

Chapter I

Introduction

1.1. John Updike and his Literary World

John Updike is one of the most prominent and genuine post-war writers in New England. Updike, an author of more than twenty novels and more than a dozen short story collections received the Pulitzer Prize for two times in the year 1981 and 1992. He was also awarded the National Books Critics Award twice and National Book Award. Similarly, he was among the few Americans able to receive both National Medal of Art and National Award for the Humanities from the hands of American presidents for his outstanding contribution to American literature. He is considered one of the greatest literary figures of his time and is the most written novelist along with Tony Morrison. His novels are principally concerned with the American suburban scene after the Second World War. His most famous work is his Rabbit series (the novels *Rabbit*, *Run*, *Rabbit Redux*, *Rabbit Is Rich*, *Rabbit At Rest*, and the novella *Rabbit Remembered*). For Updike's greatness in American literature and luminous style in his writing Van Spanckeren appreciates, "He possesses the most brilliant style of any writer today" (103).

John Updike (March 18, 1932) was born to Wesley Russell Updike and Linda Grace Hoyer in Reading, Pennsylvania and took that world for the landscape of several of his early novels and stories. He graduated from Shillington High School as co-valedictorian and class president during 1950. Updike later attended Harvard University after receiving a full scholarship there and also studied at Ruskin School of Arts at Oxford. As his mother herself was an aspiring writer, she encouraged him to write. After returning to the United States from Oxford, Updike and his family moved

to New York, where he became a regular contributor to *The New Yorker* and started to make his identity as a writer in the zenith of New England literature.

Updike's very first novel *The Poorhouse Fair* (1958) was well received by the readers. Elated Updike in the support from Guggenheim Fellowship undertook a more ambitious novel, *Rabbit, Run* which acclaimed widespread popularity. The novel features Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom, a former high school basketball star and middle-class paragon who is Updike's most enduring and critically examined character. He wrote three additional novels about the same character Rabbit as Rabbit series. The same four novels became the backbone of Updike's literary career to identify him as a leading author of his time.

The books in Rabbit series depict the life of a man- Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom- through the ebbs and flows of his existence across four decades of American social and political history. *Rabbit, Run* (1960) is a mirror of the 1950s, with Rabbit Angstrom, an aimless, disaffected young husband. *Rabbit Redux* (1971) spotlights the counterculture of the 1960s and finds Angstrom still without a clear goal or purpose or viable escape route from mundaness. In *Rabbit is Rich* (1981), the Pulitzer Prize winner book, Harry becomes prosperous through an inheritance against the landscape of the wetly self- consciousness of the 1970s, as the Vietnam era wanes. The final volume, *Rabbit at Rest* (1990), the second novel to give Updike the Pulitzer Prize and final volume of Rabbit series glimpses Angstrom's reconciliation with life, and inadvertent death, against the backdrop of the 1980s.

Updike in 1963 received the National Book Award for his novel *The Centaur* that was inspired by his childhood in Pennsylvania. Updike's next novel *Couples* (1968) created a national sensation with its portrayal of the complicated relationships among a set of young married couples in the suburbs. It remained on the best-seller

lists for over a year and prompted a *Time* magazine cover story featuring Updike. In *Bech: A Book* (1970), Updike introduced a new protagonist, the imaginary novelist Henry Bech, who, like Rabbit Angstrom, was destined to reappear in Updike's fiction for many years. In 1983 Updike's other alter ego, Harry Bech, reappeared in *Bech is Back*.

As his fiction matured, Mr. Updike's novels sometimes became more exotic and experimental in form, locale and subject matter. "The Coup" (1978) is set in an imaginary African country. "Brazil" (1994) is a venture in magic realism. "Toward the End of Time" (1997) is set in 2020, after a war between the United States and China. "Gertrude and Claudius" (2000) is about Hamlet's mother and uncle. And "The Terrorist" (2006) is a fictional study of a convert to Islam who tries to blow up the Lincoln Tunnel.

Updike spent his last years in Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, in the same corner of New England where so much of his fiction is set. His last book is *The Widows of Eastwick* (2008), a sequel to his 1984 novel *The Witches of Eastwick*. Such an outstanding writer who is able to write his name with golden letters in history of American literature surrendered to lung cancer at the age of 76 on January 27, 2009.

Updike is considered one of the greatest American fiction writers of his generation. Mc. Grath praises Updike as "America's 'last true man of letters', with an immense and far-reaching influence on many writers (WK1). Similarly, to proof the greatness of Updike, Bellis writes, "If there is any writer who needs no introduction, it is John Updike. He has been foremost among American writers" (xv). Updike has been praised by many for his delicate way of writing that is well enough to catch the interest of readers and critics. The noted critic James Wood admiring Updike's writing opines, "Updike is capable of writing 'the perfect sentence' and notes that his

unique style is characterized by a 'delicate deferral' of the sentence. The beauty of Updike's language and his faith in the power of that language floats above reality" (30-31).

Furthermore, Harold Bloom, the famous critic comments, "Updike is a minor novelist with a major style. Updike possessed a major style and was capable of writing beautiful sentences which are beyond praise. The American sublime will never touch his pages" (vi).

Eulogizing Updike during January 2009, the British novelist Mc Ewan quotes, "Updike's literary schemes and pretty conceits touched at points on the Shakespearean, and that Updike's death marked the end of the golden age of the American novel in the 20th century's second half" (27).

Since Updike was born in a middle class family, the settings as well as the characters of most of his novels depict the true picture of this class. Updike once said, "I like middles. It is in middles that extremes clash, where ambiguity restlessly rules" (quoted in Lehman A28). Other critics have praised him too for his art of true representation of the age. Olster highly appreciates Updike for his contribution in capturing the American post war society as:

Updike will be the primary novelist to read for an understanding of the enormous complexity of American society after 1950. Very few writers have made as great as John Updike to capture what it feels like to be an American living in the twentieth century. (147)

Describing more about his subject related to the American small town and Protestant middle class, MSN Encarta states, "The American writer John Updike is best known for his novels exploring the tensions of middle-class American suburban

life” (John Updike). Similarly, writing more about the technique adopted by Updike and differentiating Updike with other contemporary writers, Bellis opines:

Updike has two characteristics that distinguish him from other contemporary American writers. He has been capable of writing remarkably detailed and affectionate fiction set in the world in which he grew up, and he has constantly developed new directions that keep the reader wondering what is coming next. (xv)

Updike’s most famous work is his Rabbit series. It is the same series that facilitated him to be established as the prominent writer of post war American Literature. Commenting over the protagonist Rabbit Angstrom in his Rabbit novels, Lehmann writes, “His character Rabbit Angstrom, widely considered his magnum opus, has been said to have entered the pantheon of signal American literary figures, joining Huck Finn, Jay Gatsby, Holden Caulfield and the like”(A28).

We can find sex and religion as the common subjects in Updike’s works. His use of excessive sex also aroused some difficulty publishing his works in the beginning years of his literary career. Informing about the same sorts of themes in Updike’s work, Bellis states, “The principal themes in Updike’s works are religion, sex and America as well as death” (286).

Updike has often combined sex, religion and contemporary America frequently in his terrain of the American small town, Protestant middle class. He has used excessive sex in most his fictions. It is because of the same extremity of sex that Knopf feared that the frank description of Rabbit’s sexual adventures could lead to prosecution for obscenity and to avoid such possibility, Updike made a number of changes to the text before publishing *Rabbit, Run*. Investigating more about Updike’s

style and themes regarding the use of libidinal desires, Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury write:

Updike in particular caught the new American world of expanding suburbs, postatomic young couples and the rhythm of their marriages, divorces, material hungers and spiritual and sexual desires- desires that in his work very often seem to be one and the same. [...] His work has attempted to test what remains of the realistic and the romance traditions of American fiction, and he writes with a vivid sense both of moral hunger and aesthetic purpose. (384)

The next critic and short story writer for *The New Yorker* Elizabeth Tallent has assembled a group of essays about John Updike that treats the sexual themes in his fiction. She has analyzed specially the behavior of Updike's male protagonists. She begins her essay from the premise: "Updike's men are Adam figures caught between the attraction of domesticity, the world of Eden and escape and adultery, the world of experience" (91).

John Updike is an outstanding post World War II American novelist who tried to look deep into the nature of American values in order to understand what was happening in their souls. Concerning the same technique of Updike in fiction writing, Peter B. Hall opines, "Updike is always concerned with how individuals live and view their lives" (195). In most of his novels, he describes the unhappy situation of the main characters. They are not satisfied with their everyday lives in modern society and look for something below the surface of things like Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom, the hero of *Rabbit, Run* (1960).

Updike is capable of favoring his writings with external sexual imagery rife with explicit anatomical detail rather than descriptions of internal emotions in a

suburban middle class society where he lived himself. His combination of realism with mythology too in his works is very much momentous. Thus, Updike, the writer of more than twenty novels, who is gifted with ability of portraying the protestant middle class reality in highly appreciated present tense, is considered one of the greatest novelists of American literature.

1.2. Rabbit's Desires and His Irresponsibility

Rabbit, Run is John Updike's first novel in Rabbit series that sketches the story of a twenty-six year old protagonist Harry 'Rabbit' Angstrom. The novel covers the time period of five months and charts the experiences of Rabbit, a high-school basketball star turned husband and father against the backdrop of 1950s America.

Rabbit has a job of selling kitchen gadgets, and is married to Janice, a former salesgirl at the store where he worked. They have a two-year-old son named Nelson. Janice in the novel is an alcoholic and is newly pregnant. Rabbit from the beginning of story believes that his marriage is a failure and that something is missing from his life. Therefore, he seeks to escape the routine of married life with Janice when he does not find any charm of life from the bond of marriage. "It just felt like the whole business was fetching and hauling, all the time trying to hold this mess together she was making all the time." (91). Moreover, Rabbit's job as a demonstrator of Magi Peelers at five-and-dime stores provides no outlet for escape or self-expression.

Rabbit was a high school basketball star. He had set up various records in the tournament. Everyone would like to follow the path of Rabbit. But now, his life has been confined to an alcoholic wife. He is now a married father trapped in the suburbs. And his son does not inherit any of his father's athletic ability. His room is never tidy. Janice never makes things easy for her husband; there is always "the old-fashioned glass" with its "corrupt dregs" that Janice leaves laying about. She is pregnant and on

top of it, she always keeps on drinking. This attitude of hers really makes rabbit miserable. Faced with lack of values of the modern world, Rabbit seeks an escape by breaking away from all conventional ethics and systems to actively pursue new ones.

Getting exasperated with his dull, old fashioned-drinking pregnant, childlike wife, Rabbit instinctively drives away and takes up residence with Ruth, knowledgeable gruff, basically good-natured prostitute. He stays with her for about two months starting graphically documented sexual encounters forgetting his family and the responsibilities. He grows very affectionate of her and finds some meaning of life during the time when he is with her and impregnates her during the stay. After finding some sexual satisfaction through Ruth, Rabbit then begins to be aware of his responsibilities and moves through the confrontation between desire and responsibility. He then moves back to Janice when she finally goes into labor. After the birth of a new baby girl, Rebecca, he seems to settle with Janice but this interest does not last long. One day Rabbit finds himself consumed with lust for his wife. His wife who is now less or incapable of having sex denies and snaps at him by saying-“I’m not your whore, Harry” (213). Unable to fulfill his sexual desire, Rabbit abandons the family once more and flees ignoring his responsibilities. In other words, Rabbit runs away when his expectation of happiness and understanding in conjugal life turns out to be a mirage only.

Once again, Rabbit comes back to Janice when he hears from John Eccles that Janice killed accidentally the newly born baby girl Rebecca in drunken hysteria. Rabbit blames himself for the accident and seems to settle with Janice. After funeral, however, he becomes filled with the sense that he finally understands every thing- a sort of skewed awakening and lashes out inexplicably at his wife, “Don’t look at me... I didn’t kill her”(253). Eventually, Rabbit runs away and the novel ends openly.

Commenting over the ending of the novel, Donald Greiner states, “The beautifully written final line suggests the openness of his search, but the key word illusion also indicates deception. Rabbit has nothing but motion” (61).

Rabbit in Updike’s most celebrated novel, most of the time seems to have become irresponsible though sometimes he appears worried about his responsibilities. . He is disillusioned by the world he is living in and is comforted by the dilemma of either listening to his heart or the social obligations. He moves here and there just to find meaning in his life. When his family and his wife and her family reject Rabbit, he runs away from his home because of his inner urge that is dedicated to "something that wants me to find it" (127).

The novel that starts with Rabbit’s running and ends with his running. In other words, Rabbit is restless through out. He deserts Janice, moves to the lap of Ruth Lenard, a prostitute, comes back to Janice and again absconds her. Why does Rabbit leave Janice and move to Janice? What does he find in Ruth that Janice lacks? Why he abandons his familial responsibilities and flees away at the very final moment? The research tries to dig out the answer of all these questions by analyzing the behaviour and activities of Rabbit Angstrom in the novel from the prospective of psychoanalysis.

In the novel, each and every activity done by Rabbit seems to be related with his sexual desires i.e. libidinal yearnings. The activities done by Rabbit show that it is the instinctive drive that comes first in his life. Driven by the instincts and impulses, Rabbit tends to fulfill his personal desires, neglecting his responsibilities to others. Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom here in the novel can be compared with the animal rabbit, which is an active practitioner of sex. As the animal rabbit involves in sexual intercourse with its partner just after the time of delivery, Harry “Rabbit” also tries to

do the same in the novel that is analogous. When his such a libidinal desires cannot be gratified, there is the born of irresponsibility in the mind of protagonist Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom. The confrontation between inner urge of his erotic desire and outer demands of carrying out responsibility to others is very vividly displayed in the novel. His heart i.e. desires gets victory over his head.

This research tries to move into the unconscious mind of the protagonist Rabbit Angstrom which according to Sigmund Freud is the stronger part of human mind. It tries to link Rabbit’s activities as attempts to fulfill his sexual gratification. The young man aged twenty-six in the periphery of the American society of 1950s in the novel tries to listen to his heart when he is suffocated of social obligations and familial responsibilities. 1950 is the notable period in American literature as beat writers rejected uniform middle- class culture and sought to overturn sexual and social conservatism of the period. Since, *Rabbit, Run* was written at the same time, Rabbit also represents the character of the time who moves ahead to fulfill libidinal yearnings in changed means.

Rabbit locates himself being trapped in the net of familial responsibility that acts as a barrier in his attempt to gratify him sexually. Janice only irritates him instead of satisfying. The same cause obliges him to be irresponsible. Hence, the research further tries to look Rabbit’s mind as the storehouse of unfulfilled libidinal desires and seeks ground to claim that his human irresponsibility is the consequence of same unfulfilled libidinal yearnings piled upon his unconscious mind.

Chapter II

Psychoanalysis: Theoretical Discussion

2.1. Background and Concept

Human experiences like anxiety, fear, desire, emotions, etc. are the elements that provide a strong support for the psychiatric problems resulting in frustration, conflict, irresponsibility and inner mental disorder. In order to deal with such mental tensions and conflict, detail psychological analysis is necessary. It was Sigmund Freud, an Austrian neurologist who for the first time studied these experiences in an order and developed an important discipline that is known as psychoanalysis theory at the end of nineteenth century.

Freud forwarded the concept of psychoanalysis to find out an effective treatment for patients with neurotic or hysterical symptoms. He has provided convincing evidence, through his many carefully recorded case studies, that most of our actions are motivated by psychological forces over which human beings have very limited control. Freud has presupposed three premises before forwarding the theory of psychoanalysis. Making clear about the premises of Freud *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* by Guerin et al. states:

The most of the individual's mental processes are unconscious is Freud's major premise. The second is that all human behavior is motivated ultimately by what we could call sexuality. He designates the prime psychic force as libido, or sexual energy. His third major premise is that because of the powerful social taboos attached to certain sexual impulses, many of our desires and memoirs are repressed. (155)

Psychoanalysis is not only a form of psychotherapy used by qualified psychotherapists to treat patients with mental disorders but it equally emphasizes on the probing of unconscious mental processes. It calls for patients to engage in free association of ideas, speaking to therapists about anything that comes to mind. Freud, commenting about human mind, says, “like the iceberg, the human mind is structured so that its great weight and density lie beneath the surface (below the level of consciousness)” (qtd. in Guerin et. al. 154). Freud further emphasizing the importance of unconscious in human mind in *New Introductory Lectures of Psychoanalysis* opines, “Most conscious processes are conscious for only a short period; quite soon they become latent, though they can easily become conscious again” (100).

Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines psychoanalysis as “any of a number of the theories of the human personality, which attempt to examine a person’s unconscious mind to discover the hidden causes of their mental problems” (1002). Psychoanalysis is thus, purely a theoretical system of psychology where person’s conscious as well as unconscious minds are analyzed. In the same regard MSN Encarta further states:

Psychoanalysis may be defined as human nature interpreted in terms of conflict. The mind is understood as an expression of conflicting forces—some conscious, the majority unconscious. Psychoanalysts are practitioners of psychoanalytic psychotherapy and place emphasis on the importance of unconscious forces in the way the mind works.

(“Psychoanalysis”)

Psychoanalysis, also known as psychoanalytic criticism since the decade of 1920s is not limited to the study and treatment of psychiatry problems only but is also

used as an equally useful tool to study other aspects. Regarding the same, M.H.

Abrams opines:

Freud has developed the dynamic form of psychology that he called psychoanalysis as a means of analysis and therapy for neuroses, but soon expanded it to account for many developments and practices in the history of civilization, including warfare, mythology, and religion, as well as literature and the other arts. (248)

Now from the above definition, it is noticeable that Freud's psychological analysis also helps in exploring the causes of the mental tensions and conflicts of the characters in any literary work. From this perspective, psychoanalysis can be used as a significant tool for analyzing the unconscious libidinal desires of the character under the veil of language. In addition, psychoanalytical literary criticism takes a literary piece primarily as an expression of the state of mind and the personality of the author. Literary text is analyzed in relation to the conscious and unconscious psychic parts of the characters. Concerning this, *Random House Unabridged Dictionary* defines the psychoanalysis, "a systematic structure of theory concerning the relation of conscious and unconscious psychological process" (1561).

Psychoanalytical approach is an excellent tool for reading beneath the surface of the text. It is an attempt to investigate the unconscious territory of human psyche with logic and rationality. Its application unfolds the mental disorder and neurosis. The unconscious mind contains the repressed desires especially sexual ones that are inaccessible to the conscious mind since one cannot know his or her unconscious mind going directly to it. Analysis of mental process is done on the basis of unconscious and its impact. The unconscious contents of the mind are found to consist fully in desires and wishes which derive their energy directly from the primary

psychic instinct. Freud in the same context in *The Interpretation of Dream* opines, “[...] since, these (unconscious) primitive trends are to a great extent of a sexual or of a destructive nature. They are bound to come in conflict with the more social and civilized mental forces” (22).

This present thesis is the analysis of the principal character Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom and his human irresponsibility that has emerged as a result of conflict that goes in between unconscious and conscious part in his mind. Rabbit leaves his alcoholic wife Janice, goes to a prostitute Ruth, comes back to Janice and again deserts her. Why the protagonist becomes irresponsible towards the family in this way? What is the root cause behind his act of leaving Janice? The research tries to dig out why Rabbit, the protagonist does these activities on the basis of psychoanalytical tool. The research tries to prove that the desire for the fulfillment of the libidinal desires and deficiency for the same seems to be the root cause of Rabbit’s irresponsibility. In other words, the research seeks ground to verify that Rabbit’s unconscious desire for sex and conscious refraining from it to face the reality which is very much bitter and harsh is the major cause of his irresponsibility.

2.2. Structure of Human Personality

Freud has made three major division of personality: the id, the ego and the superego. The character of an individual is shaped and analyzed as a result from the interaction of these three key subsystems. He has studied the relationship between id, ego and superego as well as their collective relation to the conscious and unconscious.

The id is completely unconscious part of the psyche that seems as a storehouse of our desires, wishes and fears. Thus, id houses the libido, the source of psychosexual energy. The id is directly related to the instinctual drives, which are considered to be of two types: destructive and constructive. While destructive drive

tends towards aggression, dissolution, and eventually death, the constructive drives primarily are of the sexual nature and constitute the libido or basic energy of life.

The id is absolutely lawless, asocial, amoral, irrational and selfish part of human psyche, and is concerned only with the immediate gratification. In other words, its function is to gratify our impulses or instincts for pleasure without regard for social conventions, legal ethics, or moral restraint. Naturally, the id knows no values, no good and evil, no morality. It is governed by pleasure principle. It is the representative of primary process or mode of thinking and has no concern with logic, time sequence, morality and social norm; it has only desire for immediate wish fulfillment. In Benjamin B. Lahey's view, "the id is inborn part of unconscious mind that uses the primary process to satisfy its needs and that acts according to the pleasure principle [...] the attempts of the id to seek immediate pleasure and avoid pain, regardless of how harmful it might be to others"(466). To tell in jest, the id is guided by pleasure principle and avoids any sorts of pain. If unchecked, the id would lead to any lengths-to destruction and even self-destruction.

Unlike the id, the term ego denotes the central part of the personality structure that deals with reality and is influenced by social forces. Formation of the ego begins at birth in the first encounters with the external world of people and things. It regulates and opposes the instinctual drive and represents reality and, to a considerable extent, reason. It is a rational governing agent of psyche, which deals with sexual and aggressive impulses originating in the "id" at the unconscious level. Ego is ordinary social self that thinks, feels and wills. It maintains all the worldly function and makes an individual as realistic and rational as possible. It is associated with reason and gets governed with critical and politic judging. Defining ego, Benjamin B. Lahey writes, "The ego operates according to the reality principle. This

means that it holds the id in check until a safe and realistic way has been found to satisfy its motive [...] the attempts by the ego to find safe, realistic ways of meeting the needs of id” (467).

The ego is the rational governing agent of the psyche. It regulates the instinctual drives of the id so that they can be released in nondestructive behavioral pattern. Freud points out in *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*: “To adopt a popular mode of speaking, we might say that the ego stands for reason and good sense while the id stands for the untamed passion” (76). Where the id is governed solely by the pleasure principle, the ego is governed by the reality principle. To sum up, the ego serves as an intermediary between the unconscious impulses and acquired social and personal standards.

The superego, on the other hand, is another part of psyche associated with critical judging function, which is known as conscience or moral principle. It serves to repress or inhibit the drives of id, and to block off and thrust into the unconscious those impulses that tend towards pleasure. Thus, it is a regulator that governs all the functions of human personality on the basis of social values and norms. In other words, the superego includes the positive ego (or conscious self-image or ego ideal) that each individual develops. Lahey defining superego writes, “restrictions are placed on the actions of id and ego when the superego develops” (467). Similarly, expressing his view about the function of superego, Blum says:

When the superego prohibits expression of sexual or aggressive drives, the ego joins the superego in opposition to the Id. Submission to Superego forces enhances a person's self-esteem. Resistance to them usually results in feelings of remorse and unworthiness. It is possible, though rare, for the Superego and the Id to be allied against the ego. In

such a case ego struggle against a feeling of pervasive guilt generated by the Superego, and the personality may be overwhelmed by severe depressive reactions. (6)

It is superego that prohibits the id and the ego to operate with fulfillment and sometimes it wars with both id and ego. Whereas the id is dominated by the pleasure principle and the ego by the reality principle, the superego is dominated by the morality principle. In short, we can say that the id would make us devils, the superego would have us behave as angels, and that it remains for the ego to keep us healthy human beings by maintaining a balance between these two opposing forces. Thus, the superego is the norms and values oriented judge of human psychic status.

2.3. Division of Mind

Freud has divided human mind into three levels: the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious. The conscious is that part of mind which provides immediate awareness, perceptions, thoughts or feelings of the mental events or memories. In other words it is the quality or state of being aware. It refers to the experience of an object or event at the present moment. In Freudian psychology, conscious behavior largely includes cognitive processes of the ego, such as thinking, perception, and planning, as well as some aspects of the superego, such as moral conscience.

The preconscious mind is the storehouse of memories and wishes, which can be recalled into consciousness. Those memories and desires, which are dimly conscious, constitute preconscious mind. Thus, it is recalling process to consciousness. In Freudian psychoanalysis, the word preconscious is applied to thoughts which are unconscious at the particular moment in question, but which are

not repressed and are therefore available for recall and easily capable of becoming conscious.

Unconscious mind, in psychoanalytical theory is a reservoir of buried thoughts, emotions, feelings, wishes and impulses, which are not allowed to come into conscious mind. Thus, the unconscious mind might be defined as that part of the mind which gives rise to a collection of mental phenomena that manifest in a person's mind but which the person is not aware of at the time of their occurrence. These phenomena include unconscious feelings, unconscious or automatic skills, unnoticed perceptions, unconscious thoughts, unconscious habits and automatic reactions, complexes, hidden phobias and concealed desires. According to Britannica Encyclopedia, “Unconscious in psychoanalysis is the part of the psychic apparatus that does not ordinarily enter the individual's awareness but may be manifested by slips of the tongue, dreams, or neurotic symptoms” (Unconscious). The nature of the unconscious according to Freud is dynamic. It consists of repressed childhood wishes, which are ever striving to express themselves. The energy that strives for expression is sexual energy. Freud calls it “libido”. The unconscious wishes are extremely powerful and dynamic. Freud believes that the inhibited feelings and wishes of childhood remain influential as a part of active unconscious. Freud takes sex energy as the driving force of human life. The theory of unconscious motivation plays a significant role in the theory of psychoanalytical technique.

2.4. Freud and Psychosexuality

The sources of unconscious have shaped the growth of psychosexuality that is also known as libido. Freud argued that the instinctual sexual drive appears not only in “sexual acts” but also in most fundamental acts like a mother nursing the infant, an act that produces pleasures which Freud defines specially as sexual pleasure. *The*

Oxford English Dictionary defines psychosexual, “involving the mental and emotional aspect of sexual impulse” (769).

The concept of psychosexual development envisioned by Sigmund Freud posits that, from birth humans have instinctual sexual appetites (libido) that unfold a series of stages. These stages are in order: oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital. Each stage is characterized by the erogenous zone that is the source of the libidinal drive during that stage.

Freud observes that during early development, children’s behaviour often orients around body parts (the mouth during breast feeding and anus during toilet training and later the genitals). Freud states, “Humans are born ‘polymorphously pervasive’, meaning that infants can derive sexual pleasure from any part of the body” (quoted in Myre 396). Among these five stages, first three i.e. oral, anal and phallic develop within five years of age. Therefore, infancy and childhood is a period of intense sexual experience; sexual in a sense much broader than is commonly attached to the term. “During the first five years of life, the child passes through a series of phases in erotic development, each phase being characterized by emphasis on a particular erogenous zone” (Guerin et al. 160).

The oral stage lasts from birth to about 18 months. The focus of pleasure is, of course, the mouth. The oral stage is divided into two sub-stages: oral sucking and oral biting. From birth to 8 months the child expresses his sexual impulses through sucking. At this stage, the autocratic drive is localized in the mouth, lips and tongue. In the same way, at oral biting stage, the infant gets pleasure through biting, destroying and swallowing and its sources are teeth and jaws.

The anal stage lasts from about 18 months to three or four years old. The focus of pleasure is the anus. During this stage, according to Freud, the child obtains pleasure through holding and expelling the bodily waste.

The child reaches the phallic stage around five years of age. The focus of pleasure is the genitalia. The phallic stage is very important from psychoanalytical point of view in the development of adult personality. At this stage, sex energy is centralized in the genital organs and children get pleasure in manipulating and stroking it. The boy in demanding sexual love from his mother comes into rivalry with his father. Freud derives the term Oedipus complex from Greek tragedy to mention the psychosexual development of a male child. "In simple terms, 'Oedipus Complex' derives from the boy's unconscious rivalry with his father for the love of his mother" (Guiren et al. 160). In case of a girl, she becomes a rival to her mother for her father's love, which is termed as Electra complex. In the phallic stage the boy is proud of having penis, which his sister lacks and suffers with fear of losing or damaging it, that is called castration anxiety. The girl finds that she has no penis and develops a strong desire to get a penis, which is called penis envy. To Freud, at the end of the phallic stage, every child identifies him/herself with the same-sex parent. If they are deviated from this normal course, they tend to be homosexual, anti-social and immoral.

The latent stage lasts from five, six, or seven to puberty, that is, somewhere around twelve years of age. During this stage, Freud believes that the sexual impulse is suppressed in the service of learning. At this stage, boys and girls play and study together and basically children involve in their educational activities. At the genital stage, boys or girls enter the puberty and they become enthusiastic in sexual union

with opposite sex. The Libido is reawakened in this stage and the interests or desires are directed towards the sexual relationship.

The psychosexual development of childhood experience plays a vital role to form adult personality traits. When the normal process of psychosexual development is blocked, a person is also deviated from normal course of life. Hence, Freud talking about sexual tensions writes, “In every case in which tension is produced by sexual processes it is accompanied by pleasure; even in the preparatory changes in the genitals feeling of satisfaction of some kind of plainly observed” (qtd. in Sharma 16).

Freudian psychoanalysis in relation to sexuality will be an important tool to accomplish the present task. Unconscious is highly explored in the Freudian psychoanalysis as it is the reservoir of libidinal desire. The sexual urge is repressed in the unconscious of an individual. Many of Freud’s ideas are related to sexual urge and its impact. Peter Barry says, “Many of Freud’s ideas concern the aspects of sexuality” (97). Thus, psychosexuality is the desire or urge for the sex. Regarding sex and sexuality, Freud says:

If you take the sexual act itself is the central point, you will perhaps declare sexual to mean everything which is concerned with obtaining pleasurable gratification from the body (and particularly the sexual organs) of the opposite sex; in the narrowest sense, everything which is directed to the union of the genital organs and performance of sexual act. In doing so, however you come very near to reckoning the sexual and the improper as identical, and childbirth would really have nothing to do with sex [...] reproduction and kernel of sexuality, you run the risk of excluding from it a whole host of things like masturbation, or even kissing [...] nevertheless undoubtedly sexual (qtd in G. Hazo 29)

In fact, sexuality can be stretched to include the related carnal desires, such as those that accompany erotic kissing or caressing. The present tries to dig out the desire of Rabbit as the way to aiming at physical pleasure. The unconscious has the significant role in exploring the human psyche. Repressed desires in the unconscious get relief through the dreams too. So, the unconscious and dream are to be explored and interpreted for psychoanalytic study of the character.

2.5. Dream Interpretation

Dreams represent disguised desires, wish fulfillment and expression of unconscious and unacceptable thoughts. For Freud, dream represents those wishes, demand and desires that get repressed into unconscious and their instinctual satisfaction is knotted in conscious state of mind. For him, sexual desire or impulses getting barred in the real life situation get the outlet through dreams. In this regard Brill writes in *The Fundamental Conceptions of Psychoanalysis*, “In the time he was well conceived that the dream is not a mere jumble, senseless mechanism but that it represents frequently in symbolic form the person’s inmost thoughts and desire that represent a hidden wish” (23)

The dreams that are not fulfilled create violent innermost confrontation for the gratification of unconscious id, which is itself a threat to ego. In *Essentials of Psychoanalysis*, Sigmund Freud has written how dreams appear:

During the night this train of thoughts succeeds in finding connections with one of the conscious tendencies present ever since childhood in the mind of the dreamer, but ordinary repressed and excluded from his conscious life. By the borrowed force of this unconscious help, the thoughts, the residue of the day’s work now become active again, and emerge into consciousness in the shape of dream. (140)

Unacceptable thoughts, wishes and desires appear in symbolic form in dreams. These symbols have universal meaning. Andre Trion in preface of *Dream Psychology: Psychology for Beginners* further writes, “Freud showed that many of our dream visions are symbolical, which causes us to consider them as absurd and untellable; the universality of those symbols, however makes them very transparent to the trained observer” (6).

Freud found the unconscious feelings and thoughts as the materials for dream. Latent dream thoughts determine the manifest content of dream. Freud in *Essentials of Psychoanalysis* says, “The latent thoughts of the dream differ in no respect from the products of our regular conscious activity; they deserve the name of fore-conscious thoughts, and may indeed have been conscious at some moments of walking life” (140). It is clear that manifest and latent dreams contents can only be exposed through free association. Free association is vital because it leads to the hidden connection between ideas and images. Freud stresses that we cannot fulfill our desire in reality or in the awoken state. The desire that cannot be fulfilled is stored in the unconscious dream thought in the manifest as well as in the content level is called dream mechanism. In this present research, the dream of Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom will be analyzed as an outlet of his repressed sexual urge. The processes for the dreams are stated under the headings condensation, symbolism and displacement.

In the process of condensation, one image can stand for many associations; the complexity of the latent content of the dreams can therefore be derived from analyzing how repressed ideas and thoughts in association connect up with the condensed image that is at the forefront of the dream. It is the way where a single idea or event can simultaneously represent different impulses. Asserting this Freud in *The Interpretation of Dream* writes:

Strictly speaking, then, it is impossible to determine the amount of condensation. There is an answer, which at first sight seems most plausible; to the argument that the great lack of proportion between the dream-content and the dream-thoughts implies that physical material has undergone an extensive process of the condensation in the course of the formation of the dreams. (383)

Displacement, on the other hand, deals with such process where the feeling related to one thing is related to different one. For instance, the murderous feeling of someone is displayed onto the next different object. Dream displacement helps in finding distortion. Freud in *Essentials of Psychoanalysis* states:

It is the process of displacement which is chiefly responsible for our being unable to discover or recognize the dream-thoughts in the dream content, unless we understand the reasons for their distortion.

Nevertheless, the dream-thoughts are also submitted to another and milder sort of transformation, which leads to our discovering a new achievement on the part of the dream-work-one, however, which is easily intelligible [...] represented symbolically by means of similes and metaphors kin images resembling those of poetic speech (103)

Wishes repressed in the unconscious get through the dream in symbolic form. Mostly the dream symbols serve by representing person's parts of body or activities invested with erotic interest. Freud in *Interpretation of Dream* states, "Dreams make use of this symbolism for the disguised representation of their latent thoughts" (469). By Freud's example of dream interpretation, we are made believe all the concave images like ponds, flowers, boxes, caves etc. are the female genital organs or body whereas things whose length can exceed their diameter especially vertical in shape are

phallic symbols. Talking about the dream symbols, Freud in *Essentials of Psychoanalysis* opines:

Sharp weapon, long and stiff objects such as tree trunks and stick stand for male genital; boxes, ovens [...] represent uterus [...] a staircase, or going upstairs to represent sexual intercourse [...] dream symbol are bisexual and can relate to the male and female genitals according to the context. (123)

To sum up, psychoanalysis is the theoretical tool that deals with mental condition of human personality. Freud says that unconscious mind rather than the conscious one drives man. Every human being has erotic desires but cannot express it directly because of various restrictions. Family, society, ethics and morality, rules and regulations etc. are the barriers on the way to fulfill the erotic yearnings. As a result, a person has to suppress the desires and suffer from mental illness and consequently becomes neurotic.

The present thesis tries to dig out the reasons behind Rabbit's frustration towards his wife, his human irresponsibility and his pace towards the lap of prostitute, Ruth Leonard. All these issues will be dealt in relation with psychoanalysis. The research will try to analyze the conscious and unconscious part of Rabbit's mind and will seek ground to prove that he is a man dominated by unconscious mind and is driven mostly by instincts, impulses and desires neglecting his responsibilities. The research as a whole attempts to relate Rabbit's human irresponsibility with his unfulfilled libidinal desires.

Chapter III

Unfulfilled Libidinal Yearning: Human Irresponsibility

3.1. *Rabbit, Run*: A Synopsis

Harry Angstrom –nicknamed “Rabbit” for his “the breath of white face, the pallor of his blue irises, and a nervous flutter under his brief nose” is a twenty-six year young protagonist who has a job of selling kitchen gadgets. He is married to Janice, a former salesgirl at the store where he worked. They have a two years old son Nelson and live in the fictional place named Mount Judge, a suburb of Brewer, Pennsylvania. The story begins with Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom watching the boys playing basketball on the way back to home from his office. Once a basketball star in high school, Rabbit is now dissatisfied with middle class family life and believes that his marriage is a failure and something is missing from his own life. He joins a game of basketball with the young boys for a while, and then continues on his way.

Janice, Rabbit’s wife is an alcoholic and is newly pregnant. She irritates him a lot and he becomes more aggravated when she hands him a task of bringing her a packet of cigarette and getting their son, Nelson from his parents’ house. Rabbit on the way with irritated mind forgets where he is heading and seeks to escape from the routine of married life with Janice. He decides to drive south as far as West Virginia in an attempt to escape but getting hopelessly lost, he returns to his hometown and not wanting to go home, visits his old basketball coach, Marty Tothero.

Tothero wants Rabbit to join him for dinner in Brewer with two girls, Margaret Kosko and Ruth Leonard. Rabbit in dinner gets attracted to a part-time prostitute Ruth and spends a night with her in her apartment. He then stays with her in her apartment for two solid months and impregnates her. During this time, Janice moves back to her parents’ house. A local young minister, Jack Eccles, befriends

Rabbit in a futile attempt to get him to reconcile with his wife. He also offers him a job of gardening at Mrs. Smith's, a widow who later on seems to be attracted to Rabbit. Rabbit more or less dismisses Jack's efforts to reconcile him with Janice, but when Janice finally goes into labor, he hastily leaves Ruth and goes to the hospital. The doctor congratulates him on having a beautiful daughter. He then goes to meet Janice and to his dismay, finds Janice displaying no anger or bitterness whatsoever to meet him, and is only happy to have him back. The newly born baby girl is given the name Rebecca June in agreement of both. Rabbit returns to live with his wife, and gives up his job of gardening.

Rabbit attends a church on Sunday, and meets Lucy Eccles, the unhappy wife of young minister Jack Eccles. He joins her on a walk. She also offers him to have a coffee at her home. He refuses to enter her room explaining that he has a wife. He has refused the invitation considering her appeal as a proposition as a result of which Lucy slams the door furiously. Back in the apartment, Rabbit finds himself consumed with lust for Janice and pressures her towards having sex in spite of her postnatal condition. But she refuses his offer by telling: "I 'm not your whore" (213). He then leaves her and attempts to return to Ruth Leonard.

Fearing Rabbit has abandoned her again, Janice begins drinking heavily that morning and accidentally drowns Rebecca June, their infant daughter. When Rabbit hears the disapproving news from John Eccles, he goes to the dwelling of Janice's parents where she is staying. He tells her that it was his fault, and the two finally seem united in a true bond. After the funeral, however, Rabbit's internal and external conflicts result in a sudden proclamation of his innocence in the baby's death and lashes out inexplicably at his wife: "Don't look at me... I didn't kill her. (253)" He then runs from the graveyard and reaches Ruth's apartment. It is revealed now that

Ruth is pregnant and the father of the foetus growing in her womb is Rabbit himself. He seems to settle there with her but his attempt ends in vain when she puts the condition to divorce with Janice which he agrees at first but again changes the mind and disagrees when he is struck with Nelson's future.

Rabbit eventually abandons Ruth too and with a kind of sweet panic growing lighter and quicker quieter, he runs. "Ah: runs. Runs" (264).

3.2. Emergence of Human Irresponsibility in *Rabbit, Run*

The novel *Rabbit, Run*, the first of Updike's Rabbit tetralogy portrays the life of a twenty-six-year old protagonist Harry Angstrom- nick named Rabbit who is caught between the rock of societal responsibility and the hard place of personal desire. Rabbit refuses to compromise his freedom of living with the prevailing social restrictions. Updike through Rabbit paints a portrait of passionate man driven by uncertainty and addresses the difficulty of finding a common ground or any ground at all, between the call of the heart and the call of the society.

Rabbit's wife, Janice is an alcoholic, whom Rabbit takes as dull, old fashioned and childlike woman. She is shown watching children show at the first time we see Rabbit entering the apartment after job. "When he opens the door he sees his wife sitting in an armchair with an Old-fashioned, watching television" (8). Rabbit does not have interest in this sort of old- fashioned woman. Therefore, the narrator to highlight it, capitalizes the word old-fashioned. His disinterest towards Janice is also seen through narrator's comment "Just yesterday, it seems to him, she stopped being pretty" (8). When he thinks that this kind of woman can't satisfy him, he leaves her.

Rabbit always seems to be in confrontation between the personal desires and responsibility. Rabbit is the husband, father and son in the novel who is designed to fulfill many responsibilities. However, such a man designed to be accountable seeks

to run away from his responsibilities because the rigid boundaries of family life, according to Rabbit's inner feeling, are harming him. Expressing his dissatisfaction over the monotonous routine life and trying to give reason after leaving Janice, Rabbit says, "It just felt like the whole business was fetching and hauling, all the time trying to hold this mess together she was making all the time" (91).

The confrontation Rabbit faces is between the uncharted territory of his heart and the rigid routes drawn by the cartographers of society. His marital life to him seems "a series of grotesque poses assumed to no purpose, a magic dance empty of belief" (170). We find a lack of tolerance for rigid boundaries within him that ultimately affects Harry's beliefs by creating a sense of uncertainty and Harry throughout the novel dreads rigidity and yearns for freedom.

Rabbit is such a person who wants to live a free life and struggle for the search of the individual meaning in a world full of requirements and misguided notions. He thinks that life would be a lot easier without the overbearing weight of societal expectations. He takes himself to the road of irresponsibility because the narrator once says, "the feeling that somewhere there was something better for him than listening to babies cry and cheating people in used-car lots" (232). Rabbit after the very encounter with his wife Janice feels constantly trapped in the net of society and seeks to be free from such burden. He gives the reason why he does not like continuing the conjugal life with Janice. According to him, she never arranges the things like toys, newspaper, breakfast-box etc. properly at home. The unarranged things in the apartment resembles with her mess personality that Rabbit does not like. So, he says "[...] the continual crisscrossing mess- clings to his back like a tightening net" (14)

His alcoholic wife Janice watches most of the time children show on a television. "She is watching a group of children called Mouseketeers perform a

musical number in which Darlene is a flower girl in Paris” (9). But, this time the same show sows a different belief in Rabbit. On the show Mouse-ke-teer, Jimmy says, “Know Thyself [...] be what you are. Don’t try to be Sally or Johnny or Fred next door, be yourself. God does not want a tree to be a waterfall, or a flower to be a stone” (10). On watching the show, Rabbit begins to realize his own failure of not doing what makes him happy and of not knowing himself. In the simplicity and innocence of the Mouseketeers, Updike shows the protagonist Rabbit who becomes irresponsible following one’s instincts working on ourselves first in order to be happy.

In his youth, Rabbit had been a great basketball player praised by all. “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 ago” (7). He, who once felt alive and free from responsibility and was “good and cool” (7), is now crowded by his maturity and his obligations. Thus, from the net of social obligations and emptiness, Rabbit runs.

Rabbit goes through life serving his own self-interests. First and foremost, he leaves his wife because she cannot hold his interest any longer. When questioned about his leaving, he shows no remorse. One of the reasons he gives for leaving is she is child like who can’t satisfy him sexually. Showing anger over the wife he once questions her, “And meanwhile you’re off in the alley playing like a twelve year-old?” (12) Next reason he gives is: “she asked me to buy her a pack of cigarettes” (100). The very reasons behind Janice make him irritated towards her. Hence, Rabbit is fed up with his wife and is also tired of his dead-end job, selling the Magi-Peeler. From his point of view, he is trapped in dead-end situation. Rather than stepping in such a trap, he makes up his mind to run from his responsibilities.

Rabbit, on the way to bring Nelson, the son home and buy cigarettes for his wife Janice, with irritated mind forgets where he is heading and seeks to escape from the routine of married life with Janice. He decides to drive south as far as West Virginia in an attempt to escape. "He accelerates. The growing complexity of lights threatens him [...] He wants to go south, down, down the map into orange groves and smoking rivers" (23). On the way while asked by the farmer where he wants to go, Rabbit answers, "Huh? I don't know exactly"(24). But after moving little bit more, he gets himself hopelessly lost and returns to his hometown and not wanting to go home, visits his old basketball coach, Marty Tothero. This action of Rabbit shows his growing irresponsibility towards his familial responsibilities in a crystal clear manner.

Rabbit forgets his home, wife, son, parents and many other things and begins to settle with Ruth Leonard, a former prostitute whom he meets through the medium of his former basketball coach Marty Tothero. When inquired by Tothero if he wants to go back to Janice, he expresses his unwillingness to return. "Do you want to go back now? 'You must tell if you do'. Rabbit remembers the dumb slot of her mouth, the way the closet door bumps against the television set. 'No God'" (44).

Jack Eccles, a local minister tries a lot to return Rabbit to the familial responsibilities through various means but is unsuccessful in doing so. During the meeting with Jack Eccles, Rabbit repeats his unwillingness to go back like to Tothero. Jack asks him, "You don't want me to take you to your wife" (90)? Rabbit answers: "No. Good grief. I mean I don't think it would do any good, do you" (90)? This reaction of Rabbit shows his human irresponsibility.

Rabbit returns to Janice when Jack Eccles gives him the information that she is in labor. He tells Ruth, "My wife is having her baby. I got to see her thorough it" (165). He goes to meet Janice and to his dismay, finds Janice displaying no anger or

bitterness whatsoever to meet him, and is only happy to have him back. “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” (174). Rabbit, however, can’t keep Janice’s such a trust upon him and being irresponsible, leaves her when she can’t satisfy him when he very passionate. “He wish to make love to Janice is like a small angel to which all afternoon tiny lead weights are attached” (34). When Janice denies Rabbit’s proposal he damns and deserts her in anger. The narrator narrates: “He abandons her saying, “I’m going out. I’ve been cooped up in this damn hole all day” (213).

In this way, Rabbit wants to live like a fish in a huge ocean without any fear of nets and hooks in every nook and corner. The society and house that Rabbit lives in is full of the nets of societal obligations and familial responsibility only. He thinks that he is in trap there and cannot fulfill his desires. “Rabbit freezes, standing at his faint yellow shadow on the white door that leads to the hall, and senses he is in trap. It seems certain” (15). Being suffocated of the traps, he breaks the tightening net and swims towards his desired world and becomes irresponsible towards the whole family. Though he should be a responsible husband to Janice, father to Nelson and son to Mr. and Mrs. Angstrom, he roams here and there searching for the way to fulfill his own desires.

3.3. Unfulfilled Libidinal Yearning: Human Irresponsibility in Harry “Rabbit”

Angstrom

Rabbit Angstrom throughout the novel moves through the confrontation between his personal desires and responsibilities. The personal desire that Rabbit moves through is the psychical or libidinal one that we call psychosexual in the language of prominent psychologist and critic Sigmund Freud. Rabbit here yearns for

the fulfillment of his libidinal desires but the lack of the same results in frustration and irresponsibility in him. He seeks to escape from the routine of married life with his alcoholic child like wife Janice, when he thinks she can't fulfill her demands. He calls her dumb though she is not dumb physically. "God she is dumb. She really is" (39). Dumb refers to lack of passion and intelligence in Janice. Conveying his desire to escape, Rabbit says:

I don't know it seemed like I was glued in with a lot of busted toys and empty glasses and the television going and meals late or never and no way of getting out. Then all of sudden, it hit me how easy it was to get out, just walk out, and by damn it was easy. (91)

Rabbit whole over is disillusioned by the world he is living in and is comforted by the dilemma of either listening to his heart or the social obligations. "[...] guilt and responsibility slide together like two substantial shadows inside his chest" (263). But analyzing this character, we can say that Rabbit's heart seems stronger than his mind. Feelings and impulses have dominated reasons and arguments in his life. He follows what his heart commands him. Marty Tothero, his old basketball coach suggests Rabbit, "do what your heart commands. The heart is our only guide" (47). Rabbit following coach's suggestion in the novel does what his heart commands him. He does not like to stay in the narrow confinement of his house because such a confinement to him does not fulfill his desires. Commenting over the same nature of Rabbit, Jack Eccles says to Mr. Springer, "[...] His behaviour does not have reasons" (132). Hence, instead of giving interest to the demands of others, he tends to fulfill the demands of his heart at first.

There is the conflict between the conscious and unconscious part of Rabbit's mind in Updike's *Rabbit, Run*. Unconscious part of his mind is more active and

dominant than the conscious part of his mind. The libidinal force has driven rabbit all the time. Id has played the vital role in leading his life towards fulfilling his personal desires, neglecting the responsibilities towards others. Rabbit finds pleasure and excitement in the glittering flesh of a prostitute, Ruth. When Tothero wants Rabbit to get introduced with a new girl, Rabbit becomes happy. Tothero says, "Harry I've got a girl for you!" (43). Rabbit replies: "Great, Bring her in" (43). This immediate response of Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom to bring the girl to him is the result of unfulfilled libidinal yearnings piled upon his unconscious mind. But, suddenly, Rabbit doubts upon the statement of Tothero whether Tothero is talking about his own wife, Janice who is unable to satisfy him sexually. Rabbit asks, "You mean Janice?" (43). Rabbit abruptly produces the name of Janice out of disgust and frustration. Rabbit does not want to hear the name of his wife, because his wife is a mess for him; she is a trap for him. Hence, Rabbit tells Janice, "You are a mess" (11). Janice, who drinks, smokes and watches television lying on bed, does not care about the household activities. Rabbit, who wants to be neat and tidy, finds the apartment as:

The old-fashioned glass with its corrupt dregs, the chock-full ashtray balanced on the easy-chair arm, the rumpled rug, the floppy stacks of slippery newspapers, the kid's toys here and there broken and stuck and jammed, a leg off a doll and a piece of bent cardboard that went with some breakfast-box cutout, the rolls of fuzz under the radiators, the continual crisscrossing mess-clings to his back like a tightening net.

(14)

Rabbit goes through life serving his own self-interests. First and foremost, he leaves his wife because she cannot hold his interest any longer. When questioned about his leaving, he shows no remorse. One of the reasons he gives for leaving his

drunkard wife is: "she asked me to buy her a pack of cigarettes" (100). Socially, drinking and smoking are not womanly quality. Janice here in the novel is interested towards the drinking and smoking that Rabbit does not like and that is not destined to be taken by women. Rabbit on the other hand is giving up the habit of smoking too. "On the way home I threw my pack of into a garbage can. I' m giving it up" (10). He even does not like the taste of drinking. "I just don't like the taste" (38). Janice in this way is not determined to fulfill Rabbit's interest i.e. sensual ones but on the other hand is inclined to drinking and smoking leaving the apartment a complete mess. Seeing this sort of situation at the apartment, Rabbit is determined to run away from his general human responsibilities and tends to moves towards his own freedom to fulfill his sensual drives i.e. libidinal yearnings.

From his point of view, he is trapped in a dead-end situation. Rather than to stay in such a trap, he makes up his mind to run. He finds his way into the arms of a prostitute. Harry continues this behaviour of running back and forth throughout the book. Updike uses Rabbit's action to represent the freedom that Rabbit has when he is serving his own self-interests and the constraint he feels when he is tied down at home.

Rabbit, a former high school basketball star, who had broken record in a basketball tournament, now in the beginning of the novel appears in a business suit to play basketball again with some kids in a local community. Rabbit shows his skill and perfection in a basketball tournament with the kids even after so many years that really startle the boys. This makes Rabbit feel that he is still young, not getting old: "He wants to tell them there is nothing to getting old" (6). Rabbit hopes that he has still vigor and strength to revive the past glory. Rabbit takes a cigarette from his pocket and puts it into his mouth during the game. Rabbit's oral personality is seen

while he put cigarette into his mouth. The oral personality gets its pleasure from sucking and biting. Rabbit also takes pleasure from stabbing a cigarette into his mouth: "Rabbit tastes through sour after smoke the fresh chance in the air, plucks the pack of cigarettes from his bobbling shirt pocket and without breaking stride cans it in somebody's open barrel. His upper lip nibbles back from his teeth in self-pleasure" (7).

After ignoring the human responsibility, Rabbit begins to feel freedom and begins to wonder what is missing in his life. Rabbit wants to believe that there is more in the world for him than an alcoholic wife, a brainless job, and a dead-end life. He believes in the power of following his instincts, his dreams; without these, man is nothing. He states, "Funny, the world just can't touch you once you follow your instincts" (94). Updike thus urges us through Rabbit's own experience to question the power of societal rule by looking with ourselves for the answers and freedom of self-knowledge. Rabbit is frightened by the possibility that he has not yet lived life. He feels suffocated of Janice and believes that his son will be better cared for by his parents. Updike presents through Rabbit this individualist idea that, at times, our responsibility to ourselves may be far greater than that of our responsibility to others. In Rabbit's flight from home, his life no longer feels clogged by the net of responsibility that lies around him. At home, surrounded by filth, confusion, alcoholism and a lack of passion, Rabbit feels, "all the things inside his skull, the gray matter [...] seem clutter clogging the tube of his self"(85). Similarly, he notes the confusion and details of life that prevent so many people from following their instincts to happiness. This contrast is shown when he states, "Funny, how what makes you move is so simple and the field you move in is so crowded" (264). Society and its structure of responsibilities and obligations crowd this field.

Rabbit is a man who seeks transcendence through women's body. He feels depressed and monotonous with his wife, Janice but feels happy and bold at the presence of other women. Tothero, who was a coach for Rabbit in his school days at the first encounter with Rabbit, tries to make the situation normal between Rabbit and Janice. Tothero, making efforts to bring them into reconciliation, suggests Rabbit to take her in a normal way. But Rabbit has no intention to live with Janice. Tothero asks Rabbit, "What's happened to your home (38)?" Rabbit replies, "Well, it kind of went" (38). Again, Tothero asks, "How do you mean?" (38). Rabbit replies: "It was no good. I've run out. I really have" (38). Tothero suggests Rabbit, "That doesn't sound like very mature behaviour" (38). Rabbit calls his wife alcoholic. Tothero, hearing the complaint of Rabbit against his wife, asks him, "Did you drink with her?" (38). Rabbit replies, "No sir, never. I can't stand the stuff; I just don't like the taste" (38). From this conversation between Rabbit and Tothero, it is clear that there is no sound relationship between Rabbit and Janice. Hence, one of the main causes of Rabbit's frustration with Janice is alcoholism that is not generally considered woman quality.

Moreover, when Tothero offers Rabbit to go to restaurant, where there are many beautiful women and young girls, he becomes happy, because going to a restaurant is not a trap but a freedom: "He feels freedom like oxygen everywhere around him" (45). This very feeling of Rabbit undoubtedly proves the hypothesis that Rabbit is more driven by the libidinal urge than the conscious mind. On contrary, Rabbit becomes sad and hopeless when Tothero suggests him to make her wife happy by drinking with her together. Anyway, Rabbit prefers a restaurant to his house. Tothero introduces Rabbit with Ruth, a prostitute with the help of Margaret, who is also a prostitute. There are four people, who sit together, making introduction with Rabbit. Rabbit feels proud when Tothero mentions about his past life to these

prostitutes. Rabbit was a successful basketball player, who had broken record in basketball tournament, and people would like to be as Rabbit in those days. Tothero introduces Rabbit to prostitutes repeatedly as, "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 1950 and then he broke it in 1951, a wonderful accomplishment" (46). Rabbit's past life was really memorable. But now, his present life is miserable. He has to work as a demonstrator of a kitchen gadget called the Magi Peeler. His wife is lazy, and drinks alcohol all the time. On top of that, she is pregnant, who watches television lying on bed, neglecting her duty as a housewife. The reality is very much harsh and bitter, which he does not want to face. In the company of other women, Rabbit tastes the elixir of life, but he feels his life poisoned with his wife at home. As such, Rabbit decides to run away from the drab responsibilities he has to carry out.

Rabbit goes to take shelter in a fantastic world, where there is no trouble and hardship of life. Rabbit wants to be lost in the imaginative world, where he finds pleasure and happiness. Therefore, at the final moment when Rabbit runs, the narrator has permitted a sentence with the words "with sweet panic growing lighter and quicker and quieter" (264). Most of the time, we see Rabbit driven by his passion. His sexual desire seems to be unfulfilled. In the restaurant, with the prostitutes, Rabbit speaks, "God I'm hungry" (49). Rabbit does not hide his erotic desire, and speaks the truth, neglecting the conscious mind. The role of Id has become dominant in him. He does not repress and suppress his libidinal force. Tothero becomes happy to hear the word 'hunger', and he respects Rabbits' desire. Tothero asks them in a jocular way, "Where shall my little ones go?" (49). Rabbit says boldly, 'Here'? (49) Rabbit's impulses and instincts have been shown. When Rabbit produces the word 'hunger',

the prostitutes look at him curiously. Updike has shown the fact that man is naturally instinctive. Rabbit shows his instinctive nature by declaring his inner desire. Rabbit and Ruth go to a red booth in a restaurant. Rabbit is elated to be with her. Rabbit is happy when other people see him with a woman. He wants to spend his life in the company of women. Rabbit sees the essence of life in the flesh of women. Ultimate truth for Rabbit is women's body: "Rabbit is elated to think that a stranger passing outside the restaurant window, like himself last night outside that West Virginia diner, would see him with a woman" (50). Rabbit feels like touching Ruth's body because the burning passion of his heart for a woman cools down out of touching. Rabbit intentionally bumps against Ruth. "In arriving the booth, he bumps against her; the top of her head comes to his nose. The prickly smell of her hair stitches the store-bought scent stirred up on her"(50).The colourful light of the restaurant falls on Ruth's body, as a result of which, her body gleams, "The skin of her shoulders gleams and then dims in the shadow of the booth" (50). Rabbit is lost in the colourful skin of Ruth. His intention bumping against Ruth, his happiness to be with a woman and the description of Ruth's skin all can be taken as sensual images that Rabbit undergoes within his unconscious mind.

Rabbit, who is obsessed with the thought of Janice, has gone to the restaurant with Tothero for self-fulfillment. Tothero, giving suggestion to Rabbit not to take tension about Janice, says, "The real women are dropping down out of the tree" (48). After sometime stay at the restaurant, Rabbit forgets Janice and begins takes interest in the body of Ruth because she finds the real women quality in Ruth that lacks in Janice. Rabbit shows his animalistic nature when Ruth switches off the light. His unconscious mind or libido becomes dominant here. He tends to fulfill his libidinal desires that seem to be unfulfilled through out his life. "He knocks her arm down,

pulls her around, and kisses her. Its insanity, he wants to crush her [...] he is unconscious of their skins, it is her heart he wants to grind into his own, to comfort her completely" (66). Rabbit, who is really hungry for fulfilling his physical desire, holds Ruth and treats her wildly. Ruth becomes angry with the way Rabbit behaves. Rabbit bites lips, cheeks and other soft parts of Ruth's body roughly. Ruth shows her anger by telling Rabbit, "Get out" (68). Rabbit says, "Don't," "I had to hug you" (66). Rabbit does not think that his action hurts Ruth, which is wild and fierce. He wants to take physical satisfaction by giving pain and torture to the love object. So, Rabbit is a sadistic person. Ruth, who has suffered from the act of Rabbit, tells him, "I want you out of here" (67). Rabbit resists saying, "No you don't" (67). He wants to prove him as a lover, "I am a lover" (67). Rabbit is extremely driven by the force of libido. He cannot resist his passion. Rabbit shows his unfulfilled sexual desire by saying, "Let me undress you, please" (67). He further says, "I have to do something else, too" (67). Rabbit starts to take off the straps of her shoes: "he kneels at her feet and kisses the place on her finger where a ring would have been. Now that he is down there, he begins to undo the straps of her shoes" (68). Then after, Updike has presented the beautiful description of sensual scene between Rabbit and Ruth as:

He touches her caked cheeks; she seems small as he looks down into the frowning planes of her set, shadowed face. He moves his lips into one eye socket, gently, trying to say this night has no urgency in it, trying to listen through his lip to the timid pulse beating in the bulge of her lid [...] his mouth races across her face, nibbling, licking, so that she does laugh, tickled, and pushes away. He locks her against him, crouches, and presses his parted teeth into the fat hot hollow at the side of her throat. (69)

Rabbit convinces us that it is sex that he seeks for. It is the heart of Ruth he wants to grind into his own, to comfort her completely. As he embraces Ruth, the narrator presents rabbit's exclamation as: "It is not her body he wants, not the flesh and bones, but her, her" (69). Hence, it is proved that Rabbit seeks an escape through sensualism.

Rabbit feels pleasant not only with Ruth, but also with other women. In the restaurant, Rabbit is attracted to a waitress. Unconsciously he looks at the bra of a waitress: "And Rabbit watches her back recede of as if it is the one real thing in the world: the little triangle of black bra under the two blue-brown pillows of muscle" (152). Rabbit is attracted even to the wife of reverend Eccles. In the church, instead of getting concentrated on God, his mind is diverted towards a woman in a wide straw hat. "The wide hat graciously broadcasts the gentlest tilt of her head and turns the twist of blond hair at the nape of her neck into a kind of peeping secret he alone knows" (202). All these activities of Rabbit show that he, who is mostly driven by his erotic desires, neglects his responsibilities to others and is most of the time driven by his personal impulses or desires.

Updike has even used dreams to demonstrate the unconscious mind or id overlapping Rabbit's conscious one. After he goes to take some sort of help from Tothero, he sleeps at Tothero's apartment where he happens to have a dream. In the dream too, he sees a woman selling cake mix. "The woman came and touched him, hadn't buttoned her blouse more than one button from the last and upstairs asked him in her gritty sugar voice if he wanted the light on or off and, when out of a choked throat he answered off" (42).

From the above dream, we can say that Rabbit who is always predominated by the unconscious mind searches for an outlet, which he happens to accomplish through dream.

Though we see this twenty six-year old protagonist Rabbit running from the beginning of the novel till the very final line of the novel in the backdrop of 1950's, Rabbit is sometimes conscious of his family responsibility to some extent. Though Rabbit spends most of his time running outside world, taking pleasure in women's body, he returns to his home from time to time, as some important incidents occur in his family. Feeling liable towards his human responsibilities, Rabbit once says, "Help me Christ. Forgive me. Take me down the way. Bless Ruth, Janice, Nelson, my mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Springer, and the unborn baby" (78). But, we can say that Rabbit becomes responsible to some extent in such situations because of immediate sexual pleasures he has got through the foreign lap i.e. Ruth Leonard. Here, in his remarks too, he utters Ruth's name at first. It is because she is the real source for his sexual gratification.

The minister of the church Reverend Eccles informs Rabbit of his wife, who is going to have a baby. At this point, Rabbit goes to hospital to see his wife. Rabbit tells the nun in the hospital: "I think my wife is here" (167). He seems to take responsibility towards his wife by going into the hospital and taking care of his wife. But Rabbit feels nervous. What would Janice think about him? He had been wandering in the outside world for a long time, deserting his wife and son. After a long time, he is going to see his wife, who is going to deliver a baby. Rabbit feels guilty. He does not take it easy to seat in the waiting room of hospital. Rabbit takes two other people, who are waiting in the hospital for their patients, as the cops. He takes the hospital as the police station. Rabbit feels as if he is going to be under

arrest: "Rabbit sits down [...] he's in a police station and these other two men are the cops who made the arrest" (168). It seems that Rabbit feels suffocated and imprisoned when there comes the question of responsibility. But he feels free when he is devoid of responsibility. Rabbit knows that he has committed mistake. He feels guilty of his sin committed to his wife and son: "He's certain that as a consequence of his sin Janice or the baby will die" (169). Though there is the fact that Rabbit is aware of his wrongdoing, he cannot correct it because he is driven by his instincts and impulses.

Rabbit, making up his mind that he will change his behaviour and take responsibility over his family, briefly deserts the prostitute, Ruth. Rabbit wants to improve his instincts. He has the mixed feeling of fear and love toward Janice. Rabbit has fear because he has deserted Janice, leaving her alone in her pregnant condition. So, he comes, with heavy heart, to see Janice in the hospital. On reaching hospital, Rabbit goes near Janice and kisses her. Janice accepts his kiss, and to his surprise, Janice loves him by putting her arms around his head. The narrator remarks: "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" (174). This is the point of reconciliation between Rabbit and Janice.

Rabbit, who goes to the house of Eccles, minister of church, tells Lucy, wife of Eccles that he is going to improve his dealings with Janice: "I'm going to stop being naughty" (179). Lucy, becoming happy with Rabbit's improved nature, says, "You are very welcome" (181). Further, Lucy says, "Be good now" (181). Rabbit's parents are also happy to see his changed attitude towards his wife and son. His father-in-law forgives Rabbit for his treatment to Janice and provides Rabbit with a job in his car company. He believes that Rabbit will not run again, leaving Janice and his son. Rabbit is accepted in the family, as he is determined to carry out his

responsibility. Mr. Springer, who is the father of Janice, pays rent to the apartment of Rabbit, with the prospect that Rabbit will lead a responsible life. Rabbit now makes the room, which was in a chaotic and disordered condition, neat and clean. Rabbit thinks that Janice will be happy by seeing the room when she comes back from hospital: "Won't she be happy to see how we make everything?" (190). Rabbit even goes to church to ask for forgiveness. "By the time he enters the church he is too elevated with happiness to ask for forgiveness" (202). This time we find Rabbit's conscious mind dominating his unconscious one and he seems responsible to his duties.

However, Rabbit's condition does not remain the same. When he comes back to his apartment after entering the church, he again starts following his previous tendency. Instead of being committed to his wife and son, Rabbit, again, begins to show the symptom of being driven by his instinct. He is again driven by the unconscious mind or libido. Feelings and impulses start to overpower him. His conscious mind cannot work to lead him in a responsible track. When Rabbit returns home from church, his perspective towards his wife is lusty. There is a clash between unconscious and conscious mind, between id and ego. As Rabbit has extreme erotic desire towards Janice, he goes near her with the intention of fulfilling his sexual desire. Janice has arrived home just after being discharged from hospital giving birth to a baby girl. Rabbit does not think about the post delivery condition of Janice. Rabbit is here guided more by his unconscious mind. But, Janice on the other hand is not interested to fulfill Rabbit's desire this time. She complains to Rabbit and says, "Why don't you go out? You're making the baby nervous. You are making me nervous" (210). She further tells, "I just wish you would sit down or stop smoking or rock the baby or something. And stop touching me. It's too hot; I think I should be

back at the hospital" (210). Janice wants Rabbit to be guided more by the reason at the moment. On contrary, Rabbit is overwhelmed with sexual passion and tells Janice, "I love you" (210). Janice is aware of the intention of Rabbit that he is not expressing his love towards her out of sincerity. Janice says, "Stop it, you can't. I'm not lovable right now" (210). Janice protests against Rabbit's sexual desire because she is not in the condition of fulfilling his desire right at the very time.

After having supper later than they used to, Rabbit lies beside Janice. Now his mind is fascinated to fulfill his libidinal desire. But Janice simply thinks that he has come to lie beside her out of sincere love. Janice is unable to understand that Rabbit is extremely guided by libido. They lie sideways facing each other. Rabbit who is too much thirsty of quenching his desires starts to touch Janice: "He rubs her back first lightly, then toughly, pushing her chest against his, and gathers such a fuel of strength from her pliancy that he gets up on an elbow to be above her" (211). Rabbit reads her face whether she will reject or not in his plan. At first, Janice does not show any complaint: "She does not turn her head, but he reads no rejection in this small refusal of motion that lets him peck away awkwardly at a profile" (211). When Janice does not show any reaction to his act, Rabbit resumes rubbing her back. Rabbit keeps on robbing her back until his wrist aches. He thinks that he has brought Janice to her full emotion. Rabbit starts to take off her cloth: "He dares undo the two buttons of her nightie front and lifts the leaf of cloth so a long arc is exposed in the rich gloom of the bed, and her warm breast flattens against the bare skin of his chest" (212). Rabbit is unable to control his erotic desires. He knows very well that Janice has just come home from hospital after giving birth to a baby but his unconscious mind, a reservoir of id, wants the immediate gratification of his sexual desire. So, Rabbit wants to fulfill his sexual urge though she is not physically fit for it. Rabbit tells her, "Just a touch,

Jan. Just let me touch you" (212). Janice feels uneasy and uncomfortable with Rabbit and tells him, "Can't you go to sleep?" (212). Rabbit, replies, "No I can't. I can't. I love you too much" (212). Rabbit tries to touch her, but she pushes him back. She says, "You are just using me" (213). This refusal of Janice infuriates him. When Rabbit is extremely driven by his sex motive, he tells Janice, "Roll over" (212). Janice has fears that if she rejects his sexual urge Rabbit may leave her again. When Rabbit is in the position of having sex with Janice, she tells Rabbit, "Is this a trick your whore taught you?" (213). Janice is infuriated by the act of Rabbit. She says, "I am not your whore, Harry" (213). Rabbit feels humiliated and says, "that was the first thing I have asked from you since you came home" (213). Rabbit, who is flatly rejected by Janice, decides to run away again in the outside world, where his desires get fulfilled. Janice tries to persuade Rabbit, saying, "Why can't you try to imagine how I feel? I've just had a baby" (213). Rabbit shows his personal freedom by saying: "I can, I can but I don't want to, it's not the thing, the thing is how I feel. And I feel like getting out" (213). Janice requests Rabbit not to take such a harsh decision: "Don't. Harry. Don't" (213). As Rabbit is a man driven by his instinct and passion, he cannot consider other's feelings. Rabbit, whose personal desires remain unfulfilled, decides to run away from his wife and expresses his anger and says, "you can just lie there with your precious ass" (213). This activity of Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom to bear the responsibility to some extent for a few period of time but running away leaving the wife who has just delivered a baby girl gives us an idea about the confrontation going through his body between desire and responsibility.

Janice, after Rabbit deserts her again, drinks heavily to reduce the tension. Janice fears that her parents will throw blame on her for why Rabbit does not stay with her. Mrs. Springer doubts that the fault is not only of Rabbit, but Janice may be

equally responsible for it. Doubting upon Janice, her mother says, "The first time I thought it was all his fault but I'm not so sure any more. Do you hear? I'm not so sure" (224). Janice wants to hide the fact about Rabbit's escape and tells her mother, "He is going to sell a car" (224). Janice tells a lie to her parents about Rabbit because Janice hopes that Rabbit will return home soon. But, Rabbit does not return. Janice, in a drunken state, makes her effort to keep everything in order. Meanwhile, Janice takes the newly born baby, Rebecca, to the bathroom to bathe her. In her unconscious state of mind, the baby slips through her arms and drowns in the water. The baby dies by drowning in the bathtub. "The water wraps around her forearms like two large hands; under her eyes the pink baby sinks down like a gray stone" (226). The innocent baby, Rebecca, loses her life for good as a result of Rabbit's confrontation between desire and responsibility. If Rabbit had accepted his responsibility towards his wife and children, such catastrophe would not have occurred.

Rabbit truly believes that his purpose in life is to make himself happy and to know himself before turning and trying to help other people. His feelings and desires always come first. While he is selfish, Updike still presents Rabbit as the man who is strong enough to realize his own need to live life by fulfilling his own needs and finding his own happiness. Janice's statement about Rabbit helps to prove this. She states, "The only thing special about him is he doesn't care who he hurts or how much" (133). Rabbit does not follow the norm of being a devoted husband and father, and thus is a sinner in the eyes of the people.

Throughout the novel, John Eccles attempts to bring Rabbit "back to responsibility", as he feels it is the right thing to do. Rabbit's marriage is destructive, yet Eccles thinks it must be salvaged because "marriage is a sacrament" (229). This theory must be questioned, as it completely neglects the idea of what is positive to the

self. One cannot give to others unless he/she has first come to term with his/her own beliefs, morals, and happiness. Rabbit's uneasiness and unhappiness in marriage is an evidence of this. In home, Rabbit is confused, unhappy and trapped. On the run, away from society, he can think more clearly, is content and free.

Nearly at the end of the novel, Rabbit once again returns to his home when Jack Eccles informs him, "Harry, a terrible thing has happened to us"(230). But, before making such a decision to return home, Updike has shown a signal of dilemma going within Rabbit's mind. He fears that his freedom will be blocked if he goes to home. Narrator therefore writes about Rabbit's thinking, "there was something better for him than listening to baby's cry and cheating people in used car lots"(232). On the one hand, Rabbit wants to take responsibilities over his family. On the other hand, Rabbit fears that his life will be confined to the four walls of his house. Anyway, Rabbit decides to tackle the situation and comes home. At this point, Rabbit seems to take responsibilities over his family, undermining his personal desires i.e. he is able to dominate his id by ego. When Rabbit gets back to Springer's house he comes to know that Rebecca, newly born baby, is dead. Though it is Janice, who drinks heavily and drowns the baby in the bathtub unconsciously even Rabbit is also liable for the death. Both have to realize their mistakes. Mr. Springer makes his effort to bring them into reconciliation. Mr. Springer says, "I won't say I don't blame you because of course I do. But you're not the only one to blame" (234). Mrs. Springer also treats Rabbit nicely after Janice drowns the baby. Though Rabbit feels guilty in the beginning, he feels now bold, because Mr. Springer inspires him by saying, "Life must go on. We must go ahead with what we have left" (235). Rabbit is, now, accepted in the family. Mr. Springer says, "We consider you in our family, Harry, despite" (235). Rabbit is really grateful to Mr. Springer for making a speech so generous. Other people also

make their efforts to bring Rabbit and Janice into reconciliation. Tothero, who is now old and sick, comes to meet Rabbit. Tothero suggests Rabbit with the intention of leading his life normally. He says, "Right and wrong aren't dropped from the sky. We. We make them. [...] misery follows their disobedience. Not our own, often at first not our own. Now you've had an example of that in your own life" (240). Tothero further says, "I warned you Harry, but youth is deaf. Youth is careless" (240). Tothero suggests Rabbit to lead a good life. Man is not free from committing mistake. Both right and wrong are the parts of life. When man commits mistake, he has to correct it. In the same way, Rabbit might have committed mistakes in the past. But, now, it is time to correct it. Tothero tells Rabbit, "Good. Ah. You are still a fine man, Harry. You have a healthy body" (240). Similarly, Jack Eccles also suggests Rabbit to lead a responsible life, "Be a good husband. A good father"(241).

Rabbit, who had asked forgiveness for his sin before changes suddenly. During the funeral of the child, he abruptly says, "I did not kill her" (253). Rabbit again wants to escape from the difficult situation. He throws blame on Janice that she is the right person who has murdered the baby. Instead of being bold and responsible, Rabbit runs away. Rabbit thinks that injustice has been done to him because all people look at him in the funeral as if he is the real murderer. Thinking that he is not a murderer himself, he runs away again, leaving his family behind.

When Rabbit runs away from the funeral ceremony of his baby, Rebecca, he goes to take shelter to prostitute, Ruth again. Rabbit finds peace and solace in going to the apartment of Ruth. He thinks that Ruth can understand his instincts and impulses. In the family, Rabbit feels caged; his desires are blocked. Though Rabbit made efforts of taking responsibility over his wife and son he could not be committed to it. Instead of taking the responsibility as a husband, Rabbit throws blame on Janice for the death

of innocent baby, Rebecca. With the intention of fulfilling his desire, Rabbit goes to Ruth. But Ruth is already changed. Seeing the behaviour of Rabbit, who makes Ruth pregnant, but does not take care of her, Ruth grows critical to him. After knowing the fact that Ruth is pregnant, Rabbit is happy and utters word "Great" (258). Rabbit wants to take the advantage of the softness of her body. Growing angry, Ruth tells Rabbit, "Go away" (259). Ruth further says, "You are nothing, you are not help" (259). When Rabbit tells Ruth, "I love you", she answers, "That means nothing from you" (261). Ruth purposes Rabbit to marry her, but, Rabbit denies. This means Rabbit is a man, who does not like marriage. Rabbit thinks that marriage only creates problems. If Rabbit was committed to marriage, he would not leave his wife, Janice. Rabbit, driven by impulses and instincts, seeks personal happiness. In the presence of Ruth, Rabbit's unconscious state of mind becomes active. Rabbit wants the immediate fulfillment of his erotic desire. So he catches the body of Ruth. Ruth says, "Don't touch me" (261). Ruth calls him "Mr. Death"(260). Ruth does not believe anything in the argument of Rabbit. When Rabbit insists her to fulfill his desire, Ruth tells Rabbit that he should marry her first. Ruth further puts condition to Rabbit that either he should divorce his wife or forget her. When Ruth put him in a trap, Rabbit thinks that it will be better for him to run. Rather than accepting Ruth as a wife, it is easy for him to run. Rabbit only makes pregnant to the women, but doesn't take responsibility. It is not fixed where Rabbit will go. The novel ends openly with Rabbit's running: "he runs. Ah: runs. Runs" (264).

Rabbit's final action proves that he gets pleasure and happiness from following his own instinct. Despite his return and his equivocal nature due to his societal conscience, Rabbit makes his choice and runs again. In the end of the novel, after

escaping his wife, dead child, parents, and the net of his societal obligation, Updike writes of Rabbit's new freedom:

His hands lift of their own and he feels the wind on his ears even before its heels hitting heavily on the pavement, but with an effortless gathering in out of a kind of sweet panic, growing lighter and quicker and quieter, he runs. (264)

In leaving behind the responsibilities and society's creed that human beings must serve to others, Rabbit is finally freed. He is quick and light, headed somewhere other than where he is trapped from following his own instinct and serving himself. It does not matter where he is going; he is finally following his own happiness and finding self-fulfillment. Updike states, "Ah: runs. Runs" (264). There is a sense of enlightenment and celebration in Rabbit's flight. He has found the purpose of human life and has begun to search for the answer of "Why am I me? (243), as Updike deem, is necessary to self-fulfillment. Despite the difficulty Rabbit has in negotiating between his societal responsibilities and his right to live life, Updike leaves us with Rabbit's decision to run He feels himself free and finds the true purpose of human life i.e. personal contentment.

John Updike's novel, *Rabbit, Run* is a story of the angst of a young man who most of the time is driven by sexual impulses and desires. Updike's use of figurative languages in the novel also facilitate to the take out the psychoanalytical meaning. Updike uses the sexual image of America as a woman when Rabbit imagines driving south desiring to leave his alcoholic wife Janice. "[...] his image is of himself going right down the middle, right into the broad soft belly of the land" (29). Updike's indication of Rabbit's search for orange groves as ripe orange is also significant as ripe orange signifies passion. Rabbit strives for the same perfection and skill in his

life that he had known in the basketball court. But this time, the perfection he seeks is not through the game of basketball but through the act of lovemaking “The ball, rocketing off the crotch of the rim [...] drops into the rim, whipping the net with a ladylike whisper” (5-6). Kishore Purohit further comparing the game of basketball with Rabbit’s sexual life and giving his reason for leaving Janice says:

If basketball can trigger a peak-experience, he can also seek that experience in sex. But basketball cannot be a lifetime sport. So the other alternative left for him is sex. Finding Janice, his alcoholic wife, uncooperative in bed, Rabbit walks out on her. (231)

When Rabbit can’t satisfy himself through Janice, he moves to the lap of Ruth Leonard who is capable of gratifying him. He finds Ruth capable of offering him emotional succor. A renowned critic Detweiler compares Ruth and Janice and comments: “If Janice is neither, Ruth seems to hold the promise of becoming both. As a prostitute, she has the sexual sophistication that Janice lacks; she also possesses motherly nature and attributes that are alien to Rabbit’s wife” (55). Rabbit is very much happy and satisfied to be with Ruth and calls the occasion of their coming together their “wedding night,” (69) which suggests that he wants to make a ceremony of their union. Making love to her, he finds his “love and pride revive” (74). These situations in the novel show that Janice lacks the passion Rabbit expects in a woman that compels him to leave Janice.

Rabbit’s attitude of finding transcendence through women’s body is same like that of Byronic hero Don Juan. Rabbit, like Don Juan, a legendary hero, in the backdrop of 1950s moves thenceforward to fulfill his libidinal yearnings. His tendency of becoming happy in the presence of other women instead of gluing to his wife is very significant. Mrs Springer’s remarks also help to attest Rabbit’s

personality. She says, "I don't know how many women he has". (135) Comparing Rabbit with modern Don Juan, the famous feminist critic Connell states:

Rabbit, like Updike's later suburban Don Juan, knows how to take advantage of vulnerability. Janice and Ruth and even Lucy Eccles, are less susceptible to Rabbit's charm and sexuality than to his unusual sensitivity to women. He observes woman closely, testing the waters, gauging and interpreting their reactions and estimating other women. (78-79)

The novel has open ending. We don't know where Rabbit goes eventually after Ruth too discards him. Rabbit's denial of marrying Ruth is noteworthy in the novel. This means Rabbit is a man, who does not like marriage and to be glued with a single woman. Analyzing Rabbit's behaviour from above circumstances, we can say that like Connell's argument, Rabbit is a modern Don Juan who runs and runs with his inner feeling and impulses to find some more pretty women to fulfill his libidinal yearnings that is left unfulfilled.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

Libidinal Forces: Causes of Human Irresponsibility

The protagonist Rabbit in Updike's *Rabbit, Run* is an erotic personality guided most of the time by the libidinal yearnings who refuses to compromise his freedom of living with prevailing social restrictions in the backdrop of 1950s. Rabbit entrapped in a net of familial responsibility that acts as a barrier in his fulfillment of sensual instincts deserts his dull, old fashioned, drinking pregnant childlike wife Janice and their son Nelson to live with a prostitute Ruth Leonard.

It is all known that 1950s was the period in which conformity was questioned and challenged. Beat writers in New England rejected uniform middle-class culture and sought to overturn sexual and social conservatism of the period. Similarly, Rabbit, the protagonist in the novel tries to challenge the rigid routes drawn by the cartographers of society and runs from the human responsibilities to fulfill his libidinal yearnings.

As proposed by Sigmund Freud, the most of the individuals' mental processes are unconscious and they are motivated by sexuality that he calls libido or sexual energy. In other words, libido is the most motivating force in human beings. When this libido is left unfulfilled, human beings are led towards the path of irresponsibility. The same force is dominant in the life of twenty-six year-old protagonist Rabbit Angstrom in *Rabbit, Run*. Rabbit becomes irresponsible and leaves home in order to find the same gratification of sexuality he lacks in conjugal life with Janice.

Rabbit as a whole depicts a personality who tries to seek transcendence through women's body. Rabbit moves to the lap of Ruth Leonard, a prostitute when his old-fashioned and dull minded wife, Janice can't satisfy him sexually. After

staying two solid months with Ruth, he however seems somehow responsible towards his familial responsibilities and returns to his wife when she is in labor. It is because he is always in confrontation between desire and responsibility and he seems shortly responsible after his libidinal craving gets accomplished. His staying with Ruth for two months work as a life force in his life. However, he again deserts Janice when she discards his proposal of having sex telling him that she is not ready because of her post natal situation. These actions of Rabbit without doubt help us to prove that he all the times is driven by his instincts and impulses i.e. libido. Reason does not work in the life of Rabbit but instinctive drives or libidinal yearnings always come foremost in him. Rabbit is a man more driven by heart rather than by his mind. Instincts and impulses have dominated reasons and arguments in his life. He follows what his heart commands him and feels pleasant in the presence of other women but feels sad and depressed with his wife, as his wife cannot satisfy this twenty-six year-old young man. Rabbit truly believes that his purpose in life is to make himself happy and to know himself before turning and trying to help other people. His sexual experiences with Ruth help him achieve a certain degree of self-actualization and offer him emotional and spiritual succor and help to fill the gap Janice has left in his life.

Thus, as human experiences like anxiety, fear, desire, emotions, etc. are the elements that provide a strong support for the psychiatric problems resulting in frustration, irresponsibility and conflict, human irresponsibility is noticeable in the novel. The psychic force libido has predominated Rabbit's conscious mind or rationality, as a result of which he is becoming irresponsible. Therefore, *Rabbit, Run* is purely a psychoanalytical novel that explores the issue of human irresponsibility which has occurred because of libidinal forces that is leading the life of young and erotic protagonist Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom.

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