

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

**Conflict Between Desire for Individual Freedom and Social  
Responsibility: A Comparative Study of Oe's *A Personal Matter* and  
Updike's *Rabbit, Run***

**A Thesis submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan  
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The thesis entitled "Conflict Between Desire for Individual Freedom and Social Responsibility: A Comparative Study of Oe's *A Personal Matter* and Updike's *Rabbit, Run*" by Mr. Laxmi Nath Sharma has been submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University. It has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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### **Abstract**

To read John Updike's novel *Rabbit Run* and Kenjaburo Oe's novel *A Personal Matter* is to decode both the protagonists Rabbit and Bird respectively in the midst of psychological tension created by the routine of unfulfilling married life with their wives and children. They can neither suppress their desires to be free nor can avoid the social responsibilities, so torn between two conflicting choices. Rabbit and Bird both having name from non-human world, represent animal nature and try to fulfill their suppressed desires by neglecting their familial responsibilities and taking shelter in sexual perversion and alcoholism. Rabbit in the *Rabbit Run* guided by Id, the psychological motif he inhabits, runs forever instead of returning to his family to cope with the reality and Bird, in *A Personal Matter*, though guided by the same motif returns to his familial responsibilities when his Super-ego creates an unconscious sense of guilt. However, the desired goal of both of the protagonists remains unfulfilled throughout.

## Contents

Acknowledgement	iii
Abstract	iv
<b>Chapter I: Introduction</b>	<b>1-11</b>
General Introduction	1
An Introduction to Life and Works of John Updike and Kenjaburo Oe	2
Review of Literature	8
An Outline of the Thesis	10
<b>Chapter II: Theoretical Modality</b>	<b>12-24</b>
Freud and Psychoanalysis	12
The Freudian Psyche	15
Two Basic Instincts: Eros and Thanatos	17
Dream Interpretation	19
Dream Mechanism	20
Dreams and Artifacts	21
Oedipus Complex	22
Psychoanalysis and Literature	24
<b>Chapter III: Textual Analysis</b>	<b>25-66</b>
Conflict between Desire for Individual Freedom and Social Responsibility in <i>Rabbit, Run</i>	25
Imagery and Symbolism	42
Conflict between Desire for Individual Freedom and Social Responsibility in <i>A Personal Matter</i>	44
Imagery and Symbolism	64
<b>Chapter IV: Conclusion</b>	<b>67-69</b>
Conflict in Oe's <i>A Personal Matter</i> and Updike's <i>Rabbit, Run</i>	67
Work Cited	70-72

## Chapter I

### Introduction

#### General Introduction

Through the presentation of the characters who run away from the social and familial responsibility, Kenjuro Oe in *A Personal Matter* and John Updike in *Rabbit, Run* try to dramatize the conflict between desire for individual freedom and social and familial ties that restrict the freedom.

Oe's *A Personal Matter* and Updike's *Rabbit, Run* have established both writers as widely acclaimed novelists. Although they wrote these novels at different scenarios, certain parallel lines can be drawn between their works with respect to subject matter, characters and their psychological motifs and behaviour. Oe and Updike have made a vigorous attempt to depict the working of the mind of the youth of 1960s with the effect of war in Japan and 'inner-directed' American youths of 1960s respectively.

Updike's hero Rabbit has to be a good son, good husband, good worker and a good father but he is unable to be so before his alcoholic wife who keeps things in disorder and even allows her baby to drown into a bathtub which again causes Rabbit to run. He then escapes his fate through alcoholism and adultery. He seeks truth through woman's body and engages himself with a whore named Ruth. There he enjoys freedom from familial ties. Family is the bondage for him which he proves by rejecting to have a baby from already pregnant Ruth too.

Similarly, Oe's protagonist Bird runs away from familial responsibilities because his desires remain unfulfilled. He is unable to cope with reality, to take the parental responsibility, especially to be a father of a monster baby whom he wants to see dead. In other words he fears the prospect of fatherhood that will interfere with the realization of his dream to go to Africa, his dream land. His escaping to the world of sex, fantasy, and

alcoholism is away from familial ties from which he wants to be free. He fears the words "vagina" and "womb", so, his girl friend, a sex expert cures his impotence by offering anal intercourse. He gets comfort in such acts and thinks his desire to be fulfilled. Thus, by presenting such heroes Oe and Updike have succeeded in portraying the mind that works to the 1960s youths and therefore both novels are able to be compared to each other.

### **An Introduction to the life and works of John Updike and Kenjaburo Oe**

#### **John Updike: *Rabbit, Run***

Born in Shillington, Pennsylvania in 1932, John Hoyer Updike gained education from public schools in Shillington; Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, A. B. (summa cum laude) 1954; Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Arts, Oxford, on Knox Fellowship. After his graduation he married Mary Pennington in 1953 and had two sons and two daughters. When he faced divorce he then married Martha Bernhard in 1977.

Updike began his career as a staff reporter of *The New Yorker* in 1955. As prolific a novelist and man of letters as the post war period can offer, Updike began his outpouring of fiction, poetry, short stories and essays with a volume of poetry, *The Carpentered Hen* in 1958. His first novel *The poorhouse Fair* (1958) won the Rosenthal Award. A year later it was followed by *Rabbit, Run*, a novel that examines the experiences of a young man who is trapped in an unfulfilling married life who wants to desert his wife and children and wander aimlessly.

Since writing *Rabbit, Run* Updike has written three other novels about Rabbit, at approximately ten year intervals: *Rabbit Redux* (1971), *Rabbit is Rich* (1981) and *Rabbit at Rest* (1990) which established him as widely acclaimed novelist. He has written twenty-one novels altogether, volumes of poetry and many collections of short stories. His other novels *The Centaur* (1963), *Of the Farm* (1965), *Couples* (1968), *A Month of Sundays* (1975), *The Coup* (1978), *Roger's Version* (1986), *Brazil* (1988) and *Toward the End of Time* (1997) are

most memorable, but Updike has so consistently created his own world that his other works, especially the short story collection *Pigeon Feathers* (1962), *The Music School* (1966) and *Museums of Women* (1972) also contain many pleasures and moments of illumination.

It is common to all of Updike's Fiction that "a referential and evocative prose that enwraps its traditionally realistic subjects in a web of both the scenes Updike depicts and the minds of the characters he inhabits" (Braudy, 146). He is not solely associated with one particular geographic or social milieu rather he experiments with various forms and locales. The feature of Updike's writing is that he is celebrated for his novels that depict men struggling against responsibility, which we find in the series of Rabbit novels. Further his literary nature is much more assimilative than distilled, and his urge to push into new literary spaces gives his works a scope and complexity and variety that contrast strongly with the purity and single mindedness of his colleagues.

Updike, through his much more elaborated and therefore more self-indicating prose, continually risks deflation and a misanthropic interpretation of the world. He writes with wide interests, playfully acute language in rich and complex form and deals with the theme of sex, religion and responsibility. He catches the feel of American towns of the second half of twentieth century, the mores and expectations of the people especially of middle-class, their goods and habits. His characters are painted not as bastions of morality, instead, they are entirely human. So his view of America-based implicitly pastoral and Edenic visions updated by modern sex and contemporary openness-lacks the irony, distrust, and authorial suspicion that transform ordinary into extraordinary. So, in recognition of contribution to twentieth century American writing Updike is awarded with several awards and two Pulitzer Prizes.

### **Kenjaburo Oe: *A Personal Matter***

Born in Ehime Prefecture on the island of Shikoku in 1935, Kenjaburo Oe was raised in a prominent Samurai family. After the completion of school education he started his career



as a writer by writing two plays before entering University's Department of French Literature in 1954.

One of the foremost figures in contemporary Japanese literature, Oe is regarded for his intensely imagined and formally innovative novels examining the sense of alienation and anxiety of post-war generation. His fiction is both profoundly intellectual and emotionally raw. He portrays the unique agonies and dilemmas of his characters with universal significance of their suffering. The major emotional, imaginative and intellectual influences to which he has been subjected include a childhood in a remote Shikoku village followed by the impact of the city; the war, the Occupation of Japan, and the subsequent sense of cultural dislocation during his formative years; the ideas of Sartre and other writers in French and English; and a number of traumatic experiences in his personal life. These influences at times prove difficult to reconcile, yet at others they are fused by a somber, sardonic and occasionally grotesque poetic imagination to produce work of an unusual power. written in prose, heavily influenced by French and English, that represents, particularly in the earlier works, a conscious attempt to enrich the expressive powers of the Japanese language.

His official debut on the literary scene came with *Shisha no Ogori* (tra. *Lavish Are the Dead*, 1965). He followed this with short stories like *The Catch* (1959). Oe's first novel *Memushiri Kouchi* (1958) won great praise, established him in the foremost of writers of the day. The birth of his first son with brain damage in 1964 caused Oe to incorporate his personal account into literary domain. The novel that gained international reputation is *Kojinteri na Taiken* (1964; *A Personal Matter*), which tells the story of a twenty-seven year old man nicknamed "Bird" whose wife gives birth to a brain damaged son, that makes him to be torn with two conflicts. Oe's concern with sickness and sexual perversion, an expression of a deeper spiritual malaise signals his commitment to honestly portraying the darkest neurosis of contemporary humanity.

Collection of Oe's essays and of his fiction appeared in 1965 and 1966 respectively. In his essay Oe has an influential voice in the Japanese community, writing about such political issues as Hiroshima and World War II, about such intellectual question as the philosophy of existentialism. His universally acclaimed novel *The Silent Cry* (1967), which was awarded the Tanizaki Junichiro Prize, is innovative and densely poetic portrayal of two brothers who clash over the different interpretation of the family history. Life with retarded son is again Oe's subject in the 1976 novel *The Pinch Runner Memorandum*. He has incorporated the traditional values and styles of Japanese writing with modern and postmodern western influences. Yet his skill and style have brought him national and international acclaim. In the fall of 1994 Oe was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

**Synopsis of the novel: *Rabbit, Run***

John Updike's novel *Rabbit, Run* is a study of the sexual aberration of a highly disturbed young man. The title itself tells a good deal about this rather frightening portrait of a mixed-up youth.

As the novel opens, Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom, a 26 year old former High School basketball star finds himself trapped (like a rabbit) in a marriage that is on the rocks, with a young son and a job he loathes-demonstrating a kitchen gadget called Magipeeler. Coming home from work one day, "Harry stops to play hoops with some neighborhood kids and revels in his ability to tool on them, until he starts sucking wind" (Commager,13). When he gets home his pregnant wife is drunk and he goes out to get their son from his mom's house, but ends up driving to West Virginia instead. Stopping at a roadside café and examining the clientele he wonders, "Is it just these people I'm outside, or is it all America" (Updike, 31)?

Rabbit decides to bail out on his family but wants to get some advice from his High School basketball coach, who proceeds to set him up with a whore named Ruth. Rabbit moves in with her and when sneaks home to get some of his clothes, he is corralled by the

family minister Jack Eccles, who asks him one of the great questions of the age of divorce: "Do clean clothes means so much to you? Why cling to that decency if trampling on others is so easy" (91)?

Harry, of course is unable to answer this question, but he agrees to meet with the minister again and they become golf partners. Meanwhile, Harry takes a job as a gardener and lives with his trollop. But when his wife Janice gives birth to a daughter he moves back home (leaving the now pregnant other woman behind) and takes a job at his father-in-law's used car lot.

When one night Harry decides that he must have sex, his wife spurns him and Harry takes off again. He knows that he should go home but "something held him back...the feeling that somewhere there was something better for him than listening to babies' cry" (223). Meanwhile, as Harry wonders about, his wife proceeds to get drunk and while trying to give the baby a bath, accidentally drowns her.

At the funeral, Harry turns to his wife and says, "Don't look at me I didn't kill her" then runs away (253). He goes to his other woman and tells her she has to have the baby, but hardly meets with a friendly reception because he wants baby without marriage. He goes out for some groceries and just starts running.

Rabbit is completely self-centered. His job isn't good enough for him, his wife isn't good enough for him, his life isn't good enough for him, and so, he is perfectly willing to destroy what he has and abandons the obligations he's taken on, in order to go in search of something better.

### **Synopsis of the novel: *A Personal Matter***

Kenjaburo Oe's novel *A Personal Matter* depicts the life of a man who, in order to get individual freedom runs away from life and responsibility.

The novel begins in an unspecified city in Japan where the protagonist "Bird" is awaiting the birth of his first child. Unfortunately, when his wife gives birth to a deformed baby, Bird is confronted by a concrete problem, a problem threatening his future freedom. He is devastated by a sense of shame of being a father of monster baby and may now be trapped in a cage called parental responsibility. The boy, looking like a two-headed monster, appears to have a brain-hernia and the doctors tell Bird that the baby will probably die or be a vegetable for life. Bird is horrified that he chooses to let the baby die rather than face life tied to a retarded son. While his wife and child are in hospital, Bird runs off to the apartment of young widow friend Himiko, where he escapes into a world of fantasy, sex and alcohol. He loses his teaching job after being so hung over that he vomits during a lecture. Meanwhile, the baby being fed only on sugar water refuses to die, so Bird takes him to an abortionist to have him killed. After he moves the baby from the hospital, however, Bird begins to have second thought about his decision, and then returns the baby to the hospital, realizing that he can't keep running away from his responsibilities forever. Doctors discover that the hernia is benign tumor and after successfully operating, they announce that the baby will be normal, though with low IQ. Finally willing to accept responsibility and with an infant son Bird prepares to pay for the operation with the money he had saved for his personal pursuit, and is ready to donate blood for the son. No longer driven by the desire to test himself in Africa, Bird is content to work as a guide for foreign tourists to support his wife and son.

### **Review of Literature**

A host of critics have interpreted and analyzed the texts *Rabbit, Run* (1960) and *A Personal Matter* (1964) since their publication. Both the texts are rich in their criticism of various perspectives. Many critics have given critical responses to *Rabbit, Run* showing their concern over the issues related to it as literary work and therefore a depiction of time and

place. Catherine Morley, analyzing Updike's juxtaposition of the individual and the nation and myth and history remarks:

Rabbit is the product of, not of Updike, but of these larger forces of history. One might conjecture that Rabbit is, in fact a symbol of the post war nation itself: his youth and innocence, that of the quiet and tranquil Eisenhower presidency, and his adolescence the hedonistic and experimental America of the 1960s. Mid-life crisis and disillusionment with self-identity come with the gasoline crisis of the late 1970s. (4)

Another critic Leo Braudy ignores the actions of Rabbit as the result of psychological and emotional decision, instead focuses on the fate that makes him such runner. He says:

*Rabbit, Run* focuses on Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom, a former basketball star in Biff Lowman mold whose life has been one downhill slide since the triumphs of high school; his only decision to act in the drifting stability that seems to be his destiny is to desert his wife and young children and, once again aimlessly run. (9)

Similarly, we find Joseph Hendine's critical responses focusing on Rabbit's physical environment which causes him to run. Hendine also ignores the psychological problem that makes Rabbit run away: "Rabbit has had a taste of abundance as a high school basketball star. At twenty-six he is married, aged by his heavily pregnant wife, who drinks too much, by his concern for his two-year-old son, by his humiliating job, and by his fear of becoming like his father. He runs away" (271).

The critics who have given critical responses on *A Personal Matter* also focus on its meaning related to history, politics and the problem of existence. Exposing the causes of sex, violence and political excessiveness, the critic and translator of *A Personal Matter* John Nathan remarks: "It is the emptiness and enervation of life in such a world, the frightening

absence of continuity, which drive Oe's hero beyond the frontiers of respectability into the wilderness of sex and violence and political fanaticism" (x).

Washington Post reviewer Geoffrey Wolff declares that *A Personal Matter* "reeks of vomit and spilled whisky. Its surreal characters are all vegetables, cut off from history and hope. They define themselves by their despair. They use sex to wound and humiliate one another. They trick themselves with hopeless dreams of a new life, far away" (250). Yoshida Sanroku transcending Oe's implied message argues: "the implication that the baby's deformity might be linked to the delayed reaction of nuclear fallout expands the scope of the incidents into a much larger context" (10). Another critic Douglas S. Wood sees problem in Bird's existence: "The novel amply depicts the existential struggle Bird is feeling. He has to exist as a schoolteacher, as a husband, as a father, as a lover, and on top of them as an independent individual. He tries to find his existence in dream but finally locates himself in social reality" (51).

These critics also ignore Bird's desire to live as an impulsive creature and a sex expert guided by his own motifs. So, this research focuses on the psychological problems that cause the two protagonists act in such a way that they are guided by certain mental and emotional thoughts. To prove these impulses this research tries to develop Freudian Psychoanalysis as a theoretical tool. To know how and why this theoretical modality is supportive of the hypothesis, here is its brief introduction along with the textual contexts.

Since psychoanalysis is method of investigating mental process and treating neurosis and some other disorder of the mind, it focuses on the mental disorder of the suffering persons. According to Freud, the development of a person's identity is constructed biologically, s/he is therefore irrational by nature. The irrationality always tries to get outlet and guides the person to do socially immoral acts. In the present texts both of the protagonists-Updike's Rabbit and Oe's Bird leave their familial and social responsibility and

run away to get personal freedom, where they think they find a comfort. Since they indulge themselves into alcohol and adultery they are not guided by morality. And the person who is guided by Id, an irrational territory of human psyche in Freudian term can't cope with reality and find himself/herself in problem. Here, they are the patients of transference neurosis resulting from the conflict between Ego and Id. So, this research tries to analyze the conflict between these two antagonistic forces that has direct connection to the conflict between personal desire and social responsibility.

### **An Outline of the Thesis**

This thesis has been divided into four chapters. Chapter-one deals with introductory outline to both writers-Oe and Updike, their works for this research and introduction to the present research work, the general survey of the novels along with a short introduction of the theoretical tool- Freudian Psychoanalysis.

Similarly chapter-two is about the literary background which has been considered as a theoretical base for this research and discusses the terms related to it. Likewise, chapter-three is spent on discussing textual interpretation of both texts- *Rabbit, Run* and *A Personal Matter* on the basis of theoretical model. The extracts from the texts provide evidence for analysis. Finally conclusion is drawn in chapter-four, which has summed up the whole research work.

## Chapter II

### Psychoanalysis : A Theoretical Model

#### Freud and Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis emerged specially from a therapeutic technique which the Viennese neurologist Sigmund Freud developed for the treatment of hysteria and neurosis at the end of the nineteenth century. Thomas Maurtner writes: "Sigmund Fraud coined the term psychoanalysis in 1896 and used it to designate his *theory of mind*, as well as a certain *method of investigation*, and *certain therapeutic method*. The primary aim was to deal with neurosis and psychosis" (247).

A description of the cure, which one of Freud's patient ingeniously called 'the talking cure', gives an idea of the unusual origin of this approach to literature. The therapy evolved from the initial observation that patients were relieved of their neurotic symptoms by recalling the memory of certain events and ideas related to infantile sexuality. During the cure the patient and analyst interchange the words and analyst draws the patient's attention to



signs of forgotten or repressed memories which perturb his/her speech. "The neurosis and psychosis are" Maurtner says, "caused by memories of painful experiences which are repressed, confined to the unconscious level of the individual's mind, and by bringing them to awareness, relief or cure can be achieved" (247). But, "for the therapy to work, the patient must obey the fundamental rule that s/he must say everything that comes into his or her mind even if it is disagreeable, or unimportant or nonsensical" (Surprenant, 199). The patient is pressed to tell embarrassing thoughts which s/he would rather keep quiet about. However, a great difficulty is that s/he is also curiously supposed to tell the analyst what s/he does not know; that is thoughts which are so thoroughly unfamiliar to him/her that they appear to be anything but his/her. Surprenant says: "The unfamiliarity comes from the fact that they both reveal and conceal something which is repressed or unconscious, and which tries to return" (Fraud, 149). With the analyst thinking him the reincarnation of important figure from his/her past, the patient repeats repressed affective experiences. "Symptoms, mental illness, and even normal mental life remains inexplicable for Fraud without the hypothesis that unconscious mental activity permanently determines, gives a form to, and participates in our conscious life" (Surprenant,199). From the 1890's onwards, "psychoanalysis endeavored to provide a theory for explaining this distributing participation, and a therapy for alleviating its pathological effects" (Meredith, 369).

Psychoanalysis studied neurotic symptoms in conjunction with dreams, jokes and the psychopathology of everyday life-that is, mistakes of all sorts, such as slip of tongue or of the pen bungled action, forgetting-as well as art, literature, and religion with a view towards establishing the laws of functioning of the 'mental apparatus', as Freud called his hypothetical model of the mind or the psyche. In the course of psychological investigation, Freud had developed the dynamic form of psychology that he called: "Psychoanalysis as a means of analysis and therapy for neurosis, 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" (Abrams, 248).

So, psychoanalysis covers all the areas related to human activities. Emphasizing its scope and area Surprenant writes: "Psychoanalytic concepts and technique, that are conceived as being generally valid for the interpretation of all types of human activity, including art and literature" (200).

Most of our actions are motivated by the psychological forces over which we have limited control. In other words psychoanalysis is "a method of investigating mental process and treating neuroses and some other disorder of the mind" (Webster, 1158). Psychoanalysis is used in three ways: "To designate a loosely knit body ideas on the nature of human mind, in particular personality development and psychopathology; to describe a technique of therapeutic intervention in a range of psychological disturbance; to designate a method of investigation" (Encyclopedia, 137).

Psychoanalytical literary criticism takes a literary piece primarily as an expression of the state of mind and the structure of the personality of an author. Regarding the literary text J.A. Cuddon writes that psychoanalysis analyses characters invented by authors especially the language they use, this is known as the Freudian imagery. The fundamental psychodynamic model proposes that mental illness is caused by unresolved, unconscious conflicts originating in childhood. Furthermore, in such cases defense mechanism such as repression of unpleasant memories serve to protect the Ego. Neurotic symptoms are argued to be the result of the conflict between repressed or unfulfilled desires and attempts to control or resolve them. Freud argues that recovery depends on insight and working through past problems.

Freud's major contribution reached the peak when he published his famous book *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1900. Since the publication of this book psychoanalysis has become an autonomous discipline. Freud considers *The Interpretation of Dreams* is in fact

the royal road to a knowledge of unconscious, it is the secured foundation of psychoanalysis" (Osbrone, 41). Psychoanalysis is the most significant study of the non-rational process that emerge the kingdom of unconscious inherent in depth of human psyche.

Freud's comment on the workings of artist's imagination in twenty-third lecture of his *Introduction to psychoanalysis* has set forth the theoretical framework of psychoanalytic criticism. Here we are concerned only with the theoretical concept of psychoanalysis. The motive is to study Updike's *Rabbit, Run* and Oe's *A personal Matter* by applying this theory.

### **The Freudian Psyche**

Sigmund Freud first postulated the existence of the areas he called conscious, the preconscious, the unconscious, the libidos and the censor. The conscious is that part of mind immediately in contact with the external world. The preconscious is conceived of as the storage for all the individual's past experiences and impulses while the unconscious is as its name indicates, a deeper reservoir containing the primordial urges of our nature. Proof of the existence of the unconscious was found in the past hypnotic recollections of patients, in the day dream, fantasies, slips of tongue and above all in the evidence supplied by dreams. Libido or sexual energy is the basic motive force of all human action, projecting the impulses from the unconscious, while the censor was the inhibitory effect of the individual's awareness of social and moral taboos.

Freud's simple division of the psyche into conscious, pre-conscious and unconscious zones seemed "to assign to censor a wholly voluntary role in the suppression of the urges propelled from the unconscious by the Libido" (Horton and Edwards, 338). Since Freud was "convinced too much repression was inevitably harmful", it was of great importance to settle the question of the extent of which human behavior is consciously motivated" (Horton and Edwards, 330).

Freud's psyche was revised into new form in 1927 that retains the characteristic of three areas with a new terminology and arrangement. In order to defend his denial of free will in either the origin or suppression of desire, "Freud tried to show that both the conscious and preconscious portions (now called *Ego* and *Super-Ego*) have overlapping zones and that both merge into the unconscious (*Id*) at their lower end" (Horton and Edwards). Thus the repression of the censor would appear to be partly instinctive and therefore not an act of will by the individual.

Taken in the reverse order, Horton and Edwards described the new psychic zones as:

The *Id* is still the source of all instinctive energy and the great reservoir of libido. It is the region of passion and instincts, and also of habit-tendencies. It is dominated by the pleasure principle and is unmoral and illogical. It has no "plan," no unity of purpose. All repressed impulses become merged into it.

(340)

In simple terms the *Id* is a part of human mind consisting of instincts and drives and it incorporates the libidinal and other desires. In Freud's words *Id* stands for "untamed passions" and is a "cauldron of seething excitement".

The *Ego* is the self conscious intelligence and governed by the reality principle. "The *Ego* is our coherent organization of mental life what shows on the outside. It is derived from the *Id*, but shaped and modified by the necessities of the external world" (Horton and Edwards, 340). It is not sharply differentiated from the *Id* and exercises the repressions that hold in check the superior strength of the *Id*, and "it may also bring about sublimation or transformation of erotic libido into *Ego-libido*" (Horton and Edwards, 340). The *Ego* is subject to two conflicting pressures: one from the libido of the *Id*, and other from the censor, an opposing force stemming from within the individual and the inhibiting effect of social moves both. Here Horton and Edwards add:

The chief functions of the Ego are to watch the external world for the best times and occasions to allow harmless gratification of the urges of the Id, and to induce the Id to renounce, modify, or postpone such gratification if it seems necessary. Apparently in control of the Id, the Ego never really succeeds in suppressing its urges and must pay for the attempt by losing part of its own power. (341)

And the *Super-Ego* is the ego ideal. It acts as the censoring agency controlling the actions of the individual. This agency exists mostly within the Id, with lesser areas in the Ego and in the outside world. It is independent of the conscious Ego and largely inaccessible to it. It is described as:

the depository of all previous experiences including the purely instinctive ones. Its chief function is criticism by creating in the ego and unconscious sense of guilt. It is roughly analogous to the concept of *conscience*, and as such it also stores up the teaching and admonitions of parents, teacher, the clergy and the social ideals. (Horton and Edwards, 341)

According to Freud the unconscious wishes are extremely powerful and dynamic. He believes that the inhibited feeling 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 motivation plays a significant role in the theory of psychoanalytical technique.

### **Two Basic Instincts: Eros and Thanatos**

Freud recognized two fundamental forces in human beings, Eros and Thanatos. The first one denotes the force of 'life' and the other denotes forces of 'death' in Greek Mythology. These two psychic energies are innate and unlearned. Previously Freud laid emphasis only on Eros-the life instinct in human life but later realized that it was unavoidably coupled with Thanatos. In psychoanalytical technique Freud presented the two basic modes

of thinking— primary and secondary process. Primary process is directly related to life instinct or pleasure principle and secondary process belongs to reality principle.

The instinct of Eros is better known as love or sex or life instinct. Human body seeks to fulfill psychological needs such as hunger, thirst, breathing and defecation. In Freudian psychoanalysis, the most motivating force of life is Libido. It means the energy of sex motif. Sex energy is the creative and intellectual source of life instinct. Freud used sex in broad sense, it is not only coition that represents love, tenderness and sympathy that bring human beings in close contact. Freud writes, "The concept of sexuality and at the same time of sexual instincts had, it is true to be extended so as to cover many things which could not be classed under the reproductive function" (Freud, 45).

Death instinct-Thanatos, is a vital force of living organism. Every organism follows its own path to death. The feelings and behaviors of human beings, therefore, somehow reveal death instinct. The aggressive behavior, destructive will and hostility motive manifest in death instinct. Freud has given more emphasis on hostility and aggressiveness of human behavior.

Life and death instincts are closely attached with each other. Some traits of death instincts and life instincts are interrelated and inseparable. Pleasure and pain, love and hate, hostility and tenderness are motives of life and death which seem mutually antagonistic but often are inseparably fused in human activities. It is called the ambivalence of instincts. It is often seen quarreling and hurting in courtship. When the motive of life instinct dominates the death instinct, there is love, courtship, happy and prosperous life. On the contrary, when death instinct dominates the life instinct, there is aggression, hostility, pain and hatred that lead life towards death. In this context Freud opines :

Another striking fact is that the life instincts have so much more contact without internal perception emerging as breakers of the peace and constantly

producing tensions whose release is felt as pleasure while the death instincts seem to do their work unobtrusively. The pleasure principle seems actually to serve the death instincts. It is true that it keeps watch upon stimuli from without which are regarded as dangers by both kinds of instincts, but it is more specially on guard against increases of stimulation from within, which would make a task of living more difficult. (57)

In fact, human nature is a bundle of contradictory principles. It becomes clear that the opposing action of the two basic instincts provide the different kinds of ebbs and flows in life.

### **Dream Interpretation**

Freud's another great contribution to psychoanalysis is the systematic study and analysis of dreams. In his classic book the *Interpretation of Dream* he explored the 'dynamic role of the unconscious mind' and he described 'dream as the royal road to the unconscious'. Dreams represent disguised desire, wish fulfilling and expression of unconscious and unacceptable thoughts. For Freud dream represents those wishes, demands and desires which are repressed into unconscious and their instinctual gratification is fettered in conscious state of mind. (He considers that all the dreams fulfill naked wishes of sexual license and preserve his/her identity.) He says that dream is also a mental process like others and it is meaningful, purposeful and symbolic.

In his earlier stages of dream analysis he believed that dream is simply wish fulfillment of those wishes of the Id and Super-Ego which could not be gratified in real life and they are fulfilled in the sleeping state when the Ego is relaxed. All dreams represent rejected or repressed wishes: "Most of the artificial dreams constructed by imaginative writers are designed for a symbolic interpretation of this sort, they reproduce the writings

though under a disguise which is regarded as harmonizing with recognized characteristics of dream" (Freud, 129).

Those unfulfilled dreams create violent inner conflict for the gratification of unconscious Id which in itself is a threat to Ego. Unacceptable thoughts and wishes appear in symbolic form in dreams. Those symbols have universal meaning. Freud says: "the dream is the hallucinatory fulfillment of a wish, in which desires are replaced by their embodiments: thoughts become deeds; fears become monsters" (6). The desires which cannot be fulfilled in daytime are stored in unconscious part of mind, they can not be erased and come on to surface only in the dream. Distortion of the unconscious dream thoughts in the manifest, as well as in content level is called dream work.

### **Dream Mechanism**

Freud describes that many factors contribute to dream mechanism. They are briefly discussed below.

### **Condensation**

In these process, one image can stand for many associations, the complexity of the latent content of dream can therefore be derived form analyzing how repressed ideas, old ideas, unrecognized ideas and unthought associations connect up with the condensed image that is at the forefront of the dream. The way that the single idea or event can simultaneously represent different impulses, Freud calls 'Over determination'. "Condensation is the omission of the parts of the unconscious material and the fusion of several unconscious elements into a single entity" (Abrams, 249).

### **Displacement**



In this process, the feelings related to one thing are connected to a different one, for example, the murderous feeling about the sister-in-law is displaced on to the little white dog. Or "it is the substitution for an unconscious object of desire by one that is acceptable to the conscious mind" (Abrams, 249).

### **Dramatization**

Dreams are of course, almost wholly visual, rather like a film, like some bad films there often seem to be little connection between the events and images in a dream. However, as they say every picture tells a story. In dreams the story is hidden and the visuals are the clues to understand it.

### **Symbolization**

It is "the representation of repressed, mainly sexual, objects of desires by nonsexual objects which resemble them or are associated with them in prior experience (Abrams, 249). Images that are used to symbolize other things are called the process of symbolization, eg. phallic image is symbolized by gun, tower etc. Freud says that in dreams symbols are used almost exclusively for the expression of sexual objects and relation.

### **Dreams and Artifacts**

Freud draws an analogy between artist's creation and dreams of fantasy. All the literatures, art and craft are the product of neurosis of the creator. He writes :

What appears to be renunciation is really that formation of substitute or surrogates. In the same way the growing child, when he stops playing, gives up nothing but they link with real objects, instead of playing he now fantasizes. He builds castles in the air and creates what are called day dreams.  
(Freud, 713)

Dreams and fantasies are the same which are found among unsatisfied persons. The motivating force behind fantasies are un-satisfaction and every single fantasy is the fulfillment of a wish, the wishes are either ambitious or erotic ones.

The daydreaming and creative works both transform the mental contents into something where the later is more creative and interesting. Literature and other arts like dreams and neurotic symptoms, consist of the imagined or fantasized wish fulfillment that are prohibited by the social standards of morality and propriety. In the process of dreaming and creative writing the forbidden, mainly sexual (libidinal) wishes come into conflict with and are repressed by the censor into the conscious realms of the artist's mind.

### **Oedipus Complex**

In the *Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud inaugurates the theory of Oedipus complex. The term 'Oedipus Complex' derived from Greek myth where Oedipus, the son kills his father unknowingly and marries his mother.

The Oedipus complex, in simple term derives from the unconscious rivalry with his father for the love of his mother. Here the Dreamer sees the death of his parent of same sex. That happening will show the rival in love, whose elimination could not fail to other's advantages. This is immortalized in '*Oedipus Rex*' and "Freud's identification has postulated five steps of psychological development of personality of child from birth to puberty; oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital" (Encyclopedia, 142-3).

In phallic stage, child ties the feeling of love and desire of the parents of the opposite sex and becomes jealous, hostile and rival of the parent of same sex. The boy demands sexual love from his mother and comes into rivalry with his father and girl becomes a rival of her mother for the father's love. Freud derives these terms from Greek tragedy to mention the psycho-sexual development of child. So, this is called 'Oedipal Complex' in

boy's case and 'Electra Complex' in girl's case. The resolution of Oedipus and Electra Complex is to understand social norms and standards and parental punishment.

Freud says that the child's object of love is opposite-sex. The child in order to resolve the threading conflict, begins to copy the role of his/her rival to become like the same sex parent to share the affection of the opposite sex parent. The identification of the child also manages to play the role of same sex parent.

### **Psychoanalysis and Literature**

'Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism' first developed as a type of 'applied' psychoanalysis. Under this heading Freud and his collaborators ventured into the study of literary works, as well as in other fields during the first decade of twentieth century. Freud says that creative writings are the products of unconscious processes, and that it is possible to understand how mechanisms of the psychological forces operate in them. The study such as 'Poetry and Neurosis', and 'Psycho-Sexual Portrait of the Artist' tell more about it.

Approaching literary works in psychoanalytical terms in this vein consist in diagnosing the psychological health of the writer, the artist or the character, by treating his or her work as a symptom of sexual frustration and repressions. "Works of art and literature become substitutes for the creator's pathological idea or affects, which must be elucidated by means of a specific method" (Surprenant, 201). In adopting this primarily biographical approach, one inevitably comes up with a repertoire of symbols and themes relating to the creator's life, which are believed to have motivated the creation of the work.

Since the functioning of the mental apparatus and literary processes are analogous, Freudian doctrines have had considerable impact on literature. So, in this study Freud's concepts are taken as significant tools to interpret Updike's *Rabbit, Run* and Oe's *A Personal Matter*.



### Chapter III

#### Textual Analysis

#### **Conflict Between Individual Desires and Social Responsibility in *Rabbit, Run***

Updike novel *Rabbit, Run* is full of experience of frustration, separation, sexual perversion, jealousy, anger, psychological and spiritual tension, disintegration and suffering. Moreover, the novel reveals the theme of sexual guilt and alcoholism. In Freud's view we repress the desires that always need to have an outlet. In Updike's case the outlet of these repressed and suppressed desires is possible only through confession or devotion to creative writing.

*Rabbit, Run*, thus portrays the life of a man who runs away from social and familial responsibilities in order to get personal freedom. Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom, a former basketball star in the novel has a burning passion to find his place in the world. Turning his back to his wife and children he takes refuge in adultery. So, here, Updike paints a portrait of passion driven by uncertainty and addresses the difficulty of finding common ground between the call of the heart and the call of the external world. The call of the heart dominates, so he finds himself enveloped into a monotonous life of responsibility. Since he comes to term with more painful reality because of his alcoholic pregnant wife Janice and his unfulfilled passionate desires, he seeks to escape that routine of married life with Janice and son Nelson. The escapist mentality gets support when he listens Jimmie on television watched by Janice where Jimmie speaks the old Greek words- "Know Thyself. Learn to understand your talents and then work to develop them. That's the way to be happy" (Updike 12). With this decision, consequently, his passion-guided mindset makes him speak, "I don't know it seemed like I was glued a lot of busted toys and empty glasses and the television going and meals late or never and no way of getting out" (91). He is exhausted with Janice's carelessness on everything. She cannot manage or provide what her husband's heart demands.

Pointing to the dispersion he adds, "Then all of a sudden, it hit me how easy it was to get out, just walk out, and by damn it *was* easy" (91).

A man who is driven by heart rather than by mind never works with reasons and arguments. Feelings and impulses dominate his rational side. He follows what his heart commands him. So he no longer can stay with the disappointing job-"demonstrating a kitchen gadget in several five-and-dime stores around Brewer" (10). He follows the command of his heart in order to get out of the trap. Janice is a mess, a trap for him. Updike's persona sees Rabbit as:

It seems to him he is the only person around here who cares about neatness.

The clutter behind him in the room the Old-fashioned glass with its corrupt dregs, the chock-full astray 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)

Before such mess Rabbit finds him trapped and tries to come out of the situation, so, he must run after his personal determination of getting rid of it. His wife's question, "And honey pick up a pack of cigarettes, could you?" freezes him and feels trapped (15). "Rabbit freezes, standing looking at his faint yellow shadow on the white door that leads to the hall, and senses he is in a trap" (15).

Marthy Tothoro, his old basketball coach suggests Rabbit to "do what your heart commands. The heart is our only guide" (50). Angstrom has done what his heart commands. He doesn't like to stay in the narrow confinement of his house, because confinement to the house cannot fulfill his desires. Instead of fulfilling the demands of others, he tends to fulfill the demands of his heart first. Rabbit has the responsibility as a father, husband, son, son-in-

law, and member of society, but he is completely self centered. Nothing is good enough for him, his job, his wife and his life itself, and so he's perfectly willing to destroy what he has and abandons the obligation he has taken on, in order to go in search of something better. That is the conflict between his duty and desire.

Rabbit is in the quest of freedom. His aversion to growing up sets the stage for his search for liberty. Rabbit wants freedom from the emptiness of his marriage. To achieve the freedom he engages in a form of escape from the source of his problems. Daniel James Wood says:

Updike's Rabbit book tells the story of a man whose life is in constant turmoil. He married his high-school sweetheart more out of convenience than love. He could not face the working world, could not face the parents, and could not face his wife and son. He was constantly caught somewhere in the middle ground between righteousness and sinful pleasure. (3)

As he is guided by impulses, James writes: "anything appealing that entered his mind, he did it, he ran from everything. He wouldn't have been as eager to leave his wife if she were perfect for him. Even if Janice was "the one" for him, Rabbit lost no time in making more and more and more decisions to ruin his life" (4).

Mentioning his trap James adds: "Rabbit wants happiness, he looks for it in the wrong place. He doesn't realize that the right way is not always the fun way. He wants happiness to himself but he doesn't know where to find it" (4). Caught between his sense of duty and his intimation of life's real depth he is unable to commit himself to one or the other, so, he escapes.

The conscious part of Rabbit's mind is with the sense of duty and responsibility that is constantly in contrast with his unconscious mental part which is full of desires. Unconscious part of mind is more active and dominant than conscious one. He is guided by the Id or either

driven by the libidinal force all the time. He neglects the desires of 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 he is excited. Tothero says, "Harry I've got a girl for you!" (43). Rabbit becomes happy as it is a thing by getting which he becomes most relieved and says: "Great. Bring her in" (43). Though it sounds like the slip of his tongue, it is his inner desire. But he doubts that whether the new girl he thought was the same Janice and asks in surprise: "you mean Janice?" who is not the subject of his interest (43). We see Rabbit full of disgust and frustration when he pronounces the word of his wife's name. He doesn't want to repeat the name of that trap, of that mess, the mess who drinks, smokes and watches the television lying on bed and is careless about household activities, "When he opens the door he sees his wife sitting in an arm chair with an old fashioned, watching television turned down low" (8).

Harry goes through life serving his own self interest. He finds his way into the arms of a prostitute. He keeps on this behavior of running back and forth throughout the book. The oscillation of Rabbit is to find freedom from the constraints he feels when he is tied down at home making familial commitments.

A former high school basketball star who broke a record in a basketball tournament Rabbit now appears in a business suit to play again with some kids in a local community. He shows his skill and perfection there even after so many years that really startle the boys. This makes Rabbit feel that he is still young: "He wants to tell them there is nothing to getting old" (6). He hopes that he has still vigor and strength to revive the past glory. He sucks cigarette and gets pleasures, as he gets from women's flesh.

As we take sex as a core of psychoanalysis, in this novel it is incorporated throughout. The sex act is described as a welling up of innocent joy and an occasion when the weight of



guilt makes itself known. Sexuality in the novel is neither downgraded nor idealized. It is kept there as a part of everyday life which every human being must come to term with.

In this novel Updike's Rabbit tries to seek transcendence through a woman's body. He convinces us that love is what he seeks, and that love infuses his sexuality. With Ruth, the prostitute he joins after deserting his wife, it is her heart he wants to grind into his own, to comfort him completely. As he embraces Ruth, he cries in a silent exclamation: "It is not her crotch he wants, not the machines, but her, her" (35). His dream is of a human world full of mutual love and of the heart come home through womanly beauty. While playing basketball, Rabbit is too old to drop the ball into the circle of the rim. This dropping of the ball into the rim has its own connotation. The ball had to be thrown into "the perfect hole with its pretty skirt of net" (37). As Rabbit is too old for basketball game it is now replaced with successful sexual games, which provides his sole link with the time when he felt much bigger. His name 'Rabbit' itself suggests both speed and sex. The glorious past life of Rabbit has now turned into monotonous routine. Rabbit is easily moved by the call of his heart that running into outside world is far better than remaining at home, listening to the babies' cries.

The dominant theme of *Rabbit, Run* lies in "the exhilaration of physical perfection. Rabbit lives for the adrenalized intensity of physical and emotional climax through his past career or sexual dominance over his female counterparts" (Blair and Hornberger, 80). The idea of physical perfection provides Rabbit with evidence of a greater existence above his mundane occupation as a Magi peeler. Adulterous sexual activity provides the animalistic Rabbit with his other major physical release, though it ultimately leads to dejection as he reproduces at the rate of his namesake, impregnating both his wife Janice and lover Ruth. Angstrom expresses frustration in his denial of conventional responsibility. His urge to run symbolizes the introspective dissatisfaction with American institutions, a rebellion against exceptions. Updike "explores the theme of perfection and responsibility to illustrate the

claustrophobia and ambivalence of an average American in the 1950s" (Commager,15). He paints the portrait of a man searching for dignity in his possession of freedom, so to find it he runs. And Rabbit ends the book as he began it, running away.

In his book, *John Updike and the Three Great Secret Things: Sex, Religion and Art*, Jesuit Fr. Hunt, editor of *American Magazine* writes: "[A] novelist imbued with concern for these great secrets must of necessity falls on the one Great Secret that is Sex. The obvious reason is that it is the one secret of which all his readers are dragged, so it becomes the most intelligible vehicle for his further exploration" (13).

Through his splendidly precise and seductive description Updike paints Rabbit facing the ultimate moral dilemma of disobeying society and following his instincts. Constantly surrounded by social pressures of being a good father and good husband, Rabbit feels cornered and trapped in a 'net' of maturity and responsibility. To follow these societal standards and not following his instincts that tell him this life is not natural, he is no longer living life. Thus, in his search Rabbit finds that his ultimate obligation is to himself. He must find his own happiness and self-fulfillment above all else. By the age of 26 Rabbit is incredibly unhappy in his mundane life and broken marriage. His moral dilemma begins when he begins to doubt the life the society has deemed which he should follow and be responsible for.

Rabbit moves more constrainedly. The sole way he can replay those basketball games in bed, apparently: orgasm itself, the wrath of flesh and plenty of it. Rabbit moves to recapture the Eden of those days. He is dying in a sense but the game gives him vitality. "That his touch still lives in his hands elates him" (57). When he is with his wife Janice he tries to think of something pleasant outside home.

So, this novel is based on the feeling that to escape is to live or try to live. The most successful part of the novel occurs in Updike's description of Rabbit's desire, his pleasures in

the tactile sense of flesh, whoever satisfied this thirst of Rabbit will hold him together. He moves from his wife to Ruth; back to his wife; then to Ruth, each move creating chaos. His desertion of Janice leads to her excessive drinking and the death of their infant by drowning; he gets Ruth pregnant and wants her to have the child but without marriage. As Rabbit thinks his desires natural, the tone of the novel is also neutral. Rabbit doesn't seek our approval, and we should not disapprove. Rabbit expresses feelings and ideas beyond him. The family minister Reverend Eccles, who tries to help him and only creates muddles, says: "he can always redeem himself, that circumstance is not the master", and at the same time the unconscious libidinal force has pushed him to fulfill his immediate sexual desires (214). Moreover Rabbit is presented as a "sexist, dumb, lazy, illiterate, a terrible father, an inadequate husband, an unreliable lover, a tiresome lecher, a failing businessman, a cowardly patient, a typically 'territorial' male..." (Commager, 17). Rabbit is characterized with such adjectives and his wife Janice is also portrayed as the principal stumbling block to Rabbit's happiness, an immature wife and careless mother. Rabbit "has the quest to escape self to discover ego becomes a national mystique. Rabbit must run in Updike's apt image" (Karl 37). Karl adds: "the fallible hero struggles with his own sexuality, his religious feeling, the difficulty of being a son and father, and with the changed demands in American society that seem to suffocate him" (37).

Rabbit feels freedom when he leaves his familial responsibility and begins to wonder what is missing in his life. He believes in the power of following his instincts, his dreams, and without these he sees life empty. He states, "Funny, the world just can't touch you once you follow your instincts" (94). He doesn't want to be one with Janice. He sees mess everywhere in his house and cares neat and clean in women's flesh. When he indulges himself into sex and alcohol his rationality is suppressed by impulses, so he doesn't return to his wife. He answers to one of Eccles' questions, "Well I'm not going back to that little sippy dope no

matter how sorry you feel for her. I don't know what she feels. I haven't known for years. All I know is what's inside *me*. That is all I have" (93). Eccles again wants to know his settlement and asks Rabbit to take him to his house, Rabbit replies-"Hey, I wish you'd let me out... I'm not staying anywhere" (93). Rabbit thinks himself exceptional when he remembers his Edenic days. He thinks he is not fulfilled with second rate activities, i.e. social responsibilities. When he answers Eccles' question of in what way does he think he is exceptional he replies:

You don't think there is any answer to that but there is. I once did something right. I played first-rate basketball. I really did. And after you are first-rate at something, no matter what, it kind of takes the kick out of being second-rate.

And that little thing Janice and I had going, boy, it was really second rate. (92)

Eccles takes upon himself the task of saving Rabbit. He becomes Rabbit's friend and marvels at the paradox of this character. For instance, after spending the first night with Ruth, humiliating his very pregnant wife and both sets of parents, Rabbit has the need to go home and get clean clothes as he cannot function unless his wardrobe is clean and pressed. The minister inquires, "Why cling to decency if trampling on the other is so easy" (93)? Therein lies the paradox of this restless anti-hero. It is the same minister who so succinctly sums up the essence of Rabbit when he lambastes him later by saying, "The truth is you're monstrously selfish. You're a coward. You don't care about right and wrong; you worship nothing except your own worst instincts", and therein lies the crux of Rabbit's character" (115).

Updike presents, through Harry, the individualist idea that, at times, our responsibility to ourselves may be far greater than that to other. Rabbit is frightened by the possibility that he has not yet lived his life. In Harry's flight from home, his life no longer feels closed by the net of responsibility that lies around him. At home surrounded by filth, confusion, uncertainty, alcoholism, and lack of passion, he feels that "all things inside his skull, the Grey

matter...seem clutter closing the tube of his self " (85). Similarly he notes the confusion and details of life that prevent so many people from following this instinct to happiness. This contract is shown when he states, "Funny, how what makes you move is so simple and the field you move in is so crowded" (264). The field that he moves is crowded by social obligation.

Every word that he answers Tothero about the reconciliation with Janice does show that there is no sound relationship between Rabbit and Janice. When Tothero inquires as, "What's happened to your home?", Rabbit replies, "Well, it kind of went" (38). Tothero again questions: "How do you mean?", Rabbit replies "It was no good, I've run out. I really have...it was a mess as it was" (38). Rabbit who was not convinced with his reunion with Janice later is convinced when Tothero asks him to go to restaurant, where there are many beautiful young girls. He sees freedom in flirting with the girl at restaurant, it is not trap since "he feels freedom like oxygen everywhere around him" (45). But he is disgusted in Tothero's advice of sharing that pleasure with his wife so she could have controlled it. At any cost he prefers restaurant to his home. Tothero introduces Rabbit with Ruth and Margaret, the prostitutes, he is happy with. He moreover feels proud when Tothero praises Rabbit's past life with prostitute. He was successful basketball star, "who had broken the record in basketball tournament, and people would like to be as Rabbit in those days" (46). Tothero praises Rabbit before the girl: "This is my finest boy, a wonderful basketball player, Harry Angstrom, you probably remember his name from the paper he twice set a county record in 1950 and then he broke it in 1951, a wonderful accomplishment" (46). Rabbit's past memorable life now is turned into miserable. The reality is very much harsh and bitter, which he doesn't want to face. He goes to take shelter in a fantastic world where there is no trouble and hardships of life. He wants to be lost in pleasure with the company of women, where he tastes the elixir of life. The evidence of his indulgence lies in the description of Ruth's body:

She is fat alongside Margaret, but not *that* fat. Chunky, more. But tall, five eight or nine. She has flat blue eyes in square-cut sockets. Her thighs fill the front of her pseudo-silk pale-green dress so that even standing up she has a lap. Her hair, kind of a dirty ginger color, is bundled in a roll at the back of her head. Beyond her the parking meters with their red tongues recede along the curb, and at her feet, pinched in lavender straps, four sidewalk squares meet in an X. (49)

Rabbit wants to own her lap and excessively he wants this lap laid to make his bed as a result of his instincts.

All the time he is driven by his passion. His sexual desire seems to be unfulfilled. In the restaurant Rabbit speaks with the prostitute, "God I'm hungry" (49). This is the hunger of his erotic desire and speaks the truth, negating the consciousness. Id plays main role in his life. The libidinal force gets outlet on which the prostitutes are also curious. By presenting the impulsivity of both sexes, Updike is successful to show the fact that man is naturally instinctive. Rabbit is happy when other people see him with other women. He is elated to be with Ruth. So they both go to a red booth in a restaurant. He sees the essence of life, the crux of manhood in the flesh of woman. "Rabbit is elated to think that a stranger passing outside the restaurant window, like himself last night outside that West Virginia dinner, would see him with a woman" (50). His intense desires are shown when "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). Ruth's body gleams because the colorful lights of restaurant fall on her. Rabbit then is lost in the colorful skin of Ruth.

Rabbit runs from the beginning of the novel to the end. Yet he returns to his home time to time when something pleasant happens in his family. Informed by Eccles, Rabbit goes to the hospital to meet his pregnant wife. But a sense of humiliation makes him nervous since

he had deserted his wife and son for a long time. So he sees the two persons waiting someone at hospital as policemen and the hospital itself a police post. He 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). He feels imprisoned when there comes the question of responsibility, so he wants to be devoid of it. It is not that he never thinks his guilt, his sin, "He's certain that as a consequence of his sin Janice and the baby will die", but he cannot be guided by his morals (169). When he meets Janice at hospital he kisses her in spite of the fear he has. She also takes it positively. This act causes Rabbit confess before Eccles' wife that he is going to improve his dealings with Janice, and says, "I'm going to stop being naughty" (179). His parents are also happy by seeing his changed mind. His father-in-law also forgives him and provides a job in his old-car-lot sales. He cleans the rooms of his house and believes that Janice will be happy by seeing this, "won't she be happy to see hard we make everything" (190)? He goes to the Church and expects forgiveness. But his rational aspect, as it is never bold cannot control him and again he shows the symptoms of being instinctive. Even in a Church:

When he sinks back into sitting position the head in front of him takes his eye. A woman in a wide straw hat. She is smaller than average with narrow freckled shoulders, probably young.... 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)

He becomes lusty with Janice at home. He goes to Janice with the intention of fulfilling his sexual desire with extreme erotic sense and who does not care that his wife has just given birth to a baby, Rebecca. He cannot think about her condition rather wants to fulfill his desire. Janice complains, "No. *No*. I just wish you 'd 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). But Rabbit's Id works here. He says: "I love you" but she knows that he is not showing the love towards her out of sincerity (210). Her reason works to stop Rabbit's passion when she says: "Stop it, you can't. I'm not loveable right now" (210). She has also the fear that if she rejects his desire he will run again. When she lets him sit beside her he shows his libidinal desires, "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). When she doesn't show any noticeable rejection he again rubs her back. He thinks he has brought her to full emotion and then starts unbuttoning her. "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). He again passionately asks her, "Just a touch, Jan. Just let me touch you", in order to fulfill his lusty urge (212). She rejects his advances and pushes him because she is suffering from recent child birth pain. This refusal infuriates him but with full excitement orders her "roll over" (213). Pointing his position she tells him: "Is this a trick your whore taught you" (213)? She is also tensed, so adds, "I am not your whore, Harry" (213). He feels humiliated but pours out his intense out of disgust, "Damn it, that was the first thing I have asked from you since you came home" (213). Rabbit thinks the flat rejection is the 'pass' that allows him to run away again in the outside world to fulfill his desires. Janice, yet wants to persuade him but his insincerity discloses, "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). He negates her requests, her desires and adds, "you can just live there with your precious ass", and runs away (213).

*Rabbit, Run* introduces us to the man, who does his best to fulfill the verb embedded in the title and runs as far as he can. He is selfish, and hypocritical and impulsive and utterly self-centered. More accurately, "Rabbit is mired in a rut, burdened with the everyday slump. There is nothing he knows how to do but runs to escape from his misery" (169).



As we move to the later half of the book the pages turn faster, even though they're often devoid of dialogue and thick with narrative. Updike brings magic to these pages and to the actions of the Everyman Rabbit, who does fancy himself an Everyman at all, but as unique from everyone he meets. Since his "work is unfulfilled, his marriage is moribund, and he tries to find happiness with another woman. But happiness is more exclusive than a medal, and Harry must continue to run-- from his wife, his life and from himself" (Commager, 17).

Janice starts drinking when Rabbit deserts her again. Her mother doubts Janice whether she made Rabbit run. But Janice wants to hide Rabbit's escape and answers her father, "No, he is fire, we're all fire" (223). She has still hope of his return so tells a lie but her expectations were false. As her mother informs that she will come there, Janice, in drunken state starts keeping things in order. Meanwhile, she takes the little baby to the bathroom to bathe her, but unconsciously the baby is drowned in the water and dies. Here Updike shows the death of god like child, "The water wraps around her forearms like two large hands; under her eyes the pink baby sinks down like a grey stone" (226). The baby lost her life due to the consequence of Rabbit's conflict. If he had accepted his responsibility of his wife and children, such catastrophe would not have happened. To overcome the pain of Rabbit's leaving she takes drinks but the drunk mind unbalances her and as a result she drowns the baby.

Rabbit's main "mantra" of life is to make himself happy. His feeling and desires always come first. Through Rabbit's escaping, Updike provides the idea as to how we live our lives, to move towards our own individuality. Rabbit is presented as the man who is strong enough to realize his own life by fulfilling his own needs and finding his own happiness. He sees social set of institutions that tell each of us what is right or wrong. Responsibility, not his conscience, deepens his actions as sin. Rabbit doesn't follow the norm of being a devoted husband and father, and then as a sinner in the eyes of the people whom he meets.

This is proved in his mother-in-law's statement, "The only thing special about (Harry) is he doesn't care who he hurts or how much" (133). So, Mrs. Springer whines, "but he drifts further away. He is well off. He has no reason to come back if we don't give him one" (135). But Reverend Eccles as he is close to Angstroms hopes Harry's return: "No, he'll come back for the same reason he left. He's fastidious. He has to loop the loop. The world he's in now, the world of this girl in Brewer won't continue to satisfy his fantasies. Just in seeing him from week to week, I've noticed a change" (135). Eccles feels, "keeping Rabbit back to responsibility is right thing to do. He believes marriage sacrament" so, it must be salvaged (229). But for Rabbit this is selfless act. In home, he feels confused and trapped but on the run he feels free.

Rabbit gets pleasure and happiness when he follows his instincts. In spite of his equivocal nature due to his social conscience, Rabbit makes his choice and runs again in the end of the novel too. Rabbit abandons his wife, dead child, parents and the net of his social obligation where Updike shows Rabbit's new freedom: "His hands lift of their own and he feels the wind on his ears even before, his heels hitting heavily on the pavement at first but with an effortless gathering out of a kind of sweet panic growing lighter and quicker and quieter, he runs. Ah: runs. Runs" (264). Rabbit makes this flight to enlighten himself and to find the meaning of his existence, for self fulfillment. Updike lets Rabbit to be free ultimately in order to find the true purpose of human life i.e. personal freedom.

Rabbit deserts his wife forever and meets Ruth who bursts on him "Go back to your wife", but he replies, "I can't I just left her" (258). She is more curious and inquires: "You are always leaving her" (258). She wants to examine him really if he had really left his wife, and is not satisfied with his answer and doubts his selfishness, "you are bad all around. You're bad with me too" (258). Now Rabbit's instinct would tell him what to do because "Ruth is more graver in her motions and thicker in the waist" (258). He tries to embrace her after

pulling into her room but she attacks, "Go away, go away" (259). He finds himself in trouble and asks: "Don't you need me"? but she is tiresome, "Need you; I needed you that night you walked out. Remember how much I needed you? Remember what you made me do" (259)? And he pours his instinctual feelings "I didn't know you were pregnant" (259). She answers: "I thought you'd leave me if you knew. You left me any way. Why don't you get out ? please get out. I begged you to get out the first time, The damn first time, I begged you. Why are you here" (260). She adds: "How can you sit there? You just killed your baby and there you sit" (260). But he wants to be saved, "I didn't kill the poor kid. Janice did" (260).

Though Rabbit pretends to be a lover, from their conversation what we grasp is that now Ruth is also helpless before the Id guided man, so she even calls him, "Yu are Mr. Death himself. You are not just nothing. You're worse than nothing. You are not a rat, you don't stink, you're not enough to stink" (260). Now Rabbit is senseless, he is anxious to have all of it, to go as far as he can, but finally asks her, "Did you get an abortion" (260)? Actually she doesn't want abortion, which is again painful to Rabbit because the prospect of fatherhood frightens him and he is not ready to take any responsibility of any child from any women. He just wants to flirt with them. Ruth adds, "Don't touch me" (261). As he expresses love to her she wants to be married with him. But he'd "love to marry her" (261). So she replies,

You'd love to be the man in the moon, too. What about your wife and the bay you already have? Will you divorce her? No, you love being married to her too. You love being married to everybody. Why can't you make up your mind? What you want to do?... How would you support me? How many wives can you support? Your jobs are a joke. You aren't worth hiring. May be once you could play basketball but you can't do *anything* now. What the hell do you think the world is ?(261)

But all her questions are unanswered. He is afraid most when he is asked to marry Ruth. But his hunger is for something new so he is even ready to go out leaving Ruth alone. He goes out saying her, "I'll be back" (263). But Updike marks "the conflict in him, guilt and responsibility slide together like two substantial shadows inside his chest" (263). When he wants to keep her safe he gets the instincts to come out though he realizes the differences between the right way of responsibility and the good way of individual need, and in which he prefers latter. Rabbit knows the net of social responsibility will only engulf him that is the worst net of all things so he runs.

Rabbit is extremely driven by the force of libido. He cannot resist his passion. This is disclosed when he "knocks Ruth's arm down, pulls her around, and kisses her. It's insanity he wants to crush her", and asks "let me undress you" (67). Rabbit seeks an escape through sensuality. He feels pleasant not only with Ruth but also with other women. In the restaurant, he is attracted to a waitress. Unconsciously he gets pleasure when he looks at her. "And Rabbit watches her back recede 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's desires are again poured out in one of the scenes with Ruth, "his mouth races, across her face, willing 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). The man who unconsciously indulges himself in flesh feels to escape when there comes the question of responsibility. In the end of the novel pregnant Ruth asks him to marry her. But for Rabbit marriage is a tie that despairs him off from his freedom, and so he is not ready to take either Janice or Ruth as his part of life. He rather wants to make himself free from them and go with hunger to somewhere, so the novel ends with his running, "he runs. Ah: runs. Runs" (264).

Hence, the novel discusses about the desires aroused in the mind of the character Rabbit and the constant conflict he faces between these desires and his familial and social

responsibilities. In several situations he runs to shelter in emotion rather than to carry the burden of his social and familial responsibilities, which obstruct in his intention of being free. Emotionally guided Rabbit, though once again returns home having informed about his child's death chooses to run away from the ties ultimately.

### **Imagery and Symbolism in *Rabbit, Run***

The novel *Rabbit, Run* is full of symbols and imagery. Rabbit Angstrom himself symbolizes both life and death, the Eros and Thanatos. He tries to seek truth through woman's body. Rabbit who makes Janice and Ruth pregnant comes to terms with reality of death. The drowning of Janice's child and abortion of Ruth is evidently due to Rabbit's psychological conflict. In the funeral of Rebecca, he cannot blame himself about her death and runs to Ruth, who after so many encounters calls him "Mr. Death". The preceding night of the funeral day he spends in Springers' house, sleeps with Janice. In his dream he sees in the sky two perfect discs- one shirks and other transparent move towards to each other slowly, he finally knows them as a sun and a moon where Updike tells, "and that what he has witnessed is the explanation of death, lovely life eclipsed by lovely death" (242). So the two rivals Eros and Thanatos work together, the dream symbolizes his desire to transcend the moon and sun representing Janice and Ruth, but as he entangles in between is interpreted as death instinct.

Another key symbol in *Rabbit, Run* is the word 'hole'. He has desired to throw the ball into "the perfect hole" with its pretty skirt of 'net' (37). As he is not young for basketball game it is now replaced by sexual games, which provides his sole link with the time when he felt much bigger. As his name 'Rabbit' stands for both speed and sex, he searches for a 'hole' in sexuality which is frustrated because he wants the 'hole' without the accompanying net. So his search for perfection leads only to destruction.

Basketball, from the outset, holds special meanings in his life, against the backdrop of his aesthetic past. Basketball inspires the spark of possibility in Harry, the brief vision of grace, the way he moves sideways without taking any steps, gliding on a blessing.

Critics have accordingly seen anything but bashful in offering symbolic reading of the role of basketball game in Rabbit. Some regard the basketball net as representing the trap in which Rabbit finds himself, the clutches of marriage and society, from which he runs. The basketball court to Harry is an arena where the individual's skill and courage combat the training of circumstance. Others more characteristically regard Rabbit's on court athleticism as a parallel to and a manifestation of his incessant sexual questing.

The metaphorical expression of Updike marks the novel as one of the finest ones where the sexual image of America as woman is seen when Rabbit drives south and imagines himself going right down the middle, right into the belly of the land. In the novel, Rabbit's old coach Tothero represents Rabbit's tie with the past and his inability to grow. Tothero is Rabbit's emotional state personified. He "represents the past stagnation and stunted emotional growth. He is lopsided physically and Rabbit's life is lopsided emotionally" (Commager, 18). In this way symbols and images used by Updike support in dramatizing the conflict between the desires of freedom and social and familial responsibilities.

### **Conflict Between Individual Desire and Social responsibility in *A Personal Matter***

Kenjuro Oe's novel *A Personal Matter* depicts the life of a man who runs away from social and familial responsibilities in order to get personal freedom. Oe's protagonist Bird, a 27-year-old school teacher tries to escape his fate through alcohol and adultery. The freedom that Bird seeks is possible only by leaving his wife and recently born baby behind and indulging himself with a prostitute Himiko, who is also, in Freudian term, guided by the Id and tries to fulfill her desires through adultery. The world with his wife and son envelopes Bird into a monotonous life of responsibilities and so tries to ignore this domesticity and seeks independence.

Bird is confronted by a concrete problem, a problem threatening his future freedom in life—a deformed baby. Bird is devastated by a sense of shame since he has just fathered a monster baby and may now be trapped in a cage called parental responsibilities. He takes shelter in the sexual world of his girl friend, Himiko and in alcoholism as well, wishing death for the baby. Himiko resembles, "a nocturnal animal, a typical image of the classic grotesque active only in the ominous atmosphere of night and is presented as a sex expert who cures Bird's impotence by offering anal intercourse" (Napier, 37).

Bird's response to his problem is typical. Just as he dropped out of graduate school for an extended period of drunkenness immediately after he was married, so he again runs away from responsibility when he must deal with his son's defect. He finds freedom in Himiko's embrace. Appropriately, Himiko is dropped out of society, spending her time in a messy apartment, where she entertains lovers and broods over her husband's suicide and from which she emerges at night for wild rides in her sport car.

Kenjuro Oe's best known book *A personal Matter* is remarkable and intimate journey through the maze of ethics, fatherhood and responsibility. The protagonist Bird is a dreamer; he dreams of going to Africa, of understanding love, of a perfect son—none of which

are within his grasp. Norm Crawford points out the obstacle of Bird, "His child is born with a herniated brain, and his wife's obstetrician is already talking excitedly about an autopsy as the baby, a boy, continues to live" (3). This stubborn will to live, and Bird's responsibility to decide his son's fate, drives Bird deep into denial. If he does not do anything, then the baby might die naturally, and Bird will be free of the deformity that threatens to reflect ill on him as a man and husband. But his wife wants their child survive; she wants to name him, to love him. And Bird begins to question his first inclination. His touching relationship with his mistress Himiko only reinforces his sense of inadequacy and cowardice and thus he wants to run from her too.

It is a terrible thing to think our family as a cage, the ones who prevent us from realizing our dreams and living our life fully. But *A Personal Matter* examines how a man avoids facing his own, quiet different feeling. A sense of shame does pervade the novel, but it is the emotion that is felt most strongly by characters who think in a more conventionally Japanese way.

Bird, a teacher at a cram-school and a dreamer of escaping to Africa drifts through life that has no meaning or direction. The birth of his brain damaged son forces him to face the question, 'what is the right thing to do for me'? In this dilemma he "dodges the question as long as he can, plunging headlong into a drinking binge, a sexual affair; and eventually a scheme to have his son killed by a quack doctor" (Shohei, 48). But the question does not go away. It is the very own personal matter. No one can help him. The question corners him, and finally he finds HIS answer, Or rather, the answer finds him-he did not consciously look for it.

Bird is a man of fantasy. He buys maps of Africa and squirrels away money into a secret savings account. He is an ordinary failure, one who has never amounted to anything of note. His only saving grace is his wife, whose influential father secured Bird a job and saved



him from his own decent. Things are holding at a static state until the birth of his brain damaged son. The doctors and relatives advise to let the child die better for everyone concerned. Bird, must choose between responsibility and fleeing. Saving the child means sacrificing his secret bank account, his dreams, everything. Fleeing to Africa means a new life of adventure, accompanied by the sexually free Himiko who wants to escape with him.

In this conflict between domesticity and independence Bird is in dilemma of whether to accept his responsibility or yield to temptation ? And as a result Oe lets Bird choose the later up to the third quarter of the novel. He presents Bird as guided by libidinal force who seeks to fulfill his own desire and so frighten to be a responsible father of monstrous baby. Bird learns that the boy faces life in a vegetative state if he survives at all. Angered by his loss of freedom, he turns to adultery. He runs off to the apartment of a young widow friend Himiko, and tries to fulfill his desires. But he confronts the threat of his wife of divorce if he lets the child die. He can go to neither of them-letting the baby die, or donating the blood and the money that he has saved for his trip to Africa in order to the baby be operated. He as advised by Himiko takes the baby to an abortionist. But on the way he thinks that giving the baby to an abortionist is accepting his own death not of his baby, and as he changes the decision, he takes the baby back to the hospital realizing that he cannot keep running away from his responsibilities forever.

At the beginning of the novel Bird is gazing at the map of Africa-his dream land, while his wife is at hospital in a delivery case. She is shown as: "lay naked on a rubber mat, tightly shutting her eyes like a short of pleasant falling out of the sky and while she moaned her pain and anxiety and expectation, her body oozing globes of sweat" (1). It shows Bird's indifference to his wife and his struggle to avoid the responsibility. He is seeking to fulfill his desires and ignores the wife's serious condition. He rather peers at the detail of the map. He sees "the ocean surrounding Africa" (1). This is the map that holds the key to the secret of his

unfulfilled desires. Moreover, Bird takes the map in his pocket throughout the novel. These are the real road maps of his freedom, so in one of Himiko's quarries, he replies "these are maps of Africa, the first real road maps I've ever owned" (101).

Bird imagines that he would tell his secret if he met the man again who he had met while returning after he buys the map,

I might tell him my wife was having a baby tonight, and may be I'd confess that I have wanted to go Africa for years, and that my dream of dreams has been to write a chronicle of my adventures when I got back called *Sky Over Africa*. I might even say that going off to Africa alone would be impossible if I got locked up in the cage of a family when the baby came (I've been in the cage ever since my marriage but until now the door has always seemed open; the baby on its way into the world may clang the door shut). (5)

He has been feeling for years that he is in familial cage and the birth of the baby further blocks his way to freedom. He wants his personal freedom, doing adventures things or the things what his unconscious urges. He makes the plan of writing a chronicle of the free life of the flight over Africa. He does not ask Bird tell his secret to anyone but he is success of letting Bird imagine the secret plan where he reveals his unconscious desire.

Bird started dreaming since his marriage in order to find solace he indulges himself into alcohol: "Bird married in May when he was twenty-five, and that first summer he stayed drunk for four weeks straight" (6). Yet he could not find his answer. His frustration and wild nature is shown, "neglecting all his obligation without a thought, Bird sat all day long and until late every night in the darkened kitchen of his apartment listening to records and drinking whisky" (6).

Fraud says that dream is hallucinatory fulfillment of a wish in which desires are replaced by their embodiments. Bird buys the African map, finds the place in it where he

wants to go. The imagination of West Africa, the dream of roaming into Africa as a freeman etc. are the embodiments of his desires. Bird is guided by instinctive desires. He leaves his wife when she is at the hospital giving birth to a baby, and goes to Himiko, who has spent day in sexual perversion since her husband's suicide. Himiko now insists that Bird has no more responsibility for his child's malformation than she had for her husband's suicide.

Critic and translation of the book John Nathan tells about Bird's fantasy,

Bird, the protagonist a stymied intellectual with a failing marriage, dreams of flying away to Africa for a glimpse beyond the horizon of quiescent and chronically frustrated everyday life. There is nothing new about this fantasy; it is evidence that Bird is descended from Oe's prototypical hero. But Bird's wife gives birth to a baby with a cave for head, a monstrous baby who threatens to destroy his dream. (xvii)

As the frustration screens Bird into sexual world, and urges him to realize his dream, he wants to discover his own self. Nathan says: "the quest for self discovery took Oe's heroes beyond the boundaries of society into a lawless wilderness" (xviii). Bird wants to fly like a Bird into fantasy, wants to lose contact with ground, wants to transcend reality and responsibility. Here lies the conflict between the two choices: responsibility and fulfillment of wishes.

Libido and sexual energy, according to psychoanalysis are the basic motives of all human actions. Oe's hero Bird, a libidinal man cannot restrict himself into social boundaries. He leaves his wife and son, he leaves his teaching job-a social act and eludes to prostitute to get relief, comfort and solace. "Oe explores the birth's psychological ramifications for Bird, who fathers a misshapen child and describes Bird's struggle to escape his 'parental responsibility'" (Sanroku, 35).

When Bird looks at the baby first time at the hospital, he feels more ensnared because the baby is deformed. Since the hospital has no any specialist for brain hernia the obstetrician refers the baby to National Hospital but the 'refer' traps Bird into responsibility. The doctor has no hope of the baby's survival. He says: "I think the baby would be better of dead....It seems to me the quicker the infant dies the better for all concerned" (23). And, though, Bird hopes the baby's death takes him to National Hospital. At the hospital he feels, "a mixture of guilty relief and bottomless fear" (28). He then runs to his father-in-law who offers him a bottle of whisky, and for the Bird, "The rest of the day was his to spend as he like by himself the thought merged in his mind...and foamed into a promise of ecstasy and peril" (35).

Bird and his father-in-law want to keep the baby's secret from its mother. "Tomorrow, or day after or may be after a week's reprieve, when my wife has learned about the wretched baby's death, the two of us are going to be locked up in a dungeon of cruel neurosis" (35). To overcome the neurosis he argues: "I have a perfect right to today's bottle of whisky and liberting time" (35). Fantasizing about the dream land, sinking into whisky and melting in sex liberate Bird from familial strain. Bird, an English instructor who had drunk himself out of graduate school, a man in the grip of an unexplainable passion, remembers his old girlfriend Himika and rushes to her.

Bird, threatened by the birth of an abnormal baby wishes his death every time. He reveals his wishes to Himiko "we had a child but it died right away" (40). And he wants to drink the whisky with Himiko, because he is full of disgust by seeing Himika's nakedness in bathroom. The disgust comes because of his impotence:

Bird saw a back and buttocks and legs, and the sight filled him with a disgust he couldn't repress; his flesh turned to goosepimples. Bird rose on his toes as if to flee a darkness alive with ghosts: and then he was running, trembling, pass

the bedroom and back to the familiar rattan chair. He had conquered it once, he couldn't say when, and now it had reawakened in him: the juvenile's disgust, anxiety riddle, for the naked body. (41)

To overcome this disgust he goes on drinking the whisky. He is terrified of being "responsible for any mishap in the world of present time" (47). His present conditions compared to a poker game which he is dropping out, "Now he wanted to drop out of this world for a while, as a man drops out of a poker game when he has a bad run of cards" (47).

Himiko is shown "like a large tomato, was round and very red", whose company can calm Bird (47). All of sudden Bird remembers his past night with Himiko in the lumberyard. Oe throws light on the details of their past sexual contact:

They faced each other in the cold shivering, and their caresses were simple until Bird's hand, as though by accident, touched Himiko's vagina. Agitated, Bird pressed Himiko against some lumber that was stacked against a board fence and labored to insert himself in her. Himiko did her best.... (47)

In the same sexual contact Oe adds: "When he realized he would not be able to insert his penis as long as they were standing, Bird felt humiliated by circumstance, which made him dogged. He spread his buckskin coat on the ground and lay Himiko down on top of it" (48).

But because of Bird's incapability he interrupted their love making. The desire that Bird had at that moment was not the normal desire but "this was the desire Bird might have satisfied the late one winter night in a lumberyard if he had known for certain that he was raping a virgin" (49).

From this quote what we understand is that the desire that Bird has is to rape a virgin. He wants to be free from any bondage and have nights with so many virgins. His intention of running from ties is not an end it is only a means by which Bird can fulfill his libidinal and erotic desires with the encounter of so many virgins.

Freud was convinced that too much repression is inevitably harmful. So, from Freudian perspective, Oe lets Bird to reveal his repression. In his theory of psychoanalysis Freud has stated that the functions of the Ego are to watch the external world for the best times and occasions to allow harmless gratification of the urges of Id, and to induce the Id to renounce, modify or postpone such gratification if it seems necessary. And for this protagonist the best time is not the time when he is in his family, when he is in Japan. Because Japan for him is the land of responsibilities, land of restriction and boundaries. For the gratification of the urges of the Id Bird seeks to be away from family and conscientiousness. In order to get relieved the repressed desires that are confined to the unconscious level of the mind need to get outlet and for it the patient has to have the proper time and occasion.

Bird lets the repressed desires to come out in Himika's embrace, "Sex for Bird and Himika would be linked to the dying baby, linked to all of mankind's miseries, to the wretchedness so loathsome that people unafflicted pretended not to see it, an attitude they called humanism" (49).

Moreover, for Bird sex is not that he shares with his girlfriend but excessively what and how he likes: "If he wanted to re-create in all its marvelous tension the sexual moment he had ruined that winter night, he would probably have no choice but to strangle the girl to death. The voice flapped out of the nest of desire in him: *Butcher her and fuck the corpse*" (49)!

His instinctual drives exceed the human activity. Here lies the irony of the protagonist that his wish to butcher the girl and fuck the corpse has no any connection of taking the responsibility of his family, accepting the fatherhood of monstrous baby.

Bird is hurried in quest of a voice that would announce his baby's death. He makes the plan what he'll do after the baby's death:

When he received the news, he would make the necessary arrangements- for the autopsy. Today I'll mourn the baby alone, tomorrow I'll report our misfortune to my wife. The baby died of a head wound and now he has become a bond of flesh between us—I'll say something like that. We'll manage to restore family life to normal. And then, all over again, the same dissatisfactions, the same desires unrealized, Africa the same vast distance away.... (68)

This event too adds the frustration. If this happens he will find himself in the same ground with same dissatisfactions. At the hospital, seeing the baby still alive and, more than that he has to donate thirty thousand Yen to save the baby, the money that he has deposited in a secret account for his flight to Africa, and thus feels ironically the realization of his dream is far away from him. His agitation comes out when he sees:

Deadly cactus into an incubator..., he dredged the question up to the surface of his conscious mind: how can we spend the rest of our lives, my wife and I, with a monster baby riding on our backs? Somehow I must get away from the monster baby. If, I don't, ah, what will become of my trip to Africa? (75)

Every moment he makes the plan to go to Africa and every second moment blocks the former. So, Bird tired of the baby's unwanted breathing again flees to Himiko, who is ready to satisfy Bird. She says: "even if you intend to have the most disgust kind of sex with me I'm sure I'll discover something *genuine* in no matter what we do" (80). Bird, the English instructor at cram-school arranges the translation words inside his head. The word *genuine* means- *authentic, true, real, pure, natural, sincere, earnest*" (80) and none of those meanings came even near to applying to him.

Yet Himiko manages him to do sex but warns him the danger of pregnancy. The warning of pregnancy makes him 'not good'. He says: "pregnancy is the one word I just can't

take!" and he reveals his fear, "It is not a question of technique, the problem is fear" (82). He tells Himiko what kind of fear he has, "I'm afraid of dark recesses where the grotesque baby was created, when I saw the baby with head wrapped in bandages, I thought of Apollinaire. . . My baby got hit in solitary battle inside a dark, sealed hole I've never seen....I can't send my weakling penis onto that battle ground" (82)! Then Himiko guesses that Bird is afraid of pregnancy, to be precise of responsibility. So she asked, "Is your fear limited vagina and the womb? Or are you afraid of everything female, of my entire existence as a woman, for example" (83)? Bird finds the right time to reveal his fear and replies, "Of the vagina and the womb, I suppose. Since you personally have nothing to do with my misfortune, the only reason I can't face you when you are naked has to be that you are armed with a vagina and a womb" (83)!

Womb for Bird is battle ground where his son had to fight and then consequently got wounded like mythical Apollinaire. He fears with vagina and womb but he is coiled with sexual desire. The woman with vagina and womb is armed for Bird. Himiko knows that if he fears them, then "the energy he has to flight lives only in that realm so he must eliminate of it" (84).

Womb is the place where the origination of life takes place. But Bird regards it as grasping sperm of male and producing deformed baby. Vagina reminds him womb, womb reminds him a deformed baby who threatens his future freedom, so he fears womb and vagina, fears the responsibility, fears the fatherhood, rather he wants mere sex, sex without any result, any deformed baby. But Himiko is not to be put off; "Do you suppose you wouldn't be particularly afraid from the female body if the vagina and womb were excluded from it" (84)? He blushing replies that it's not "terribly important but, well, the breasts-" (84). Meanwhile she further asks, "What you are saying is that you wouldn't have to be afraid if you approached me from behind" (84). This clarifies that she cures his impotence by



offering him anal intercourse. "This plan" Oe writes, "Himiko outlined was more than sufficient to overcome Bird's own fastidiousness about sexual morality" (84). Himiko is ready to discover what she'd call something *genuine* in any imaginable brand of sex. Here Bird is waiting what he had "longed for the most malefic sex, a fuck rife with ignominy" (85).

Simultaneously Bird is deepening into the swamp of whisky which delights him while having intercourse. Oe narrates nakedly, "Bird took another Whisky and fell back on the bed. Now his penis was keen and hard pulsing hotly" (85). In the extreme of sexual contact Bird even bites Himiko's neck and 'sees' a drop of blood trickling past her ashen earlobe toward her cheek" (86). His convulsion with pleasure drives a cry from Himiko. All this act shows Bird's brutal nature, his masochism. He gets pleasure by hurting her. Bird proves Freud's opinion of human nature as brutal. Freud says that human nature always longs for destruction, violence and brutality.

The sexual pleasure with Himiko is different from the sexual anxiety of his wife. He overcomes the fear he used to have: "It was thanks to help from her that he had just overcome one of his fears. Had he ever felt so uncomplicated talking with a woman after intercourse? He didn't think so. After sex, even sex with his wife, Bird had always fallen captive to feelings of self-pity and disgust" (87). That is why this instinctual creature finds his wishes fulfilled in Himiko's embrace. There is not any self pity and disgust with Himiko, rather she is a comfort, a satisfaction and an ultimate cure for Bird. She keeps Bird away from the burden of responsibility. Himiko's next statement convinces Bird more, "There's nothing as arrogant and shitty as having sex with somebody and then feeling sorry for yourself" (87). Himiko meets his desires. She cures him. This is stated in Oe's sentence "Bird felt as if he were reclining on psychiatrist's coach" (88). She is a 'woman of gold' for him.

As he "discovers his lover he discovers his desires as well, desires which no longer stigmatized the attribute of womanhood" (89). He seeks to make amends now for the pitiful

past performances. Oe's description of their action supports Freudian idea. After the intercourse "Bird felt like a rooster watching over a chick" (90). Bird had banished the curse on everything feminine that had occupied his brain a few hours ago, and, though "She was more womanly than ever, he was able to accept Himiko completely. . . he tasted mild but wholly sexual satisfaction" (85). That is the fruit he gets by choosing Himiko-a psychiatrist, a perfect freedom, in contrast to his wife-a trap, a bondage, and an unavoidable responsibility.

After visiting hospital once Bird again returns to Himiko. Slowly Bird wants to be with Himiko every time feeling her as if she is his real wife, "As Bird bent forward to shake Himiko awake, he began to feel as if he had escaped encirclement by strangers and had returned to his true family" (101). He then gets relief from Himiko and acts in the same way. She suggests escaping the villain in himself and protecting his little scene at home from an abnormal baby.

When Bird is in dilemma whether to let the baby die or save him, Himiko, benefiting his state of confusion warns him, "Once a person has been poisoned by self deception he cannot make decision about himself as neatly as all that" (113). Her fear is that if Bird took the familial responsibility, she would not fly to Africa with him. She cautions him as he is full poisoned with self-deception, "Not even your own wife will trust you absolutely, and one day you'll discover for yourself that your entire private life is in the shadow of deception and in the end you'll destroy yourself" (114). With the expectation of realizing his dream Bird accepts this warnings.

Bird's desire of freedom is the most rooted thing in his mind and heart. We are clear from his words:

But the fact that an abnormal baby was born to my wife was a simple accident; neither of us is responsible. And I'm neither such a tough villain that I can wring the baby's neck nor a tough enough angel to mobilize all the doctors and

try to keep him alive somehow no matter how helpless a baby he may be. So all I can do is leave him at a university hospital and make certain that he'll weaken and die naturally. (114)

But Himiko suggests Bird to be either villain or angel, one or the other. He cannot even accept the life of the baby nor can he accept the death ensuing a divorce from wife. He then turns to third decision of drinking and having wilder sex. The whisky, beer, woman's flesh are the keys to Bird to enter into the world where he gets satisfaction.

Baby's phantom image haunts Bird every time. And he thinks that the worst part will come after the baby's death, therein lies the conflict of his desire to be free and the familial responsibility. Bird shares the last night dream with Himiko, "It was a missile base on the moon, and the baby's bassinet was all alone on those fantastically desolate rocks" (120). The missile symbolically is his dream and the moon is his land of freedom, Africa but the obstacle on the way is the baby's bassinet on the desolate rocks. Bird compares his present problem as: "I am experiencing personally now is like digging a vertical mine shaft in isolation; it goes straight down to a hopeless depth and never opens on anybody else's world... Hole digging is all I'm doing, futile, shameful hole digging" (120).

Here Bird is shown as neurotic. Neurosis is appeared when 'ego' is not able to fulfill its function of mediating between Id and reality. When he finds his work futile, the poor ego becomes neurotic when repression becomes regression. It is the worst condition of Bird, "Bird sweated, tormented by an egoistical anxiety" (122). He is suffering from a "disgraceful paranoia" (122). Himiko tries to console him that she was also suffering from a barren neurosis from her husband's death, but after all she recovered.

Bird visits hospital once again but can do nothing except running, "Feeling his stomach heave, Bird turned toward the main wing and broke into a run" (123). And he goes to the prostitute who is "a single cell only in the organism of his consciousness" (130). She

compels him to forget everything and go Africa. That night, "Bird and Himiko fucked in the humid darkness for an uninterrupted hours", and Bird feels "as if he had been fucking the girl for more than hundred years"(133). The successful sexual attempt with Himiko is stated as: "Himiko's vagina was simplicity itself, a pouch of soft, synthetic resin from which no ghostly hag could possibly emerge to harry Bird. He felt profoundly at peace, because Himiko explicitly and without qualification limited the object of their sex to pleasure" (133).

In contrast, he remembers how it was with his wife, "their timidity and the unflagging sense of peril. Even now, after years of marriage, they founded on the same gloomy psychological shoals every time they made love" (133). This event shows that what he could not find in his wife can find in Himiko. He wants to prove himself a brave, satisfied and perfect in doing the things what his Id requires. This is the moment of a kind of freedom just opposite of his wife and the responsibility that he has to bear with her. Himiko is the one with whom he wants to achieve his goal, indulging into sex and alcohol and flying to Africa.

At this time Bird is waiting the telephone from the hospital with the news of his baby's death. In the director's call to the father of the baby, he thinks: "*the baby died, the Assistant Director is going to do the autopsy*" (134).

He goes to hospital hoping his baby's death, but when the doctors talk about operation of the baby Bird wants to resist these 'bastered' to protest himself from the monstrosity and reveals himself as "I must forbid them to operate, otherwise the baby will march my world like an occupying army" (137). He leaves the hospital without any words to the doctors and escapes to Himiko again to ask her about the baby's transformation to another hospital. He drives to the hospital with Himiko to take the baby back enveloping his wife in vague doubts. He reveals how he felt with his wife and familial responsibility, a trap- "Just after she got pregnant I went shopping with my wife, it was lousy with mothers-to-be and screaming babies, there was something animal about the atmosphere in there" (141). While they are

driving to hospital he reveals his desire, "When the baby is dead and my wife has recovered I imagine we'll get a divorce. Then I'll really be a free man now that I've been fired and all, and that's surely what I've been dreaming about for years" (141). Himiko a way to freedom for Bird suggests him immediately, "Bird I have become fascinated with your maps. I want you to get divorced so we can travel to Africa together and use them as real road maps.... And now your freedom has become essential to me, Bird, I need you as a free man" (141). She is ready to kill the baby and be free with Bird which she lets us know, "we'd be dirtying our hands" (141).

Himiko too is guided by the instincts. She also wants to sink in alcohol and indulge in uninterrupted hours of sex and if she, even dirtying her hand, could able to make Bird free they would be in their dreamland where they could lead a free life without any familial responsibility. Her trick does not let Bird think failure. So she is going to introduce Bird to her friend, an abortionist where Bird can leave the baby to die.

But slowly disgust stirs Bird as the outside climate is stirring, "The sky was dark, the air damp and swollen; a wind was clamoring" (143). Now he thinks as if he were "about to be led to his own death at that hands of a shady abortionist. Not the baby" (143). Moreover, when they go to his former friend Kikuhiko whom Bird had abandoned once, he falls in dilemma. His wife's desire to give the baby a name Kikuhiko and Bird's past experience of abandoning Kikuhiko disturbs him. The conflict between his desire to be free and the demand of social and familial responsibility reaches into climax. This is the catastrophe to his dream. He is in quandary whether the baby be let died or save it and return to his wife. In this situation Bird, in Freudian term, falls into transference neurosis. This is the conflict between ego and I'd. The urges of I'd will remain unfulfilled if he accepts the familial responsibility. This acceptance is a violent betrayal to his dream. He faces the problem of 'to be or not to be'. The ego that he has to show in external world is in crisis. This is the conflict between

recklessness and responsibility, and all of this is caused by the monstrous baby who governs Bird's personal destiny.

At the hospital he had to give the baby a name. But giving a name to monster is accepting its human existence. Oe writes, "The difference between death while the monster was nameless and death after Bird had given it a name would mean a difference to Bird in the nature of the creature's very existence" (146). And finally he gives the name 'Kikuhiko' to the baby, a name of his ex-friend whom he betrayed once and the very name his wife preferred.

He did not find the clinic, where to take it. After leaving the baby at abortionist he thinks, "Ever since the morning my baby was born I've been running away" (161). Here he says to Himiko: "I've been running the whole time, running and running, and I pictured Africa as the land at the end of all flight, the final spot, the terminal—you know, you're running away, too. You are just another cabaret girl running off with an embezzler" (162).

He has two choices: either to let the baby die and flee to Africa or save it and take responsibility, return to his family. But ultimately he prefers later. He chooses to save the child and says, "All I want is to stop being a man who continually runs away from responsibility" (163). And in Himiko's resistance he answers "For God's sake Himi, get a hold of yourself! Once Bird here begins worrying about himself, he won't hear you no matter how loud you cry" (163), and Himiko then leaves Bird. He now intends to save the baby donating his own blood and spending the money in it's operation that he has deposited for the trip to Africa.

Bird leaves no stone unturned for the baby's operation who after a week looks almost human. It was not a brain hernia but just a benign tumor. He is welcomed by his parents-in-law and his wife. He finally makes the plan to be the tourist guide in his own land instead of going to Africa and hiring a local guide for him. He says: "A dream of mine has always been

to go to Africa and hire a native guide, so I'll just be reversing the fantasy: I'll be the native guide, for the foreigner who come to Japan" (165).

At the end of the novel Bird becomes almost another person and his father-in-law wants him with a new name, "A childish nickname like Bird does not suit you anymore" (165). At his home Bird is with his wife and son, full of affection and familial responsibility. The novel ends with Bird's query about the word 'hope' written on the inside cover of the Balkan dictionary that Mr. Delchef has presented him.

Bird, throughout the novel encounters with so many events and almost all of them leave negative impact on him. His trial to see the bare breasts of Iron Maiden at Gun corner makes him feel raping the maiden. In another event he drops the coins into a helmet and tries to check his strength, but feels weak. The youngsters in dragon store who are observing him in silence later chase him and beat him. He tries to fight them to be free to realize his dream but fails and keeps lying beaten by the teenagers. Likewise one night in his dream he is in Africa where phacochoere bites on his ankle, at that time a phone from hospital wakes him and he gets information of the birth of his deformed baby. He tries to deny the reality but cannot.

At the hospital Bird is asked to transfer the baby to National Hospital that threatens him. It is the "inevitable design which he must accept without protest" (28). When he sees his son first he remembers a mythical Apollinaire wounded in battle. He then escapes to his father-in-law who offers him a bottle of whisky with which meets Himiko who ask him not to care the baby. She cites Blake's poetic lines to induce him, "Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desire" (43). She means that Bird has to murder the baby and go to Africa with her. She talks about the pluralistic universe linking the suicide of her husband one is the living world and another is the world after death, is her pluralistic universe, which all of us must face. She is making the death normal and urges him to kill the

baby. This reminds us Freudian two instincts, Eros and Thanatos. Love, sexual energy is related to Eros or life instinct and the hostility, aggressiveness, destructive will is related to Thanatos.

Next day, in an excessive drunkenness he goes to the school. In the class he teaches a lesson from Hemingway's *'The Green Hills of Africa'* but all of sudden Bird vomits in the classroom. Later he accepts before the principal that he was in hangover. All of them continue his frustration. In the school he knows about Mr. Delchief, an English man who has run away with a Japanese girl. Bird goes to hospital expecting his baby's death, moves back to Himiko and waits for phone call with the news of the baby's death, but never happens what he wishes. He moves to and fro, gets pleasure with Himiko and gets tensed at hospital. In few sexual attempts Bird thinks of beating Himiko unconscious and fucking her. Here the death instinct Thanatos works.

Bird has kept the baby at National hospital leaving his wife in vague doubts. She does not know about the baby's deformity and Bird on the other side is planning to let the baby die. He returns to his wife, sometimes with grapefruit, which he does not care she dislikes, but he finds no answer of his desires and returns to prostitute, returns to alcohol. He finds no way, "he was pregnant himself, in the womb of his brain, with a large squirring mass that was the sensation of shame" (92).

Bird tells a lie about the baby's health to his wife and mother-in-law. Mother does not know her baby's real condition, "Just as the baby was born I heard the nurse cry 'Oh!' So I suspected that something must have been wrong" (94).

Bird's real nature is seen in his wife's comment:

I very much want you to be all right, Bird. I think sometimes that, when a really crucial moment comes, you'll either be drunk or in the grip of some



crazy dream and just float up into the sky like a real bird....You've no real desire to lead a quiet, respectable life with your wife and child. Bird. (97)

His wife's threat of divorce if Bird lets the baby die makes him feel as if he is fighting a losing battle. Bird accepts it, "The baby is weakening and about to die. And I am just waiting for it to happen. But my wife is staking the future of our married life on whether I take sufficient responsibility for the baby's recovery – I'm playing a game I've already lost" (100). It's his realization when he thinks consciously but his another facet of mind shadows it and he again starts dreaming.

At last Bird's encounter with his ex-friend Kikuhiko, whom he had abandoned 7 years before tortures him, and finally accepts his reality and returns to his family.

In addition, at the end Bird has two life options, two existential choices in which he chooses to accept his responsibility, and gives up dreaming about Africa.

This novel can be interpreted as Oe's wish fulfillment through his creative writing. He uncovers all the pathological memories. Every creative writer, Freud says has the conflict, the conflict between the need for expression and compulsion to repress. And by literary art, under certain veils or disguises s\he reveals the fervent emotion of the mind. So creative writing is the disguised mode of self-expression that preserve men from madness.

In summing up, Oe's protagonist Bird has the conflict of whether to follow his instincts or to accept responsibility in which he accepts later ultimately he tries to make his dream fulfilled by all his means but in the end as he is confronted to face the reality he accepts his domesticity. He runs away from his family so many times and sinks into alcohol and adultery. His return to his wife and son for so many times push him to follow realizing his dream. But he makes a final return to his family as an another man and thinks of being satisfied in his familial responsibility.

**Imagery and Symbolism in *A Personal Matter***

Oe's novel *A Personal Matter* is full of symbols and imagery. The protagonist's name 'Bird' itself is a great symbol representing his flight like a real 'Bird' in dream. He does not feel of changing his nickname of his childhood until he realizes his wishes fulfilled. The author makes the work representational by creating an anti-hero named Bird. The use of animal imagery is so convincing that the distorted portrayal of the Japanese society in which Bird lives seems absolutely real. Oe explores the birth's psychological ramification for Bird, who fathers a misshapen child and describes Bird's struggle to escape his "parental responsibility".

Bird's physical appearance is described as a small, thin and round-shouldered, with a pointed nose, thin lips, cold eyes, and a squawky voice. All of this permits Bird to continue his childhood name even in his full matured age. Bird is compared to so many animals throughout the novel. He "glances around him like a hunting dog nosing for a spoor when he follows Himiko in her apartment" (40). In another point he is seen as "a sewer rat that wants to scurry into a hole" (97). Another use of simile shows his brutal nature, "Bird embraced Himiko like a bear hugging an enemy" (89).

In addition, in Oe's world of imagination, "deformity possibly caused by nuclear contamination, is closely related to the observation with perverted sex" (Napier, 8). These two elements combined seem to the notion of an apocalyptic ending of the world. The images of deformity recur throughout this novel. The reference of Korean war, Soviet nuclear. . .are often in connection with the threat of nuclear annihilation.

The deformed baby symbolizes the deformed generation of Japan in post war scenario, because of the nuclear fallout in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The name of Bird's girlfriend Himiko is taken from the chronicle of the ancient province of Emperor Higo. Her unusual name symbolizes 'fire-sighting-child' (36). She is compared to a 'mother hen' (39).

Besides this, the word 'hole' is one of the important symbols used throughout the novel. Sometimes Bird feels his exertion as "hole digging. . . futile shameful hole digging" (120). In another place he as "a rat wants to scurry into a 'hole'" (97). And above all Bird engages himself inserting into a 'hole of flesh' in high intoxication negating his reality.

The use of words like 'fear' and 'flight' recurs throughout the novel. 'Fear' shows Bird's fear while he is suffering from neurosis. His ego is not able to perform its function to mediate Id and reality. And the word 'flight' is used to symbolize Bird's imaginative flight to Africa, a flight from restriction of familial responsibility to the state of freedom, independence and satisfaction.

Similarly, Bird's attempt to look at the bare breast of Iron maiden pushing her hand away shows his desire to trip through woman's privacy. And the map of Africa is taken as a ticket to go to realize his dream. African map is map of freedom.

Furthermore, the use of words like 'womb' and 'vagina' represent the obstacle to bird's flight. Vagina reminds womb, womb reminds deformed baby who blocks the way of his way to wish fulfillments. And the 'womb' is the battle field, a darkness, an infinite for Bird where his son was wounded as mythical Apollinaire in a battle.

Bird's vomiting in the class is symbolic of his frustration from reality. Bird, in his dream is beaten by an animal in Africa that shows his misfortune even in his dreamland. And the word 'Hope' which was written by Mr. Delchief on inside cover of a dictionary while offering to Bird is the significant word of the novel. Bird hopes of fulfilling his dream. Every time he has hope of moving towards his goal. First he hopes to fulfill his desires, and even after his return to his family he still hopes to lead the life properly, working as a tourist guide to support his wife and son. The novel ends with Bird's consult with the word Hope and he intends to look *forbearance* that means patience and tolerance. What Bird has learnt is to be patient, hopeful and optimistic about unknown future.

## Chapter IV

### Conclusion

#### **Conflict in Oe's *A Personal Matter* and Updike's *Rabbit, Run***

Oe's novel *A Personal Matter* and Updike's novel *Rabbit, Run* present protagonists Bird and Rabbit respectively who run away from familial and social responsibilities instead of managing and fulfilling them. The novels reveal the theme of sexual guilt and alcoholism. These two protagonists are presented as full of experience of frustration, separation, sexual perversion, psychological tension, disintegration and suffering. The conflict between inadequacy and frustration to cope with the reality and escaping from it to find the individual freedom is explicitly dramatized by the novelists.

John Updike and Kenjaburo Oe present the characters who feel their family as a trap and full of restriction and fantasize to find something better which their urges of the Id require and thus indulge themselves in alcohol and adultery. They are already away from home leaving their family behind. For both of them returning to their family means sacrificing their quest for freedom, their dream, everything else and escaping from the family means a new life of adventure and freedom accompanied by the sexually free prostitutes and alcohol—a world of fantasy. In this conflict of duty and desire, domesticity and independence or responsibility and freedom both of them are in dilemma of whether to return to responsibility or yield to temptation following their instincts. And ultimately Updike lets Rabbit to run forever to fulfill the urges of the Id and Oe, in contrast, lets Bird choose the former one i.e. his return to his wife and son which is eventually because of unconscious sense of guilt created by the Super-ego.

Oe's hero Bird, a 27 year old school teacher thinks his family as a cage, ones who prevent him from realizing his dreams and living his life fully. He thinks: "going off to Africa alone would be impossible if I got locked up in the cage of a family when the baby came" (5).

He is a dreamer; he dreams of going to Africa, of understanding love, of a perfect son-non of which are within his grasp.

He begins a sexual affair with a prostitute, Himiko, who also wants to go Africa with him. He sits "listening to record and drinking whisky" while, at the same time his wife is about to give birth at a hospital (6). The birth of a son-a deformed baby threatens his future freedom. So, he struggles to escape his familial responsibilities.

Bird's response to his problem is typical. Just as he dropped out of graduate school for an extended period of drunkenness immediately after he was married, he runs away from responsibility again when he must deal with his son's defect. This is how Oe manages to convey a sense of the unconscious humanity of his hero who does not live up to any moral standards. He chooses to let the baby die rather than face life tied to retarded son. He loses his job after being so hang over that he vomits during a lecture. He leaves the baby to the hospital and again returns to Himiko to fulfill his own desire first. The attempt to have sex with her is failed because her vagina reminds him of womb, that reminds him of deformed baby and consequently a threat to his dream. He moves on to hospital, to Himiko, to his friend Kikuhiko and to his wife too, but every movement creates chaos. Humiliation constantly occupies his mind and falls in dilemma of what is the right thing to do for his life. The dilemma of letting the child die or accepting its life and return to his family tortures him much. Finally as he accepts the reality he speaks: "Ever since the morning my baby was born I've been running away ....All I want is to stop being a man who continually runs away from responsibility" (163). His Super-ego creates an unconscious sense of guilt so he leaves up his dreams and returns to his family with the hope of unknown future.

Similarly, Updike's protagonist Harry 'Rabbit' Angstrom, a former High School basketball star finds himself trapped in a failing marriage, a son and a job he loathes-

demonstrating a kitchen gadget called Magipeeler. His setting off to take his son from his mom's house ends up driving to west Virginia instead, suffering from neurosis.

His high school basketball coach introduces Rabbit to a whore called Ruth. He starts working as a gardener and lives with his trollop. He returns to his wife after the birth of a daughter and finds a job at his father's used car lot. He is frustrated because of his erotic attempts of sex with his wife, and runs to Ruth again, meanwhile his wife in a state of drunkenness drowns her baby while bathing. At the funeral he accuses his wife about the baby's death and runs to Ruth again who calls him 'Mr. Death' and asks to take the responsibility of her for coming child. But when the question of responsibility comes he fears to it and ultimately starts running - Run, Rabbit, Run.

Though the novelists wrote these novels at different scenario, the psychological motives of their protagonists caused by the conflict of their search for individual freedom and social responsibilities is similar. Giving the name from the non-human domain Oe and Updike show the real animalistic nature of their heroes who feel their family as a cage and go to find something better which both of them fail to grasp. Rabbit's unending running does not help to fulfill his longing for freedom and Bird's returning to his family counters his first inclinations. Anyway, Updike makes his hero escape forever to find his dream realized, to fulfill the urges of the Id and Oe, on the contrary leaves Bird between the two choices, and in which he chooses to take familial responsibility because his Super-ego does work and creates an unconscious sense of guilt in the Ego. In this way, both of the novelists have succeeded to dramatize the conflict between desire for individual freedom and social and familial responsibilities.

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