

I. Introduction

General

This study is a Marxist reading on John Updike's *Rabbit Is Rich*. The central character Harry's bourgeois bliss and excess of materiality forces him towards sexual perversion and disintegration which breaks the familial and social ties. Updike portrays his protagonist Harry as a frustrated man who is torn between marital tensions and family irresponsibilities, betrayals within family members and spiritual crisis by breaking closely held family relations. The forthcoming chapters will attempt to justify this issue of disintegration and sexual perversion which breaks familial and social ties in capitalistic system.

John (Hoyer) Updike (1932-) was born in Shillington, Pennsylvania. Following graduation from Harvard University, he studied art for a year in England. Upon his return to the United States, Updike became a staff writer for *The New Yorker* magazine during the 1950s, for which he contributes to write poetry, stories and criticism throughout his prolific career. A prolific writer, Updike has published poems, novels, short stories, essays and literary and art criticism. Since 1957, he has lived in Massachusetts. He is the father of four children, grandfather of three boys, and the author of several (fifteen) novels, along with twenty-some other titles, including five previous collections of poetry.

He is internationally known for his novels *Rabbit, Run* (1960), *Rabbit Redux* (1971), *Rabbit Is Rich* (1981) which is the winner of Pulitzer Prize and American Book Award. He is also famous for his novel, *Rabbit At Rest* (1990). They follow the life of Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom, a star athlete, from his youth throughout the social and sexual upheavals of the 1960s, to later periods of his life, and to final decline.

Updike's oeuvre has been largely consisting of novels, collections of poems, short stories and essays. He has written a great deal of literary criticism.

Rabbit Run (1960), the book that established John Updike as a major novelist writer where Harry (Rabbit) Angstrom is playing basketball with some boys in an alley in Pennsylvania during the tail end of the Eisenhower era, reliving for a momental past as a star high school athlete. In this novel, Updike has written a moral fable for our times: about the self-absorption of a young man who lacks wit, charm, and intelligence. He does have consciousness, a sense of something missing, and a physical desire which transcends occasions. Harry Angstrom, or Rabbit, as a former star basketball player on his high school team, has conditioned himself to run. Athleticism of a different sort is on display throughout these four magnificent novels. The athleticism of an imagination possessed of the ability to lay bare, with a seemingly effortless animal grace, the enchantments and disenchantments of life.

Updike revisited his hero toward the end of each of the following decades in the second half of this American century; and in each of the subsequent novels, as Rabbit, his wife Janice, his son Nelson, and the people around them grow these characters take on the lineaments of our common existence. In prose that is one of the glories of contemporary literature, Updike has chronicled the frustrations and ambiguous triumphs, the longueurs, the loves and frenzies, the betrayals and reconciliations of our era. He has given us representative American story which reflects the changing decades of late-20th-century America.

The Centaur (1963) winner of National Book Award and *The Farm* (1965) are notable among his other novels set in his native Pennsylvania. Most of his later fiction is set in New England, where he has lived since the 1960s.

His other novels include the controversial *Couples* (1968), *Marry Me* (1976), *The Coup* (1976) *The Witches of Eastwick* (1984), *S.* (1988), *Brazil* (1994), and *In the Beauty of the Lilies* (1996). The Jewish novelist Bech in the subject of *Bech: A Book* (1970), *Bech Is Back* (1982), and *Bech at Bay* (1998). Updike's acclaimed short-story collections include *Pigeon Feathers* (1962), *Museums and Women* (1972), and *Trust Me* (1987). His criticism and other non fiction have been collected in such volumes as *Picked-Up Pieces* (1975), *Hugging the Shore* (1983), *Just Looking* (1989), and *Odd Jobs* (1991). Updike's mastery of virtually every genre of literature had led many to regard him, by the end of the century, as America's foremost man of letters.

Rabbit Is Rich is the third novel in Updike's highly acclaimed "Rabbit" tetralogy which explores the inner life of Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom, a former high school basketball star in a small Pennsylvania city who finds it difficult to adjust to life outside the limelight of sports stardom. *Rabbit Is Rich* picks up the story begun in Updike's *Rabbit Run* (1961) and continues in *Rabbit Redux* (1971), of Harry Angstrom, Rabbit, in his mid- forties and the novel is set in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Rabbit is part owner and sales manager of Springer Motors Toyota, in the fictional town of Brewer, in Pennsylvania. Charlie Stavros, the man who had an affair with Harry's wife, Janice, in *Rabbit Redux*, has developed a close relationship with Rabbit and works with him at the dealership. While working, a teen couple comes into the dealership to look at cars, and Harry suspects that the young girl, Annabelle, may be his illegitimate daughter.

The novel begins with Rabbit thinking that the world is "running out of gas" (1). The phrase means that the energies are diminishing in the last months of Carter administration. America faces long lines at the gasoline pumps, oil crisis and high inflation rates as well. But, Rabbit is not worried about the matters. Since his father in

law, Fred Springer's death, the ownership of Springer Motors has first gone to Janice Angstrom, who submissively allows her husband to run it later. They have been living in the Springer house since their own house was destroyed by fire in 1969. Their son Nelson has been going to college at Kent State University. Nelson decides to return to Brewer after three years at University. Nelson is torn between two women, impregnating and marrying one and leaving another. Finally, he returns with one young lady, Melanie, and then another appears, Pru who is pregnant and whom he marries against his will. He also, intends to get his start in the Toyota dealership, forcing Rabbit to acknowledge him. Although Rabbit fits well within his cozy life, he finds himself in a constant struggle with Nelson, who has Janice and her mother (the other co-owner of the dealership) on his side.

Nelson bangs up one car after another, in his moving from one girl to another, in making a marriage that seems doomed even before the ceremony. He is bitten by some disgruntlement which also gnawed at Rabbit and made him run.

Updike is very successful in making Nelson appear as unpleasant as he is supposed to be. Janice is sympathetic, but she is a heavy drinker, under a sexual sway of Rabbit, a woman seeking her own pleasures. Rabbit is still incapable of being a father, although he wants some closeness and pays heavily for Nelson's mistakes. While rabbit struggles with his son, he is haunted by the ghosts of his past his dead daughter. Nelson abandons his family just as his father had. Like Janice and Rabbit, Nelson and Pru are becoming fairly heavy drinkers. Harry engages with other women and worldly pleasures not having responsibilities towards his family. He leaves maternal parent's house after having material success. Nelson abandons his family and pregnant wife. There is not unity but betrayal in the family which brings the

disintegration of the familial and social ties. Thus, the novel captures a sense of individual and societal frustration, encapsulated in the life of an aging American man.

Marxist Reading of John Updike's Novel *Rabbit Is Rich* Harry, a chief sales representative of a Toyota Agency in Pennsylvania who is John Updike's monumental "everyman" seems to be economically prosperous, dabbles in gold and silver, plays golf, owns enough property, lives luxurious life and engages in lustful activities representing excess of material gain in modern American life. The material success brings alienation, disorder, division, sexual perversion and leads the material success towards disintegration of the familial and social ties.

Economically prosperous and luxurious life of Harry represents the material success but the too much involvement in worldly pleasure and excess of materiality becomes the root cause of disintegration and alienation of the protagonist.

Critics on *Rabbit Is Rich*

Rabbit Is Rich is one of the four novels in Updike's acclaimed "Rabbit" tetralogy. In addition to winning the National Book Award, this novel earned the Pulitzer Prized and National Book Critics' Circle Award. The novel has elicited a host of criticism since its publication in 1981. Updike has been interpreted and analyzed by a host of critics. The great body of literature about this book is concerned with the American life of 1970s, issues like the sexually-obsessed thoughts, the confinement of marriage, the realities of material obsessed American etc. This research paper attempts to explore 'The Marxist Reading of John Updike's Novel *Rabbit Is Rich*.'

In *Encyclopedia of American Literature*, Carl Rollyson argues Harry's running is to get fit with the time. He says that it is his compulsion to run from his normal way

of life to an alcoholic and sexual adventure. He asserts, "Harry's running has become a symbol of his new energy as well as the fitness craze of the 1970s" (258).

His bourgeois bliss of New World's new man, practicing excessive freedom and capitalistic way of life cannot run properly which brought conflict within the family. The clash between father and son is reflected in an interview given to *The National Book Foundation* by Updike himself:

The father and son conflict in *Rabbit Is Rich* just sort of flowed naturally out of Harry's aging. He is better with smaller children than with bigger ones, I think with bigger children you need a certain set of principles, something to hang a disciplinary on and he doesn't have that system. So, with Nelson, Harry is fairly worthless. Maybe parenthood has a certain season and curve, and Harry has run his curve of fatherhood and feels deep down that he should not have to mess anymore with this child of his [...].(2)

Morris Deckstein sees that Rabbit novels are Updike's personal history of America over four decades, always "keyed to national mood: rebellious but frustrated in the late 1950s, apocalyptic in the late 1960s, smugly materialistic in the late 1970s, dispirited by the late 1980s" (8). He states that America is "bathed in the glow of the material world which is shown in *Rabbit Is Rich*"(volume 27).

Ran Richards Cooper in his article entitled "*Rabbit Loses The Race*" regards "Harry experiencing a kind of inner dwindling, his spiritual desires waning as his waistline has grown [...]" (318). He reflects *Rabbit Is Rich*, a persuasive return to the themes of Harry Angstrom's inner life, presented a Rabbit grown fat and happy with success but inwardly dwindled by breaking closely held family relations.

Baya, Nina also has similar view like Carl Rollyson. He assumes Harry's incapability to live in present life, who has "nostalgia" that always haunts his mind. He is "in love with his own past, perpetually lives in a present he can't abide" (2268). It is true the Updike's novels and even more his short stories sometimes conform to these limits that see all human effort as subject to the ironies of cross-purpose. This may not be immediately apparent to some readers who can doubt that there is any link between a continuing moral curiosity and the many passages in the novels that give explicit accounts of sexual success and sexual importance. For Updike is not the kind of stoic moralist common in the eighteenth century and elsewhere who seeks to detect and defend a purely humanistic code of excellence. In *Rabbit Run*, *Rabbit Redux*, *Rabbit Is Rich*, and *Rabbit At Rest*, the center of awareness is Harry (Rabbit) Angstrom, an ill –educated and adulterous printer later thanks to an useful marriage, a prosperous car salesman but consumption is linked with sex as way to fill the spiritual void of modern life.

Thomas Riggs, in his book, *Reference Guide to American Literature* observes that Updike's novels reflect social reality and present the world as it is. He remarks:

Updike has never been interested in little books. His narratives are those of an idea novelist and his imagination has always made its aim that of exemplifying, interpreting, and reforming the larger social world. Always well-crafted, well- thought-out, and well driven his stories and novels succeed in the effort to help us explain ourselves to ourselves. (860)

Thomas Riggs presents similar view with Lukacs in Updike's novels which presents the world as it is and reflects the reality. George Lukacs thinks that the literature should reflect the reality.

Thomas Riggs further examines that closely held family relations are broken under capitalistic society. In the novel, there is not good relationship between father and son. He says:

In *Rabbit Is Rich*, John Updike's aptly named Rabbit Angstrom inwardly bridles against his life as head of a family automobile franchise that he has conveniently eased into but that leaves him spiritually and emotionally adrift. Aware that life is passing him by, Rabbit longs to breakout to find another self. Unable to do so, he sees his son's increasingly insistent claims to succession in the family business as a severe personal threat. Heartbreaking encounters between one generation and the next dramatize the passions that can divide and all too often destroy closely held family business. (862).

Women are presented as sex objects and are commodified as sell products.

Women are taught by the mass media to be the objects of men's desire. In

Encyclopedia of American Literature, Carl Rollyson views Updike and his works:

Updike writes about sex as an alcoholic would write about the bottle, as both fascination and flaw, as what mires him in and at the same time detaches him from reality. In the same way, he views this reality as the theatre of his own compulsions, as orchestration around the same theme of himself. People don't just go off and do something else in Updike's novels; or if they do, it in for reasons he gives them. (205)

Female body is presented as battleground. Beauty is commodity under capitalism. The novel presents unhealthy relationships between the couples Harry and Janice, Nelson and Pru, father and son as well brings disintegration and division in the

family. So, the novel captures a sense of individual and societal frustration, encapsulated in the life of an aging American man.

Many critics have also expressed objection to Updike's portrayal of women, viewed by some as specious and misogynistic; as graphic depiction of sexual activity, which have been faulted as gratuitous; and the grand historical and social backdrops of his fiction, considered by some an exploitative façade for the author's solipsistic concerns.

Despite such criticism, Updike remains highly esteemed as a foremost man of letters whose prodigious intelligence, verbal prowess, and shrewd insight into the sorrows, frustrations and banality of American life separate him from the ranks of his contemporaries.

In *Introduction of Rabbit Angstrom a Tetralogy*, Updike himself observes his works as a reflection of social reality. He further says: "I have chronicled the frustrations and ambiguous triumphs, the longeurs, the loves and frenzies, the betrayals and reconciliations, of our era. I have given our representative American Society" (5).

Updike's novels detail the marital tensions, sexual escapades, personal betrayals, professional disappointments, and spiritual crisis that reflect changing attitudes about sexual behavior, relationship between men and women, and, most importantly, religious belief in contemporary society. He is also the keen social observer.

In this way, the middle class American society which has sexual and religious hang-ups, the marital tensions, spiritual crisis, familial irresponsibilities and excess of materiality brings disintegration of familial and social ties. This research is a discussion of the failure of capitalistic way of life which lacks harmonious family and

social relations. This research explores the issue of disintegration breaking the unity and harmony in capitalistic society which remains unexplored in Updike's *Rabbit Is Rich*. It is the first attempt to explore this issue in *Rabbit Is Rich*.

Among the four chapters, the first chapter is a general introduction to the area of this study and the whole direction this study is going to take. In order to provide the cause of disintegration which breaks the familial as well as societal harmony and unity the second chapter outlines in brief, the Marxist perspective of the society from past to present. This study is based on the assumption that American Society in *Rabbit Is Rich* is frustrated, alienated, disintegrated by practicing capitalistic values. It further studies the failure of capitalistic way of life by breaking harmonious society. The third chapter is oriented towards close reading of the text from Marxist perspectives. The final chapter illustrates the findings of this research in brief.

The significance of this study is that it will enable the readers to comprehend and appreciate the incredible achievement Updike made in *Rabbit Is Rich*. By touching an issue of harmony and unity within familial and societal relations, Updike has presented the American society which fails to establish the harmonious society. This study also intends to understand *Rabbit Is Rich* from Marxist perspective. While many scholars have examined the different aspects of the novel but this aspect of the novel is also equally important too. So, it is significant to explore this side of the novel to fully recognize Updike's importance in establishing a universal issue of disintegration and division in capitalistic society by breaking harmonious society. This novel captures a sense of individual and societal frustration, encapsulated in the life of an aging American man. His intention is to reflect the society as it is and to establish a harmonious society.

II. Marxism as Literary Theory

Introduction

Marxist criticism prescribes the broad picture of social reality and analyses literature in terms of the historical conditions which produces it. The most valuable way of discussing Marxist criticism, then, would be a historical survey of it from Marx and Engels to the present day, charting the ways in which that criticism changes as the history in which it is rooted changes. Marxism itself is a scientific theory of human societies which studies the struggles of men and women to free themselves from certain forms of exploitation and oppression. In Eagleton's view, "Marxist criticism is part of a large body of theoretical analysis which aims to understand ideologies- the ideas, values and feelings by which men experience their societies at various times" (1).

Karl Marx, an economist, historian, sociologist, and ideologist of 19th century occupies a significant ground in the field of politics. Karl Marx (1818-1883) in association with Frederick Engels (1820-1895) invented radical economic, social and political theories. They have expressed revolutionary social and theoretical aspect in '*Das Capital*'. According to Marx, political, economic and social dimensions are the determinants of human consciousness. Marx says, " It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" (31).

Marxism disproves the bourgeois economic, political and social mechanism. Marxism initiates a movement of proletarians against bourgeoisie by raising a voice in favor of proletarians. Proletarians do not furnish and posses material things and means of production but work. As the oppression from bourgeois side reaches too much they

raise their voice against bourgeois who possess abounding amount of wealth accumulated from the means of production without their toil.

The Marxian emancipatory movement emphasizes the abolition of the wealth and means of production concentrated in the hands of minority of the industrial giants. Marx advocates ever striving class struggle between proletarians and bourgeoisie until the destruction of bourgeoisie's mechanism. The concept of class struggle brings a significant challenge on idealistic philosophy. It leads Marx as a propounder of dialectical materialism. According to this theory, material factors in society determine the way we think. The material factors of the nature have certainly been decisive for historical development. Marx observes life and art through a very different point of view and reaches a conclusion that philosophers have only said how life is but the concern should be to change it. Terry Eagleton says:

Marxist criticism is not merely sociology of literature, concerned with how novels get published and whether they mention the working class. Its aim is to explain the literary work more fully; and this means a sensitive attention to its forms, styles and meanings. But, it also means grasping those forms, styles and meanings as the products of a particular history. (3)

The originality of Marxist criticism, then, lies not in its historical approach to literature, but in its revolutionary understanding of history itself. These seeds of that revolutionary understanding are planted in a famous passage in Marx and Engels's *The German Ideology* (1845-66). Marx proposes a model of history in which economic and political conditions determine social conditions. Marxist critics tend to look for tension and contradictions within literary works. Marxism analyses society at the grandest level and it mainly focuses on base and superstructure rather than in art

and literature. Gradually its effect is also found in art and literature. As a result, Marxism develops as a wide range of knowledge. Different Marxist critics start to give different ideas about art and literature through Marxist point of view. Lukacs opines literature as the reflection of the objective world whereas Adorno takes it as the negative knowledge of the world. Marxism anticipates establishing a new political system by revolutionizing the existing orders of economy. Terry Eagleton says:

So, it is that Lukacs will trace the bourgeoisie's loss of historical direction in the disintegration of its narrative methods, or Walter Benjamin will detect the invisible presence of the Parisian crowd in the very perceptual strategies of Baudelaire's poetry. Lucien Goldmann will unearth from the work of Racine and Pascal an abiding structure of categories which binds them to the fortunes of an ousted social class, while Theodor Adorno detects in the conflictive, fragmentary nature of the modernist work of art an ultimately self- thwarting attempt to hold out against the miseries of ideological closure and economic commodification. (11)

Literature should reflect class relation and should be fit for working class people according to Marxist theory. The writer's preference should be given to those literary figures who more openly demonstrate class conflict and socio- economic reality. Marxism demands authors to portray the exploitation upon working class people by so called upper class people. This theory believes in those authors who have profundity of knowledge, intellectual power and historical sense of the epoch.

Emergence and Development of Marxist Criticism

Twentieth century has been a revolutionary era from the point of view of development of new critical trends. These new critical trends include Marxism,

feminism, existentialism, psychoanalytic, linguistic and stylistic, formalism, myth criticism etc. As this research is concerned with Marxist approach it would be relevant to examine its emergence and historical development.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels are better known for their political and economic theories rather than literary writings. "Karl Marx's world-wide reputation and influence rest principally on the *Communist Manifesto of 1848*, probably the most eloquent and undoubtedly the most influential political pamphlet ever published, and on his writings on what the nineteenth century called 'Political economy': the investigation of the structure and nature of contemporary society, and of the role of economic and productive process within it. In particular he is remembered as the author of an unfinished but still monumental analysis of nineteenth-century capitalism, *Das Kapital* (1867) and its satellite texts, such as the *Critique of Political Economy* (1859) and the posthumously published *Theories of Surplus Value*. These writings, elaborated and supplemented by his friend Frederick Engels and others from the basis of what we might call 'official Marxism': the intellectual rationale of the numerous communist and Socialist parties and movements that sprang up in the rough century or so between Marx's death in 1883 and the melt-down of the Soviet and East European state systems in the late 1980s. (140)

Borrowing dialectic theory of Hegel in their works like *The German Ideology* and *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels posit a materialistic account of history which focuses upon the struggles and tension within society. Marx also proposes a model of history in which economic and political conditions determine social conditions.

Marxist philosophy treats literature and art with attention even if this philosophy is devoted to social, economic, political and revolutionary activities.

Marxism values literature and art on the basis of how far it has carried the functions of expressing socio- economic life of a society. The Marxist literary theoreticians believe that literature must have social and political theme which should be committed to lead human in the progressive path and for the advancement of a society and literature should be interpreted in social- economic context.

The production of ideas, concepts and consciousness is first of all directly interwoven with the material intercourse of man. In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The social relations between men, in other words, are bound up with the way they produce their material life. Terry Eagleton Says:

At a later stage, the development of new modes of productive organization is based on a changed set of social relations-this time between the capitalist class who owns those means of production, and the proletarian class whose labor- power the capitalist buys for profit. Taken together, these 'forces' and 'relations' of production form what Marx calls 'the economic structure of society', or what is more commonly known by Marxism as the economic 'base' or 'infrastructure'. From this economic base, in every period, emerges a 'superstructure'-certain forms of law and politics, a certain kind of state, whose essential function is to legitimate the power of the social class which owns the means of economic production. But the

superstructure contains more than this: it also consists of certain 'definite forms of social consciousness' (political, religious, ethical, aesthetic and so on), which is what Marxism designates an ideology. The function of ideology, also, is to legitimate the power of the ruling class in society; in the last analysis, the dominant ideas of a society are the ideas of its ruling class. (5)

Marx and Engels do not, in fact discuss more in the *Communist Manifesto* but of course they discuss a little more in their discussion on base and superstructure. Marxist literary theoreticians claim that base is primary and the superstructure is secondary. And the latter automatically changes as the base changes i.e. the socio-economic relations bring changes in ideology, religion, politics and art as well. Each economic and political structures; socialism, capitalism and feudalism give birth to its own type of mode of production and social organization that produces its own reflection in literature, art, culture, religion and politics. Some Marxists view that fame or defame and success or failure of a work of art and author has to be judged according to the extent of its relation and portrayal of socio-economic life of the contemporary society. Marxism aims to revolutionize whole socio-economic life establishing a new system of politics governed by proletarians. It demands authors to portray socio-economic situation of an epoch and reduce reality with attention centered to class division and the exploitation of the lower class people by the upper. Authors should have profound understanding of wretched human condition rather than subjective experience and aestheticism. Thus, literature for Marxist critics should be a device to spread the ideology of working class.

Marxists such as Lenin and Trotsky were directly engaged by the values of literature. More recent academic Marxists have been concerned with theory as such,

rather than literature, or with the problems with the culture industry and media such as film, redefining literary study as the study of rhetoric in history, or as cultural materialism.

Marxist critics saw literature as social criticism and analysis, and artist as a social enlightener; literature should disdain elaborate aesthetic techniques and become an instrument of social development. Art reflects social reality, and must portray its typical features.

Marxist critics thought that literature should reflect social reality and revolutionize the society. V.I. Lenin implemented raw theory propounded by Karl Marx for the first time in Russia in 1917 through October revolution. Its success encouraged and necessitated to revolutionize every aspect of social life to continue the journey towards complete socialism. They hoped literature and art could play influential role to develop human understanding and spread socialism. The Communist rulers like V.I. Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky interpreted literature through Marxist perspective.

Formalists are not content to ascribe to their methods a merely subsidiary. It has a tremendous impact over the Russian intellectual world slightly but cannot reflect social reality. After the success of Bolchevic revolution in Russia, Marxism became the central stream of thought not only in political but in literary area too throughout the world. Recently after the collapse of Soviet blocks ended cold war and the Marxist political, intellectual and literary activities come into crisis. Like Marxism, literature and literary criticism are also in crisis as well as discouraged.

But, the capitalist world order, sustained as it is by a public discourse of lies, superstitious veneration of the miraculous infallibility of a 'free market' in which all the high cards are stacked on one side of the table, and a constant recourse to coercive

violence, has proved wholly incapable of generating an intelligible account even of its own monstrous operations.

George Lukacs one of the most significant and influential Marxist literary critics of 20th century was attracted to revolutionary activities from his early life. While he was a student, he joined a student's club named 'Revolutionary Socialist Students of Budapest' which inaugurated his life long Marxist political and intellectual career. He joined the Hungarian Communist Party in 1918, and, although imprisoned, exiled and expelled at various times, he remained loyal to the party. His most influential philosophical contribution, *History and Class Consciousness* argued for a Hegelian Marxist approach to class consciousness, alienation and reification. His work differentiates the form and content of realism and aesthetic objectivity.

He defended a conception of critical realism through Marxist readings of novels: from Scott, Balzac and Tolstoy to the present. According to Lukacs, the greatest artists are those who can recapture and recreate a harmonious totality of human life. Lukacs views that literature should reflect society. He says:

In a society where the general and the particular, the conceptual and the sensuous, the social and the individual are increasingly torn apart by the 'alienations' of capitalism, the great writer draws these dialectically together into a complex totality. His fiction thus mirrors, in microcosmic form, the complex totality of society itself. In doing this, great art combats the alienation and fragmentation of capitalist society, projecting a rich, many-sided image of human wholeness. (26)

Lukacs names such art 'realism', and takes it to include the Greeks and Shakespeare as much as Balzac and Tolstoy; the three great periods of historical

'realism' are ancient Greece, the Renaissance, and France in the early nineteenth century. Lukacs defines realist art as:

[...] A 'realist' work is rich in a complex, comprehensive set of relations between man, nature and history; and these relations embody and unfold what for Marxism is most 'typical' about a particular phase of history. By the 'typical' Lukacs denotes those latent forces in any society which are from a Marxist viewpoint most historically significant and progressive, which lay bare the society's inner structure and dynamic. The task of the realist writer is to flesh out these 'typical' trends and forces in sensuously realized individuals and actions; in doing so he links the individual to the social whole, and informs each concrete particular of social life with the power of the 'world-historical'-the significant movement of history itself. (27)

Lukacsian literature of realism is aiming at a truthful reflection of reality, must demonstrate both the concrete and abstract potentialities of human beings in extreme situations of this kind. His pioneering accounts of realism and historical fiction have survived the onslaught of formidable opponents like the Marxist playwright-poet Bertholt Brecht, their author's equivocal relationship with Stalinist orthodoxy, and their own anti-modernist limitations, and still stand as an essential starting-point for an exploration of Marxist critical practice. Like Marx and Engels, Lukacs deplores authorial sermonizing and partisanship. For him, the conservative Balzac is a better, a more comprehensive novelist than the Socialist Zola, a distinction he frames by reworking the traditional antithesis between telling and showing. A Zola tells us in microscopic detail how a character looks, where and how she lives, what she says and does; Balzac (or Scott or Tolstoy) brings these things alive, makes us feel them on the

pulses. It is their capacity to provide imaginative access to what Lukacs calls the totality (Marx's sum total of the relations of production) that constitutes the criterion of typicality in character and circumstance; and since a typical character is precisely an individual caught up in, and embodying, the confusions and contradictions of a history always moving on.

Bourgeois ideology forgets its previous revolutionary ideas, dehistoricizes reality and accepts society as a natural fact. As with naturalism, the dialectical unity between inner and outer world is destroyed. Lukacs values content instead of form. He says:

What must be avoided at all costs in the approach generally adopted by bourgeois-modernist critics themselves: that exaggerated concern with formal criteria, with questions of style and literary technique. This approach may appear to distinguish sharply between 'modern' and 'traditional' writing (i.e. contemporary writers who adhere to the styles of the last century). In fact it fails to locate the decisive formal problems and turns a blind eye to their inherent dialectic we are presented with a false polarization which, by exaggerating the importance of stylistic differences, conceals the opposing principles actually underlying and determining contrasting styles [...] .(292)

His idea is that content determines form. Literature is rooted in content: it is the specific form of a specific content.

Lukacs denounces the romantic concept of art that separates it from social realities and its utility. For romanticists, art has no more scope and aim than expressing the purest feelings of the creator. Romantic poetry is less about mankind,

more about nature. Thus, the romanticism that entirely excludes the mimetic and pragmatic function of art was clearly a reactionary movement.

Lukacs criticizes naturalism which attempts to reproduce photographic picture of life. For him, naturalism which appears to be more realistic in its depiction of life is unmediated. In his view, naturalist writers are alienated from comprehensive social problems. They possess superficial vision of life and dismiss the inner and constant antagonism between the classes. They are unable to apprehend the basic and historical truths.

Similarly, Lukacs disproves the modernist writers as Joyce, Beckett, Woolf etc. of going too far in the direction of subjectivity. In his opinion, the modernist writers try to make their works life like what they have depicted is not endowed with reality as it excludes the inner causes that have made the life worthless. The tremendous change brought by the modernist writers in technique, theme and especially in treatment of time is not acceptable to him. The personalization of the standard of significance that is the private interpretation of value and loss of confidence are more objectionable because Marxist philosophy claims that the generation of ideas and feelings in our head is not personal phenomenon as it directly corresponds to the objective reality and is determined by it. As a true Marxist, he criticizes the modernist literary practice of separating individual from social process.

A true artist, in Lukacs view, is the one who is successful in depicting the social and historical reality objectively through his literary works. This principle of artistic creation applies not only in the case of Lukacs, but also for every Marxist literary theoretician all artistic creations are inseparable from the socio- historical phenomenon. Art, therefore, is a special form of reflecting reality which is the sum total of socio- historical phenomenon. He argues that scientific thought as well as our

everyday thinking possesses reality but art differs from them because the impression of reality in art is mixed with individual reaction. Thus, he strongly rejects the emotive theory of art, and argues that, "the creation and appreciation of art is not unique and mysterious kind of knowledge" (232). It is neither created in vacuum nor received so.

Time and again he stresses the fact that art directly corresponds to outside reality. At the same time he states that though it is closely connected to the reality-the socio- historical situation of specific period; it is not reality in itself. It is only the knowledge of reality. Art is totality and reflects totality. However, he insists that, " the novel must be faithful to history despite its invented hero and imagined plot" (152). Here he means to say that the theme must be realistic whatever the description is. According to him, "the novel's aim is to represent a particular social reality at a particular time, with all the color and specific atmosphere of that time" (150).

Though Lukacs demands an artist to portray reality in his works, he draws attention to the fact that it is not possible to portray reality as it exists: According to him, "reality as a whole is always richer and more varied than even the richest work of art, no detail, episode, etc. however, exactly copied, biographically authentic, factual, can possibly compete with reality" (Lukacs 302). He further argues that an artist, however, should endeavour to portray an all-round and comprehensive picture of his time. The universality of such picture depends upon the variety of the characters depicted in a work. A true artist should attempt to include even such characters who are felt to be the bearers of hostile principles. All the characters, whether good or bad, should be "portrayed as living many sided human beings and not as poster like caricatures" (Lukacs 330).

In Lukacs view, reality reflected in a literary work should be similar to the one reflected in human consciousness and it is the duty of a critic to examine whether it is translated correctly or not in a literary work; and to judge whether a literary work is realistic or not. The achievement of success or failure of an author depends upon his greatness in capturing the objective reality through his work.

Lukacs always emphasizes that there must be some formal correspondence between the literary work and "dialectical totality." Not only Lukacs, the Marxist philosophy itself insists that literature closely corresponds to reality. It is explicitly stated that literature belongs to the superstructure as politics, religion and philosophy which are based on socio- economic base. Thus, art, from Marxist point of view, is originated in the society and it must have some social significance. However, this reproduction of reality cannot be always indifferent. It also carries the artist's attitude towards it.

Lukacs who has tried to interpret art from Marxist realistic perspective is rather severe in his treatment. For him, all interesting writings can't be works of art. To be literature it must be straightforward in its imitation of immediate truths along with other literary characteristics. The only measurement of the successful artist is his touch to reality. Whatever the language, style, uses of images, construction of plots, if it does not copy the life faithfully, Lukacs does not allow it to be entitled a work of art. Regarding the duty of Marxist aesthetics, he observes that it's duty is "not only to explain this impoverishment and inadequacy in a social genetic way but also to measure them aesthetically against the highest demands of artistic reflection of reality and to find them lacking" (Lukacs 334). Thus, according to Lukacs it is the duty of the critics to evaluate whether the historical reality is properly reflected or not.

Theodor Adorno (1903-69) is a leading figure of the Frankfurt School of German Marxists. His principal philosophical works are: *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, written with Max Horkheimer (1944; trans. 1972); *Negative Dialectics* (1966; trans. 1973); and *Aesthetic Theory* (1970; trans. 1984). He is a defender of art against mass culture; Adorno's conception of the culture industry saw this split as an irreconcilable antagonism within the commodity fetishism of capitalism. Accordingly, he was critical of both avant- garde art and the products of the culture industry, while attempting to create a critical space for the social promise of cognitive and aesthetic negativity.

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer openly denounced the realist theories like Lukacs's which take literature as reflection of outside reality. They lauded modernist writers such as James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Kafka,, proposing that their formal experiments by the very fact that they fragment and disrupt the life they reflect, establish a distance and effect a detachment which serve as an implicit critique or yield a negative knowledge of the dehumanizing institutions and processes of society under capitalism. Adorno's theory of literature is markedly different from others as it openly criticizes them in favour of modernism. Frankfurt school which he belong to, criticizes the formal laws of literature and argues that the reality in the real world is formless. Unlike Lukacs and Macherey, Adorno sees literature as alienation from reality. Adorno, regarding literature, observes that it is the negative knowledge of the real world that gives definite value to the works of the modernist writers. Interior monologue or the stream of consciousness as literary technique was much criticized by Lukacs.

Adorno, however, emphasizes that " the interior monologue, far from cutting the literary work off from reality, can expose the way reality actually is" (Forgacs

188). But, for Adorno, this reality is not photographic as for Lukacs and at the same time the duty of an author is not to give shape to the objective reality pre-existing in the society. Adorno, clearly states that, "art is the negative knowledge of the actual world" (Forgacs 189). However, according to David Forgacs, Adorno by negative knowledge "doesn't mean non-knowledge. It means knowledge which can undermine and negate a false or reified condition" (Forgacs189).

Thus, Adorno emphasizes the negative and critical role played by the works of modernist writers as Proust, Kafka, Beckett, Joyce etc. As stated by Forgacs, Adorno "opens up modernist writing to Marxist theory by showing that a different kind of relationship between the text and reality is possible" (Forgacs 190).

Ramon Selden observing the theory of Adorno in *Contemporary Literary Theory* states that for Adorno, "literature unlike the mind doesn't have a direct contact with reality" (Selden 34). Adorno's opinion is that art and reality are not alike. Inverting the reflection theory of Lukacs he claims that art is set apart from reality; its detachment gives it its special significance and power. Selden observes that in contrary to the Soviet Socialist Realists, or Lukacs who totally rejects the modernist writings, and refuses to recognize the writers like Joyce, Beckett etc. as writers and their works as literary works. Adorno gives implicit value to the works of these writers and approaches near to Brecht than Lukacs.

In *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Horkheimer and Adorno talk about enlightenment which leads towards mass deception. Enlightenment use of 'reason' is used by culture industry for their benefits. Their view about culture industry is:

The culture industry perpetually cheats its consumers of what it perpetually promises. The promissory note which, with its plots and staging, it draws on pleasure is endlessly prolonged; the promise,

which is actually all the spectacle consists of, is illusory: all it actually confirms is that the real point will never be reached, that the dinner must be satisfied with the menu. (213)

Their view is that art, culture and beauty is commodity under capitalism. They defend art against mass culture.

Walter Benjamin (1892- 1940) lived mostly in Germany and, after 1933, in France. Attempting to escape the Nazis, he killed himself in 1940. He was a notable German Marxist critic but never joined the Communist Party. The originality of Benjamin's essay lies in his application of the theory of art itself. For Benjamin, the revolutionary artist should not uncritically accept the existing forces of artistic production, but should develop and revolutionize those forces. In doing so, he creates new social relations between artist and audience; he overcomes the contradiction which limits artistic forces potentially available to everyone to the private property of a few, cinema, radio, photography, musical recording: the revolutionary artists task is to develop these new media, as well as to transform the older modes of artistic production. It is not just a question of pushing a revolutionary message through existing media; it is a question of revolutionizing the media themselves which he emphasized in pioneering essay *The Author as Producer* (1934). Benjamin's theory of revolutionary art is one which transforms the modes, rather than merely the contents of artistic production.

Benjamin takes up this theme again in his essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1933). According to him:

Traditional works of art, he maintains, have an 'aura' of uniqueness, privilege, distance and permanence about them; but the mechanical reproduction of, say, a painting, by replacing this uniqueness with a

plurality of copies, destroys that alienating aura and allows the beholders to encounter the work in his own particular place and time.(58)

The artistic aura in the age of mechanical reproduction is lost. The film-camera penetrates, brings its objects humanly spatially closer and so demystifies it. Film makes everyone something of an expert- anyone can take a photograph or at least lay claim to being filmed; and as such it subverts the ritual of traditional 'high art' whereas the traditional painting allows the individual restful contemplation, film is continually modifying ones perceptions, constantly producing a 'shock' effect.

Benjamin views that art like any other form of production also depends upon technique. Even for Marxism, the stage of development of a mode of production involves certain social relations of production, and the stage is set for revolution when productive forces and productive relations enter into contradiction with each other.

For Benjamin, the revolutionary artist should not uncritically accept the existing forces of artist's production but should develop and revolutionize those forces. In doing so, artist creates new social relations between artist and audience.

Terry Eagleton (1943-) is one of the leading figures in English Marxist literary criticism. His work emerged as part of the broader range of engagement with European Marxism associated with New Left Review which saw the translation of numerous Marxist writings previously unavailable in English. This theoretical diversification distinguishes Eagleton from the more specifically 'English' Literary and historical studies associated with Raymond Williams and E.P. Thompson.

Eagleton has expanded and elaborated the concepts of Althusser and Macherey. In his view, a literary text is a special kind of production in which ideological discourse described as any system of mental representations of lived

experience is reworked into a specifically literary discourse. Roman Selden in his book, *Literary Theory* observes Eagleton's view:

Like Althusser, criticism must break with its ideological prehistory and become a 'science' the central problem is to define the relationship between literature and ideology. Because in his view texts do not reflect historical reality but rather work upon ideology to produce an 'effect' of the real. (42)

Hence, Eagleton means that the text may appear to be free in its relation to reality, but it is not free in its use of ideology. Ideology here refers not to conscious political doctrines but to all those systems of representation which shape the individual's mental picture of lived experience. In, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* Eagleton writes, "Ideology is not in the first place a set of doctrines; it signifies the way men live out their roles in class. Society that values, ideas and images which tie them to their social functions and so prevent them from a true knowledge of society as a whole" (15).

Here, he means that any work of art should show a man making sense of his experience in ways that prohibit a true understanding of his society, ways that are consequently false.

Eagleton rejects Althusser's view that literature can distance itself from ideology; it is a complex reworking of already existing ideological discourse. As he writes:

In any society ideology has certain structural coherence. Because it possesses such relative coherence [...] and since literary texts 'belong' to ideology, they too can be the object of such scientific analysis, a scientific criticism would seek to explain the literary work in terms of

the ideological structure of which it is part, yet, which it transforms in its art; it would serrate out the principle which both ties the work to ideology and distances it from it.(18)

Eagleton means that literature and ideology both are the object of scientific interpretation science gives us conceptual knowledge of a situation; whereas art gives us the experience of that situation which is equivalent to ideology.

He argues that such attempts to disengage art and culture from socio-economic determinants lead them to unprivileged humble position. Art becomes nothing more than production of any other commodity. Regarding the anti-representationalistic nature of modern and post modern art,Eagleton views, "If art no longer reflects, it is not because it seeks to change the world rather than mimic it, but because there is truth nothing there to be reflected, no reality which is not itself already image, spectacle, simulacrum gratution fiction" (387).

Here, he means that in contemporary society truth itself has been subjected to power and performativity instead of reason. Nevertheless, the attempts to disintegrate art from reality erase the influence of history on present and create art on culture devoid of all political and historical contents are nothing more than metaphysical illusion which can never be successful. This makes him, the vital fault of modernism in bracketing off the real social world, establishing a critical negating distance between itself and the ruling social order in its bracketing off the political forces which seeks to transform that order.

In Literary Theory: an Introduction 1983, Eagleton discusses that in the present world of nuclear power everything has been politicized, and literature is not exception to it. It has been in the literary theory he observes that it is part of the political beliefs and ideological values. He further writes that it is not an independent

phenomenon, so pure literary theory devoid of all historical, social and sexual relevance is entirely impossible. As he writes that literary theory without any relevance to socio- economic situation is only an academic myth. According to him, "literary theory has a most particular relevance to this political system. It has helped wittingly or not to sustain and reinforce its assumptions."(196)

Regarding the utility of studies, he observes perhaps literary criticism and literary theory just mean any kind of talk about an object not the method, which distinguishes and delimits and discourse" (197). Nevertheless, the object or literature itself is not stable. As he states, "the unity of object is as illusory as the unity of the method" (197).

Eagleton views literature in terms of form, political ideology, and consciousness. But, all this overlooks a simple fact which is obvious to every-one, and not least to a Marxist. He further says literature may be an artifact, a product of social consciousness, a world vision; but it is also an industry. In *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, Eagleton observes:

Books are not just structure of meaning. They are also commodities product by producers and sold on the market at a profit. Drama is not just a collection of literary tests; it is a capitalist business which employs certain men (authors, directors, actors, stage hands) to produce, a commodity to be consumed by an audience at a profit. Critics are not just analysts of texts; they are also (usually) academics hired by the state to prepare students ideologically for their functions within capitalist society. (55)

Eagleton's view is that art and literature is commodified by capitalists. Writers are not just transposers of trans-individual mental structures they are also workers hired by publishing houses to produce commodities which will sell.

Eagleton's opinion towards modernist as well as post modernist developments in art and culture is that it brackets off all political and socio-economic relevance. Eagleton attacks post modernist art and culture as hollow, devoid of its political content. He observes that "the depthless, style less, dehistoricized, decathected, surfaces of post modernist culture are not meant to signify an alienation, for the very concept of alienation must secretly posit a dream of authenticity which post modernist find quite unintelligible" (Eagleton, *Capitalism* 386). He argues that such attempts to disengage art and culture from socio-economic determinants lead them to unprivileged humble position. Art becomes nothing more than production of any other commodity.

Thus, Marxist literary theoreticians straight forward acknowledge the literature's relevance to the socio-economic situation of a society despite lots of diversities among themselves.

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, a philosopher and a psychoanalyst both collaborated and pervasively concerned with political praxis, convey the effects of inevitability, as it were the mutual fate of philosophy and psychoanalysis to meet on the field of social and political action. Their *Anti-Oedipus* is a work of the late 1960s early 1970s which was written during the period of Vietnam War. It challenges deeply rooted presuppositions about society and politics, the psyche and the "self", knowledge and representation. In their view "Oedipus represents the central dogma of psychoanalysis, a self determined by the triangle of the nuclear family ("daddy-

mommy-me") and, by extension, reflecting the nuclear and molecular structure of capitalism"(110).

Anti- Oedipus is an argument that resembles an "event" since it happens, as it were, where three roads meet: political theory, psychoanalytic theory, and the theory of sign-Blind Oedipus, a figure for an idea of the "self" that guilty of incest only in the sense that it turns against its own flesh, a self-generated tyrant, at once the object and the agent of revulsion and desire.

Deleuze and Guattari had brought a model of desire from Marx's idea of production which treats desire a privation or lack. The central idea in Anti-Oedipus is that:

Desire is a process, always involved in production, and we err fundamentally when we make desire self-reflexive, as it belonged to the psychic economy of the individual alone. The "self" is already the product of repression and denial, not a good to be attained; and desire, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is reciprocal or dialectical and always binary. (111)

Desire according to Deleuze and Guattari is "the lack of the real object, its very nature as a real entity depends on the 'essence of lack' that produces the fantasized object" (111). From this view, the idea of production is prevented into representation always taken to be fantasy or illusion, so that what is represented is always what is absent. Like the dog chasing his own tail, the "self" can never be satisfied, since representation has usurped the place of a directly material, bodily process of the ' desiring- machine". In this respect, their analysis of desire, or rather their diagnosis of alienated desire mirrors Marx's analysis of alienated labor in capital.

Within these parameters, Marxist approaches to literature are surprisingly varied, and there is no programmatic way of applying Marxist ideas. Of course, Marxist critics will continue to discuss such issues as class struggle, commodification and alienation of labor and so on, but their shared concerns have not entailed that Marxist readings are always identical in approach, or even that their conclusions will be the same.

Literature might be seen to reflect life under capitalism: for example, in arguing that modernist art portrays and even exacerbates and individual's solipsism and isolation in Lukacs view. Art is split between elitist 'high' art and popular 'low' art in cultural studies opinion.

Alternatively, however, literature might be seen as opposing the ill effects of capitalism: especially artistic traditions may be relatively free of economic determination so that this relative autonomy permits art to critique capitalist relations in Adorno's view or that art alone resists appropriation by the market avant-garde art, or that new technologies make a collective imagination possible in Benjamin's view. However, Marxist approaches to literature are thus attempts both to articulate the relationship between literatures which this implies into question.

Pragmatically, we may have to separate art and society in order to explain their relation, but simultaneously we need to resist this separation remembering that art is 'part of society'.

III. Marxist Analysis of *Rabbit Is Rich*

Introduction

Marxist literary theory might be defined in terms of common goals and political commitments. The Marxist theory depicts the interrelationship of art and world, of theory and practice exposing and challenging the inequalities of the capitalist system in its various forms.

Marxist literary theories- like feminism and post colonialism continue to ask the most challenging questions within the discipline of literary study. What is the relationship between literature and society? Few Marxist theorists today would claim to reveal absolute truths but they do assert a situated argument of what is true or false, for that specific historical moment. All Marxist theories continue to assert certain inequalities. Class exploitation and poverty will always be wrong and Marxist literary theories continue to assert that these issues are not unrelated to literature.

Marxist literary theories inevitably refer to the writings of Karl Marx, the first major critic of capitalism as the system. Undoubtedly, much of Marx's work has dated: the working classes no longer seem likely to be in the vanguard of revolution, at least in the industrial west and the activism of feminists. But, capitalism continues throughout centuries. A wide gulf between the richest and the poorest of our society still exists. Many people still find their work unrewarding and repetitive. We are witnessing the growth of the working poor, of an 'underclass' of homelessness, slave, labor, and insecure and part time labor.

Marxist theories, distinguished from other approaches in the way in which they prioritized the materiality of culture, the way in which it is produced, distributed and received as a concrete social practice. For Marxist theorists, the economic mode of society is crucial because it is economic system which frequently-though not

always determines how art will be constructed. The relationship between economics and literature is both the central concern of Marxism and the subject of its most heated debates. While interpreting *Rabbit Is Rich* from Marxist perspective, the following questions arise.

In what way does *Rabbit Is Rich* represent the social and economic condition of capitalism? How does the novel treat the individual subject in relation to society? Does the novel reflect or expose the dominant ideologies of its time? What are the material conditions under which the novel is produced and received? What are the cultural politics of subsequent and contemporary readings of Updike's fiction? These are some of the questions which Marxist readings of *Rabbit Is Rich* pinpoint.

Harry: A Representative of Whole Society

Rabbit Is Rich depicts the social and economic condition of 1979 and early 1980s. The world faced energy crisis. In the beginning of the novel, Updike writes, "Running out of gas, Rabbit Angstrom thinks as he stands behind the summer-dusty windows of the Spring Motors display room watching the traffic go by on Route 111, traffic somehow thin and scared compared to what it used to be. The fucking world is running out of gas" (1).

Due to the crisis of fuel, the American ride was ending. They suffered a lot. Oil crisis was replaced by gas. Updike further says, " Gas lines at ninety- nine point nine cents a gallon and ninety percent of the stations to be closed for the weekend" (1). The truckers can't get diesel. The novel presents the oil crisis and gas lines which were closed during in the first part. It represents the social and economic condition of capitalistic America.

The present crisis of the energy is the result of the crisis of the international capitalist economy. It is a classical cycle crisis, the twenty-third one since the

inception of the world market for industrial goods is both a crisis of over accumulation of capital and a crisis of overproduction of commodities, triggered by a decline of the average rate of profit. But, it is a classical business cycle crisis within the framework of a long depressive wave, which started in the early 1970s and which is characterized by a constant rise in unemployment.

The novel presents sexual thoughts and performances, the emphasis on women's bodies, their inner parts and protuberances cannot hide the fact that sexual activity is being used as a tease. Updike conveys delight in the female form, in the joys of heterosexual connection, in the varieties of sexual excitement a man and woman can conceive of- as experienced by the man. *In American Fictions 1940-1980s*, Frederick R. Karl writes:

Updike rarely misses out on a large ass, a wide pair of hips, earthy thighs, a good muscle here, a sexy development there. Breast, also, can matter, but faces and heads not at all, except for mouths, which can perform fellatio or cunnilingus. Blow, blowing, blown have replaced pillow talk, in what had been labeled an intellectual Peyton Place. (352)

Updike's protagonist Harry represents bourgeois class. He perceives women as commodities. In *Marxism in The Postmodern Age*, Rosalyn Baxandall views:

Historically, women have been perceived as either madonnas (good girls) or whores (bad girls). Aborting women are associated with selfishness and immorality while married mothers are regarded as morally pure and self-sacrificing. Women are taught by the mass media to be the objects of men's desire, rather than the subjects of their own desires. (242)

Harry loves and marries Janice but he engages with other women's too. " Even the return of Ruth- the part- time whore from *Rabbit Redux*, who bore Rabbit a daughter he has not seen- now fat and grey, brings back to him her heavy, sweet body. Rabbit not only performs well, he remembers well" (Karl 351). He always remembers Ruth and his illegitimate daughter from her but not his personal son Nelson. So, there is not unity in family. Janice does not believe in Harry. She says, "You always want what you don't have instead of what you do. Getting all cute and smiley in the face, thinking about this girl that doesn't exist while your real son that you had with your wife is waiting at home right now and you saying you wished he'd stay in Colorado" (63).

Harry is haunted by his past and not responsible for his family. So, Janice says, "One thing definite, I don't want to hear any more about your darling illegitimate daughter. It's a disgusting idea" (64). There is not harmony in the family because of Harry's excess of material gain which forces him towards sexuality and alcoholism.

In *American Fictions 1940-1980s*, Karl further writes:

A vacation trip that three couples take late in the novel is predictable: it must lead to wife swapping. With his eye on the well- filled- out Cindy (she is only flesh, not life); Rabbit is more than willing to trade off Janice in order to get his hands and mouths on her opulence. But, he ends up with slim, prim Thelma, who turns out to be sexual dynamite. (351)

Karl's view is that Harry is willing to give his wife Janice to get Cindy. He is the bourgeois everyman who represents contemporary America. Though he does not have sexual intercourse with Cindy, he becomes successful to sleep with his friend's wife Thelma.

Harry sees women as sex objects. Baxandall in *Marxism in The Postmodern Age* writes:

Women are presented as commodities under capitalism. As sex objects women have been violated and used to sell products. An important part of Marxist –feminist project must be for women to reclaim their sexuality and see themselves as desiring subjects in the full sense of the word- not only as victims of men's sexuality, but as active seekers of their own pleasure. (243)

Capitalist used to see women as passive objects but Marxists see them as active subjects. They should not be commodified. But, the novel presents women as sellable goods and pleasure for men. So, it reflects the contemporary American bourgeois society. Lukacs says, literature should reflect the reality. The novel also reflects the reality of the contemporary America and Updike is successful in portraying sexual perversion and disintegration which the Americans faced during that period.

Ronnie Harrison was married to Thelma Harrison. Ronnie played high school basketball with Harry. He also slept with Ruth Leonard before she became Harry's lover in *Rabbit, Run*. And yet again, in *Rabbit Is Rich*, he sleeps with a girl. Harry lusts after Cindy Murkett.

Thelma Harrison becomes Harry's lover near the end of *Rabbit Is Rich*, and the affair continues for the next ten years, up until near her death from lupus in *Rabbit at Rest*. She tells her husband about the affair on her death bed, and Ronnie in turn speaks to Harry about it. Charlie Stavros worked at Springer Motors alongside Harry and not only slept with Janice while she and Harry were still married, but he also slept with Harry's sister, Mim.

Almost every character is unfaithful to husbands and wives. Harry's freedom that he always thought was outward motion turns to be this inward dwindling. Consumption is linked with sex as a way to fill the spiritual void of modern life. Ambiguously, sex represents both vitality and the void, the unfillable emptiness constitutes death. The fuzzy emptiness and mindlessness of the 1980s pervade the novel. The novel captures a sense of individual and societal frustration, encapsulated in the life of an aging American man.

After the death of his father in law, Harry owns the Springer Motors. Updike further views that Harry is a part of bourgeois society who uses commercials as his means to cheat the people. He says, "The Toyota Commercials on television are out there all the time, preying on people's minds. He likes being part of all that; he likes the nod he gets from the community that had overlooked him like dirt ever since high school" (3).

Adorno and Horkheimer in their essay, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* view:

The culture industry perpetually cheats its consumers of what it perpetually promises. The promissory note which, with its plots and staging, it draws on pleasure is endlessly prolonged; the promise, which is actually all the spectacle, consists of, is illusory: all it actually confirms is that the real point will never be reached, that the dinner must be satisfied with the menu. In front of the appetite stimulated by all those brilliant names and images there is finally set no more than a commendation of the depressing everyday world it sought to escape. Of course, works of art were not sexual exhibitions either. However, by representing deprivation as negative, they retracted, as it were, the

prostitution of the impulse and rescued by mediation what was denied.

(213)

Adorno and Horkheimer's view is that culture industry and enlightenment leads towards mass deception. The people are condemned to choose whatever culture industry provides for them. Harry uses his trick in the Toyota commercials on television and people are condemned to choose whatever the culture industry provides for them. They are deceived by culture industry.

The disintegration between the family members is matched by the disintegration of the outer world. Harry's disintegration is matched with the world outside because contemporary America faced the same common problem. George Lukacs in his essay, *The Ideology of Modernism* says that, "The disintegration of personality is matched by a disintegration of the outer world" (296).

Bourgeois ways of life breaks harmonious society which is presented in the conversation between Harry and Janice, "I like having Nelson in the house, It's great to have an enemy sharpens your senses. Nelson is not your enemy. He is your boy and needs you more how than ever though he can't say it"(111).

Harry treats his son as an enemy. The son on the other hand is like his father. He says, "What did he ever do, to build up the lot? My granddad was grubbing his way up while my father wasn't doing anything but being a lousy husband to my mother. That all he's done to deserve all this money: be too lazy and shiftless to leave my mother like he wanted to [...]" (119).

Nelson says, Rabbit had loved Janice for money and is not responsible for the family. He leaves Janice as his wish and goes to other women. This made the family relations not good by breaking the harmony and unity. Nelson further clarifies:

He is bad, really bad. He doesn't know what's up, and he doesn't care, and he thinks he's so great. My little sister dead because of him and then this Jill he let die. Every thing's his fault, it's his fault I'm so fucked up and he enjoys it. And then the way Mom waits on him, like he's actually done something for her, instead of the other way around.

(120)

Harry's sexuality and alcoholism made him irresponsible for the family. So, Nelson finds him guilty in her sister's death. She was burnt in their earlier house. He treats his son and wife only for his medium to get economic success.

Here, the point is the social nature of individual and his/her existence lies in the social interaction between individual and society. It determines the person's personality. Harry's personality is determined by interaction with contemporary bourgeois American society. Marx says:

Though man is a unique individual and it is just his particular which makes him an individual communal being he is equally the whole, the ideal whole, the subjective-existence of society as thought and experienced, he exists in reality as the representation and the real mind of social existence, and as the sum of human manifestation of life.

(Manuscripts, 130)

Man is an individual and represents the society. At the same time man is also the totality as proclaimed by Marx. Harry Angstrom on the other hand, represents contemporary American society.

Besides, Harry's family relation is based on money. Though, he lives with his wife, Janice, he has extramarital affairs with a prostitute called Ruth and he is always worried about his illegitimate daughter who aroused tension between him and his

wife. Janice says to Harry, "One thing define, I don't want to hear any more about your darling illegitimate daughter. It's a disgusting idea" (64). This made the bad relation with his wife. "Janice and I had not been getting along well"(98). Then, why they live together is a bond of money. Harry is running his wife Janice's Springer Motors. So, he says, "Janice, my wife, has been supporting me" (13). It points out their relation exists because of money by which she supports him, not because of human love and humanity. Marx also points out this money relationship of the capitalistic society. "The bourgeois has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to mere money relation" (*Manifesto*, 23).

The relationship between Harry and his son Nelson is bad because Nelson does not earn any money. He does not want to see his son in the same house because of his unemployment. If he had earned money, he would have loved his son. Money becomes so perverse in their relationship as well as in capitalistic society- Marx comments it "is the bond which binds me to human life and society to me" (Manuscripts, 166)

Thus, presenting those facts, love towards material goods like car, house, and money based family relations; female as a commodity and disintegration which brings alienation in *Rabbit Is Rich*, Updike makes the protagonist, Harry a true representative of the capitalistic society.

The question may arise whether the Updike's protagonists, Harry's society is a capitalistic society or not. Updike has presented many facts, evidences and happenings which are not possible to happen in other kinds of society. As Marx firmly believes, "it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary, it is their social existence that determines their consciousness" (*Preface to a Contribution to the Karl Marx Critique of Political Economy* 217-218).

We have already mentioned that the setting of the novel was during the oil crisis and Harry's society is a capitalistic society. Harry's too much concern on money results in the bad relationship between the family members which is presented in conversation between Harry and Nelson. Nelsons says; "They don't care, Dad. People doesn't care that much about money anymore, it's all shit anyway. Money is shit" (151). Nelson values family love and harmony instead of money but Harry is only concerned about money:

May be to you money is nothing but not to me. I'll tell you that now. Let's keep calm. Think of the parts. These things sure as well need some work, the years they've been around. You know what six- seven year-old parts cost these days, when you can get' em at all? this isn't some fancy place dealing in antiques, we sell Toyotas. (151)

Here, the protagonist Harry is always concerned with money and the family relations are changed into mere money relations. There is not love and sympathy in him. So, his society is loveless capitalistic society.

He had decided to keep lady staff in the Toyota dealership. As he says, "Toyota agency had decided to hire women to make the service [...]" (58). As well as the term "hire" denotes the meaning that workers are taken as a commodity in the market. In the same way, Marx describes capitalist market in his book *Marx in His Own Words*, "Everything has become a commodity: side by side with the meat market, there is a art market, side by side with car market there is the art market, the labor market, the sex market, [...]. Above all it is a man who becomes a commodity" (52).

The workers and females are taken as commodities. Thus, Harry's society is the capitalistic society.

Harry represents a free individual at first sight. As the life of Harry goes, the novel detail the marital tensions, sexual escapades, personal betrayals, professional disappointments, and spiritual crises that reflect changing attitudes about sexual behavior, relationships between men and women and most importantly, religious belief in contemporary society which brought the failure of capitalism in contemporary American society. Here, Updike presents the alienation in a mirror form. Lukacs sees literature in *Marxism and Literary Criticism* as a presentation:

In a society where the general and the particular, the conceptual and the sensuous, the social and the individual are increasingly torn apart by the 'alienations' of capitalism, the great writer draws these dialectically together into a complex totality. His fiction thus mirrors, in microcosmic form, the complex totality of society itself. In doing this, great art combat the alienation and fragmentation of capitalist society, projecting a rich, many-sided image of human wholeness.

(26)

Updike strongly reflects Harry as a failed athlete failed husband and worker as well as a failed national energy. Updike further says, "This is a novel about limits, energy crisis, hostages, and death. The globe's natural resources are dwindling; America depends for fuel on other nations, which then take her citizens hostage; and Rabbit's own energy and aspirations fade in middle age." (Introduction, *Rabbit Is Rich*)

Not only did Rabbit fail but the whole country was facing energy crisis. His failure as a athlete, worker and husband is the failure of whole America. So, he reflects the whole society.

Updike presents the contemporary American society as it is. He gives the realistic image of America though being a naturalist writer. In *American Fictions*, Frederick R. Karl views Updike as:

Many critics have also expressed objection to Updike's portrayal of women, viewed by some as specious and misogynistic; his graphic depictions of sexual activity, which have been faulted as gratuitous; and the grand historical and social backdrops of his fiction, considered by some an exploitative façade for the author's solipsistic concern. Despite such criticism, Updike remains highly esteemed as a foremost man of letters whose prodigious intelligence and verbal power presents the sorrows, frustrations and banality of American life separating him from the ranks of his contemporaries.(349)

Karl's view towards Updike is positive. He sees Updike as a realist writer. He has presented contemporary America as it is and sees American society as sorrowful, frustrated, filled with banality and spiritual crisis. There is the realistic presentation of American society.

Updike's distinct prose style, an essential feature of his fiction and discursive writings, is characterized by its vividly descriptive passages, carefully wrought in a striking, allusive passages placed him within the realist tradition, a literary mode that favors precise, objective description of the real world over imaginative or idealized representations. His novels detail the marital tensions, sexual escapades, personal betrayals, professional disappointments and spiritual crisis that reflect changing attitudes about sexual behavior, relationships between men and women and most importantly the religious belief in contemporary society as it is. So, Harry's failure to be a father and a husband is the failure of American society. Lukacs also sees realistic

presentation most give vivid image of society as it is and says," The task of the realist writer is to flesh out these 'typical' trends and forces in sensuous realized individuals and actions; in doing so he links the individual to the social whole." (26, *Marxism and Literary Criticism*)

Lukacs says, individual is a social whole. So, here, Harry Angstrom is a representation of whole society.

Of course, it is a social relations in which Harry has to interact to exist in the society. His personal activities and wishes are also determined and conditioned by social relations. As Marx believes, "the manifestation of his life even when it does not appear directly in the form of communal manifestation accomplished in association with other men- is [...] a manifestation and affirmation of social life" (*Manuscripts*, 130)

Harry, along with his friends, goes to the Caribbean with his friends. They swim, play golf, go sunfish sailing and generally have wonderful time. Updike further says:

The day eventually comes when they go to the Caribbean with their friends. They swim, play golf, go sunfish sailing and generally have a wonderful time. At dinner someone suggests they swap wives night-by- night. They have a serious discussion about the idea and work out a set of ground rules to agree on. Harry picks Thelma though he is really hot for Cindy Murkett but that will have to be another night. (376)

Though Harry likes Cindy, he sleeps with Thelma. Harry says, "Let me suck these sweet things then. These nipples are not bumpily like Janice's but perfect as a baby's thumb-tips" (377). Women characters are treated like sellable goods in the market. They are taught by the mass media to be the objects of men's desire rather

than the subjects of their own desires. They are presented as the victims of men's sexuality. They do not have their own individual identity. Their financial independence and identity is linked with male member's identity. Harry treats women according to his will accepting one and leaving other. This brought disintegration in the marital relations. So, Harry is presented as a Updike's monumental "everyman". The most successful parts of the novel occur in Updike's descriptions of Rabbit's desire, his pleasure in the tactile sense of flesh. Whoever satisfies this aspect of Rabbit will hold him together; he moves from his wife to Ruth, a part-time prostitute, back to his wife, then to Ruth, each more 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.

Rabbit is charmless, witless, a young man full of disaster, but even that on a small scale, and he is the archetypal American male. *In American Fictions*, Frederick R. Karl writes:

Everything in *Rabbit Is Rich* suggests that Rabbit, now forty-six, has peaked, in an allegory of America itself in the later 1970s and early 1980s. What Rabbit represents as a piece of America is being transformed; and his own life, so much a microcosm of middle America, must undergo a similar transformation. (350)

According to Karl, Harry represents the whole American society. A vacation trip that three couples take late in the novel is predictable: it must lead to wife swapping. They are ready to exchange their wives which brought disintegration within the families forcing to alcoholism. Sexuality brings alienation breaking within the familial and social ties which force them towards alcoholism. So, Harry's failure is the failure of whole American capitalistic society and Harry is the representative of whole society.

IV. Conclusion

Every society is a platform where there exist a variety of socio-economic classes. All the members of the society do not yield the same nature of their property structure, earning and opportunities. So, these factors locate them to different social ranks or positions. The position to which a type of people having homogeneous set of thought and practice, affiliate, apparently defines to have formed a social class. The members from different social classes cannot have a conflict- less life as long as they have to live together because the interests, choices, concepts, practices, behaviors, manners and so many other social phenomena do not match. The cultures they make have varying characteristic features. Sometimes, a type of conflict regarding to the cultural and religious issues or that of other type is perceived. In true sense such conflicts exist in society and form the foundation for class- variation.

Harry Angstrom (Rabbit) the protagonist in the novel represents the capitalistic hero. He is economically prosperous, dabbles in gold and silver, plays golf, owns enough property and lives luxurious life and engages in lustful activities which represent excess of material gain in modern American life. The too much involvement in worldly pleasure and excess of materiality not only brings disorder, division, sexual perversion, it also becomes the root cause of disintegration and alienation of the protagonist by breaking familial and social ties. Human beings are taken as a commodity in a market. The society lacks all the humanistic values like love, brotherhood morality and so on. Due to the disintegration of the familial and social ties, he is alienated. He has not been able to socialize himself in capitalistic society. This very disintegration of personality is matched by a disintegration of the outer world because Harry is one of the Updike's monumental "every man" which represents capitalistic modern American life. Harry (Rabbit) finds his son a severe personal threat in his business. So, he does not involve him in his business. The

heartbreaking encounters between one generation and the next divide and destroy closely held family relations.

His involvement in other women breaks his relation with his wife. In his bed scene, he imagines his wife Janice in a pornographic movie. Updike presents Rabbit as an outwardly rich and prosperous but inwardly dwindling capitalistic hero. If the first Rabbit novel (*Rabbit Run*) begins with a failed athlete and the second (*Rabbit Redux*) a failed husband and worker, the third goes on to suggest a failed national energy. *Rabbit Is Rich* begins with the phrase, "Running out of gas" (1). All the "Rabbit" novels present the failed protagonist (Harry Angstrom) who is the Updike's monumental "everyman". So, the failure of the protagonist is the failure of capitalism in modern American life.

The spiritual crisis and lack of responsibilities in the novel between family members signifies Rabbit's incapability of being a father. Nelson abandons his family like his father had in *Rabbit Run*, like Janice and Rabbit, Nelson and Pru are becoming fairly heavy drinkers. Harry engages with other women and worldly pleasures not having responsibilities for his family. He also leaves maternal parents home after having material success leaving Janice mother alone. Nelson abandons his family and pregnant wife. There is not unity but betrayal in the family bringing the disintegration of the familial and social ties. The disintegration brings alienation as well as individual and societal frustration. The protagonist (Harry's) failure is the failure of capitalism.

Updike wants to establish new form of an unalienated society where man would become independent, stand on his own feet, and will no longer be crippled by the capitalistic values, that he will truly be the master and creator of his life.

In this way, Updike presents alienated condition of human beings. And to get emancipation from it, there is needed a socialistic revolution against the capital.

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