabbit keeps all the things at proper place. In addition to the quality of keeping things in appropriate place, Rabbit is a male with fixed goal and determination. Since he is always a clean worker during his journey, he carries a map with him. So that he can reach to his destination. His intellectual quality is portrayed in the following way, "He stops at a gas station for two dollars worth of regular. What he really wants is another map. He unfolds it standing by a coke machine and reads it in the light through a window stained green by stocked cans of liquid wax." Rabbit in his journey always carries a map and this small act of him unfolds his rational behavior. He is a man with perfect vision. He has the sense of to study the problem and discover the solution for it. The women here lack all this rational quality. They don't have the sense of right judgement and correct decision. Guided by the emotions, women can't decide wrong and right. The wrong selection and decision of women can be noticed in Ruth's act of wearing heels while walking in the hill. The irrational behaviour of Ruth can be noticed in the following lines:

He marks her place with the blunt match and looks at her bare foot.

"Do you have speakers or anything? You can't wear heels."

"No, thilley I'm sleepy."

"Come on," he says, "Put on flat shoes and well get your hair dry."

"I'll have to wear heels, they're all I have". (117)

Rabbit is already aware about the fact that she's going to suffer on the way if she walks on heel. When they approach the mountain, footing is difficult for Ruth. She can't walk properly because of her heels. He always makes the right judgements but Ruth is not intellectual enough to understand the situation. Ruth shows her stupidity when she wears heels for climbing the hills. She should have found the other comfortable goes. Rabbit already alerts her regarding the problems but still she talks understanding so she suffers. This act of Ruth displays that males are more intellectual than females. Moreover the careless and stupid nature of the female characters is clearly revealed from Janice's act of drowning her child. When Rabbit abandons her again; Janice is hurt and depressed, and she starts drinking to dull the pain, Drinking all night and all the next day. Her mother is coming to visit her, and he tries to give the new baby a bath before the visit, but she is so drunk that she unintentionally lets the body drown in the bath. Rabbit, horrified and built-stricken over his child's death, goes back to Janice to lesson her difficulty and fulfill all of the father's responsibilities at his child's funeral, in this regard Amjlya Kishore Purohit writes:

A self-actualized man, he now has the courage to face the event: "A strange strength sinks down into him. It is as if he has been crawling in a cave and now at last beyond the dark recession of crawling rocks he has seen a patch of light, he turns, and Janice's face [. . .] blocks the light. 'Don't look at me,' he says, I didn't kill her". (238)

Purohit admits that Rabbit is a man who is strong enough to face the event. He is able to see the truth when others around him cannot. He realises the truth that he is guiltless and very strongly he announces that he didn't kill his child. The facts that Janice blocks the light where as Rabbit is able to see the truth are associated with

masculine intellectuality. Rabbit can see the truth when those around him cannot means, Rabbit in a true sense a traditional masculine hero.

Intellectuality, which has always been one of the important masculine trait, has been here connected with the men in the novel whereas the women are supposed to be irrational and unintellectual. As the traditional masculinity expects, Rabbit and other males hold the superior position. On the other hand the women are often treated as animal. The women here are often addressed as monkey, dog or horse. Almost all the female characters are treated as animals by males.

"Do you realize, Harry, that a young women has hair in every part of her body?"

"I don't thought about it." Distaste stains his throat.

"Do," Tothero say, "Do think about it. They are monkeys, Harry.

Women are monkeys". (55)

Tothero directly addresses women as monkeys just because they have hair in their body parts which is actually common to men also. Tothero's expression is the outcome of traditional masculinity which prioritize male's intelligence and assumes women to b irrational like animals. The situation also justified the dominated and nonsense position of the women. Women here are devoid of intelligence. In addition to this, Ruth, in one situation is compared with dog. Updike describes Rut as "a dog with a scrap" (83). When she shakes her head crossly. Moreover when Rabbit calls Ruth a horse, it even strengthens the argument that the women in the novel are given animalistic traits:

"My queen," he says, "My good horse."

"your what?"

"Horse." (118)



Rabbit's selection of words for females substantiates the arguments that the novel reflects the traditional form of masculinity. Rabbit is a masculine hero bestowed with masculine quality of intellectuality. The traditional assumption of man to be technical, executive and judicial has been conformed here through Rabbit and other males.

Rabbit possesses the masculine norms and ethics as defined by R.W. Connell:

With masculinity defined as a character structure marked by rationality, and western civilization defined as the bearer of reason to a benighted world, a cultural link, a cultural link between the legitimization of patriarchy and the legitimization of empire was forged. (246)

R.W. Connell clearly attaches the quality of rationality to masculinity and as stated by Connell, we can discover that only the males possess this quality in the novel since the women lack the sense of responsibility, right judgement, fixity, determination and devotion at their duties. All these facts makes it as obvious as broad day light that through the protagonist Rabbit and other male characters, the novel reflects the traditional form of masculinity. This proves that 1950s American society was purely based on masculine ethics in which a male was a role model for his family and the family adopted the traditional gender role where man was a provider and protector and women were just confined to kitchen. The female characters like Janice, Ruth and Mrs. Eccless, all are better cook and they don't have better job to do. When Rut serves lunch he sees she is better cook than Janice. The women are compared in some filthy works like cooking. At another point, Mr. Angstrom sits down in his white shirt at a porcelain kitchen table and Mrs. Angstrom sets about heating coffee to her husband. This small act of services seems to bring her into harmony with him. Moreover, it has been given here a hierarchical position between God, men and women where men are

the ruler where as the women are ruled. The conversation below between Mrs. Angstrom and Mrs. Eccles make it even clearer:

"All soft heart. I suppose that's why men rule the world. They're all heart."

"That's an unusual view."

"Is it? It's why they keep telling you in Church. Men are all heart and women are all body. I don't know who's supposed to have the brains, God, I suppose." (166)

Mrs. Angstrom and Mrs. Eccles themselves being the female characters in the novel place man and masculinity nearer to God whereas women are all body. It means women lack the capacity to think Men are superior beings and they rule the world. The hierarchy created in the above lines justifies the argument that the male characters conform the masculine norms and values. Portrayal of male characters confirming the traditional masculine ethos in indication of traditional masculinity in the novel.

Masculinity believes that men are the provider and protector of the family with the sense of responsibility. As assumed by the traditional form of masculinity, the male characters here possess the masculine ethics but the women lack the intellectual qualities like correct judgements, sense of responsibility, fixity and determination. Women can't even think what is right and what is wrong, nor they are the clean workers. All of the males in the novel have their job and they are fulfilling their duties at home and even outside but most of the women are jobless and some are engaged in low rated job like prostitution. The women are completely under the intellectual control of men. Thus, the traditional masculine ethos of provider ethics is dominating in the novel. The men are responsible for their wife, children, parents and also parent-

in-laws. Besides this, men go to the root of the problems and look for the solution whereas women escape the problem with intoxication. Presentation of man as a clean worker, responsible and rational being, the novel conforms the traditional forms of masculinity to be in vogue in 1950s America.

There is yet another angle to the theme of masculinity crisis in *Rabbit, Run*. This angle is related to the sphere of sexuality. Anne Cranny Francis defines sexuality as "a set of practices which produce and organize the structure and expression of desire" (9). The traditional form of masculinity is believed to be highly dominant over females. Traditional society expects females to be shy, timid, passive and submissive in terms of sexuality whereas the males are taken to be highly active and domineering. We can observe the automatic link between dominance and the male, and the submission and the female which is nothing other than the continuation of traditional form of masculinity. Men are on the side of the public; women hidden. Oppression of women in terms of sexuality can be clearly visualized through the study of the characters. The traditional masculinity takes men as success objects whereas females as sex objects. Expression of desire is only limited to male and it is believed that women can not freely express their desires especially related to sexuality. For the same reason those women who have quite liberal thoughts regarding sexuality are considered to be prostitute or low rated persons. Traditional form of masculinity or patriarchal society gives no boundary for men in expression of desire but women's voice is not digested. A man can have as many girls as he wants; a woman can't have a free sexual life. Continuation of same tradition can be found in the novel since Rabbit and other males conform traditional assumption of man and masculinity.

Regarding sexuality male sexuality is always defined as superior to female sexuality. Anne Cranny Francis states, "Female sexuality is naturally marked as

naturally masochistic, narcissist and passive; male sexuality inscribed a naturally aggressive sadistic and active" (7). Traditional notion of women's sexuality denies them expression of desire and makes it synonymous with her reproductive function. It is believed that sexual power is one of the most important instrument of male to overpower women. Women are sexually exploited and used as sex objects but they have failed to resist against men. Though some women like Ruth and Janice try some kind of resistance but the resistance is undermined and not valued. The husbands want to consume the wife sexually and the women endure all sort of brutal attempts to males. In terms of sexuality too, men are more powerful than women since they are free live their sexual life. As the traditional form of masculinity provides all types of freedom to men, they try every sexual activity to fulfill their lust. The brutal form of forced sexual advance is the consequence of traditional masculinity which can be noticed in the novel. The female characters always have to surrender before the sexual desires of males. They live in the way men like. In addition to this, sexuality here is addressed as love or the process of self actualization. Surrender of female characters in front of males is a striking example of masculinity. Despite of unnatural sexual life, sexuality here has been justified relating it with spirituality. In this regard Lister and Rachael write, "Sex becomes more than simply an act of lust, though it is never quite associated with love; instead, it emerges as an almost religious process, though which two humans strive to seek or create invisible bond" (6). Sex is connected with spirituality when Lister and Rachael say that sex in the novel emerges as an almost religious process. Very uncommon and unnatural sexual activities in the novel are just ignored because of masculine ethics. The strength of traditional masculinity is depicted here. Sexual freedom is only associated with the males and the sexuality here is regarded as genuine and spiritual

Traditional form of masculinity in terms of sexuality becomes crystal clear through Rabbit's gaze. The male characters are free to observe the female bodies and to have sexual relationship with them. As the traditional masculinity believes man to be free and independent from every angle, the male characters in the novel also have the free choice of sexual life. But the women are deprived of having free and open sexual life. The woman who is little more liberal is called to be prostitution. In terms of sexuality also men are given powerful position which supports of our argument. The protagonist Rabbit always seeks to consume female bodies wherever he gets a chance. In the same society where when a woman spends a night with other male besides her husband is addressed as prostitute, a man can freely have sexual relationship with the girls other than his wife and the wife easily forgives this husband's behavior. This is the power of traditional masculinity which is seen to be prevalent in 1950s American society. In the novel, Ruth, and Margaret who spend the nights with boys are called to be prostitutes and these prostitutes are denied the life of respect and dignity in the society. But the males who visit these prostitutes are the respected citizens of the society. This is nothing other than the magic of masculinity which always decides everything in favour of males in the society. The protagonist Rabbit's sexual power can be seen in the protagonist's various activities:

"Oh all the world loves you," Ruth says suddenly. "What I wonder is why?"

"I'm loveable," he says.

"I mean why you. What's so special about you?"

"I'm a saint," he says, "I give people faith." (149-50)

Ruth wonders why all the world loves him. Rabbit does not miss a chance to stare the girls and even the girls love him so much. Rabbit believes himself to be special as he

says he gives faith to the people. These above lines depict masculine power of sexuality because of which many girls are attracted towards Rabbit. Though Rabbit is loveable and many girls get tempted because of his masculine physique, they can't express their feelings as frankly as the males because traditional masculinity renames them to be prostitute. Besides Rabbit Marthy Tothoro is another male character who very often visits a prostitute named Margaret and yet he has the life of dignity and honour. Even the wives don't have any sort of complains because their voice is left unheard. More strikingly Peggy Fosnacht tells Rabbit is leading the life of Riley with many women.

Traditional form of sexuality is based on the ideology of compulsion of marital heterosexuality with male dominance over women. Woman is expected to have a limited sexual life only with her husband whereas a man can have much more freedom. The woman who is even suspected to have sexual relationship with males other than her husband is quickly outcasted from the society giving her a batch of adultery but the male is always forgiven by his wife, family, society and even God or Heaven. The act of love and the search for God are presented here as the two sides of the same coin, and Rabbit's apparently shallow sexual adventure is also a spiritual one as shown in the context when Rabbit sees the Church through the window of Ruth's apartment. Direct light falls on Ruth's face. When Rabbit goes to the window and bends to see, he sees the Church across the way.<sup>1</sup> After some time "from deep in the pillow, he stares at the horizontal strip of stained-glass Church window that shows beneath the window shade. Its brightness comes from years away" (90). The frequent association of Church with the night Rabbit and Ruth spend at Ruth's apartment reveals the truth that Rabbit's relationship with other girls is accepted by the God himself. The next morning "Church bells ring loudly" (93) as if to bless them. Rabbit

makes love to Ruth and that accepted by all. To Rabbit, the experience is spiritually rewarding.

Traditionally, sex is the weapon of male to prove his ultimate supremacy and the male characters in the novel conform the same ethics. The female characters such as Ruth, Janice and Margaret are totally dependent upon the males. They surrender themselves before the male power and traditional masculinity. On the other hand, males have made women as puppets in their hands. The stereotypical image of women as a possessive sex object being coy and obedient receiver and male as strong and active performer seems to be prevalent in 1950s American society due to the silent and obedient behavior of Janice and Ruth. They don't have their own choice. They silently accept the situation through it is not their favour but males always have the options and they have the power to sexually dominate the females. The protagonist's supremacy and the women's inferior position in terms of sexuality can be observed in the conversation between Rabbit and Ruth during their first night stay.

"I have to do something else, too."

"Don't do it. I know what it is. I hate them."

"You don't even feel it."

"But I know it's here. Like a rubber kidney or something." Rut laughs.

"Well aren't you choice/ Do you have the answer then?"

"No I hate them even worse."

"Look. I don't know what you think your fifteen dollar entitles you to, but I got to protect myself."

"If you've going to put a lot of gadgets in this, give me the fifteen back."

"Come on." Ruth says, in a voice slightly tense with the fear of talking, his weight pinning her leg. "Get into bed." (80-81)

Rabbit though married man, is choosing after younger women without a hint of remorse. Traditional strength of masculinity is revealed there when Rabbit has the sexual relationship with Ruth, a prostitute. Ruth is a clear picture of a oppressed, suppressed and dominated woman. In the scene above, Truth wants to go to the John to get contraceptive. She wants to use contraceptive, but Rabbit asks her not to and refuses to wear a condom. Ruth reluctantly gives in to his demands. This incident is tremendously important to our claim as it shows that only the males have their choices and options where as the females have to agree with their conditions though may not be appropriate for them. Though Ruth is feeling that it is unsafe and needs to protect herself, but can do nothing before Rabbit's insist. Eventually she is ready to get into bed and Rabbit loves her as if he did with his wife, Janice. Rabbit seems to be proud to have spend the nights with the prostitute since he has no feeling of regret. Rabbit seems to be representing traditional masculine ethics.

Rabbit's eyes scan over every detail women's bodies, even though his heart allegedly belongs to another. While writing for Janice in the hospital the day after the birth of his second child, Rabbit notices the beautiful gray hair and somehow silver, finely wrinkled skin of Marty Tothoro's wife. Besides this when Rabbit goes to Mrs. Smith's house, he sees a portrait being hung on the wall and shares at it through his sexual eyes. He moves a few steps closer to get a less oblique views and finds that, "She has that short puffy little upper lip that is so good in a girl: the way it lifts to let a dab of dark come between her lips. There is this readiness above her all over. He feels that she's about to get out of the chair and step forward toward him" (229). Rabbit sounds a perpetual voyeur. His gaze is associated with potential sexual adventures.



Traditionally masculinity restricts a woman from staring at the males where as males have supreme power and control over females. Once when Rabbit goes to Eccle's house, he doesn't feel the need to stop himself from scanning Lucy Eccle's body. "He looks up to Lucy Eccles blossom, two pointed bumps under a buttoned blouse that shows through its summer wearer the white shadows of the bra" (219). Though Rabbit keeps observing female bodies, the female can't protest it as harassment since their voice is sure to be a drop in the ocean. Unwillingly the females accept the situation.

The reluctant silence of the women can be noticed in a context when at Jack's house, Rabbit slaps Lucy Eccles Sassy ass. "Not hard: a cupping hit, rebuke and fond pat both, well placed on the pocket"(124). She swiftly pivotes, swinging her backside to safety behind her. Mrs. Eccles would have told her husband or scolded him for his act but she remains silent and doesn't complain to anyone. Her silence is a proof of traditional form of masculinity in the novel. The female characters become the victim of sex many times in the novel. One night Rabbit and Ruth go out to club castanet on the south side of Brewer. Rabbit becomes unhappy because of his sister's affair with a young man and Ruth's with Harrison. This context clearly visualizes the fact that males have freedom to have sexual life. Rabbit being himself with a prostitute can't tolerate seeing his sister with a boyfriend. Being distressed and angry, he asks her (Ruth) to go out from the club. Rabbit humiliates her asking her previous relation with Harrison:

"Did you blow guys?"

"The answer to your question is yes."

"Harrison? What all did you do with him?"

"Oh, I don't know, what do you do? You make love, you try to get close to somebody."

"Well would you do everything to me that you did to him?"

This stuns her skin in a curious way, makes it contract so that her body feels squeezed and sickened inside it. "Sure. If you want me to". (192-93)

Rabbit is highly possessive. His conversation with Ruth is one of the striking evidence to support our argument. Though unwillingly, Ruth accepts to perform the same sexual activity that she had performed to Harrison. Despite of knowing that she is a prostitute, Rabbit asks her about her past simply to depict the masculine strength. As the traditional form of masculinity expects, the protagonist insists in knowing about the past of Ruth though he himself is married. Rabbit's love here has been praised by David J. Fekete. he writes:"Initially Rabbit embodies Eliot's typist, for whom eroticism is a mechanical exercise without meaning. But Rabbit's overwhelming believe in love and his ardor Ruth transform her feelings about him and about eroticism" (75). In this expression we can find the appreciation of Rabbit's love whereas Ruth has been given subordinate position.

Extreme form of traditional masculinity is reflected in a situation when Rabbit forcefully tries to have sexual relationship with his wife. Though Janice has undergone the critical condition of delivery, Rabbit tries to keep the relationship with her undermining her pain. This is the brutal form of sexuality which is easily accepted by the female characters in the novel. Rabbit, overwhelmed by lust wants to sleep with his wife soon after the delivery of their child. he kisses her dark, hard face scented with alcohol. Rabbit ignores the sign of rejection in his wife's face. Janice is not even fully aware about what her husband is trying to do. A husband's forceful sexual attempt can be visualized in Rabbit's attempt to have sexual relationship with his wife:

"You can do something."

"No I can't. Not for six weeks. You know that."

"Yeah. I know, but I though...Just a touch, Jan. Let me touch you."

"No I can't."

"Damn it," he says, "that is the first thing I have asked from you since you came home."

"Why can't you imagine how I feel. And I feel like getting out."

"Don't. Harry. Don't. Oh for God's sake," she cries, and flounces under the covers, and smashes her face down into her pillow. (254-55)

As the traditional form of masculinity assumes, the dialogue above is evidence to substantiate that *Rabbit, Run* depicts that masculine power existed in 1950s American society. In terms of sexuality too, males seem to be more powerful than women. The dominated position of women and the domineering position of males can be easily sensed when Janice requests her husband not to leave her even though he is mistreating her. It reveals the truth that females in the novel are totally dependant on males.

The novel conforms the masculine ethics in terms of sexuality. traditional form of sexuality is based on marital heterosexuality where the females are expected to be coy, shy and obedient. In addition to this, John Updike writes, "Now Rabbit is intermittently careless, walks out of bathroom naked, lets her straps hang down while she burps the baby, seems to accept herself with casual gratitude as a machine, a white pliant machine for fucking, hatching, feeding" (241). This very comment on females sufficiently proves our argument.

Thus Updike's *Rabbit, Run* reflects traditional form of masculinity in terms of physicality, intellectuality and sexuality. When we observe the novel through the lens

of traditional masculinity, we discover that males are physically, rationally and sexually more powerful than females. Men's privileged position and women's subordinated position in every arena makes the novel full of masculine ethos. As defined by traditional masculinity, women are limited within the household chores and some filthy jobs whereas the males are the provider and protector of a family with the full sense of responsibility.

### III. Influence of Masculinity

Fermenting a masculinity which is based on a conventional belief that it is the male who holds a superior position in the society in private and public spheres of life, John Updike implicitly undermines the sufferings of Janice including those of other female characters in *Rabbit Run*. The whole research focuses on Updike's attempts on making Rabbit a man, as most of his contemporary fictions do, exploiting theories on masculinity and gender propagated through theorists from Anne-Cranny Francis to Rachel Adams and David Savran. The process of research follows an attempt to unmark literary attempt of Updike in *Rabbit Run* whose role endeavour is to create a vehicle through which masculinity is institutionalized. The instances of protagonist's superior position demonstrates how gender pervaded in western culture during mid twentieth century- with its standard privileging of masculinity as is the case with Rabbit. Though Updike created one of the active heroines in his fiction, Janice, wife of Rabbit a female with robust high spirits-remains subdued in her own narrative of sufferings because of existing masculine ethics as the reader is compelled to follow her hardships from natural to physical. The resistance from females is always left unheard or made silent. Why Janice's spirit throughout the novel remains calm and undemonstrative, and imaginative is because she is created under the parameters of traditional form of masculinity. The female characters are denied their agency, identity and existence. Drawing upon gender studies, this research focuses on how gender and masculinity is employed in regulative and tactical forms within American society that Updike has carved in the novel, *Rabbit Run*. It examines how masculinity is institutionalized in the novel through the internal discourses of physicality, intellectuality and sexuality. The novel demonstrated how, on the basis of the normalization of masculinity, male characters are able to regulate female characters

through their domineering position in every arena of life. Updike's Rabbit prioritizes masculinity as the norm through the organizational structure and pedagogy of education.

Masculinity is a social system in which structural differences in privilege, power and authority are invested in masculinity and the cultural, economic and/or social positions of men. Women are excluded from power and authority. As a consequence of this, men strive for an excessive masculinity, whether signified by a huge, muscular body, an impressive sexual scorecard, a powerful car or a high flying job, acts of violence towards women and children, as an attempt to assert their masculinity in the eyes of their fellows. Rabbit becomes able to meet the parameters constructed by the traditional form of masculinity. On the other hand women become the victims of masculine ethos.

Thus, evidences and testimonies of traditional form of masculinity in the novel, *Rabbit Run* have been assembled through the analysis of physicality, intellectuality and sexuality along with the underestimated resistances of a few of the women of mid twentieth century America.

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