

## ABSTRACT

LIANTY, NG : A CHARACTER ANALYSIS ON JOHN UPDIKE'S NOVELS  
RABBIT RUN, RABBIT REDUX, RABBIT IS RICH AND  
RABBIT AT REST.

Harry 'Rabbit' Angstrom is a very interesting character because he is one of the most famous character in the world of novel writing. Through him Updike has found his longest fiction. He is also the character who made Updike the most-gifted and most talked-about writer of his generation. Therefore, there should be some essential factors which determine the success of Updike's Rabbit novels, and which make the novels being admired and hated at the same time by the readers.

This study has three objectives. They are to find out how Updike conveyed his central character in accordance with M.J. Murphy's characterization methods, to find out what Updike's opinion on his character, whether he agreed or disagreed to Rabbit's action, speech, behavior and thoughts, and to find out why the readers considered the novels shocking and why they, at the same time, admired and hated the novels with equal intensity.

In analyzing the novels, I have used the characterization methods by M.J. Murphy, namely, Personal Description, Character as Seen by Another, Speech, Past Life, Conversation of Others, Reactions, Direct Comment, Thoughts, and Mannerisms. The analysis of this first objective results in finding the five characterization methods used most frequently by Updike in his novels. They are : Personal Description, Direct Comment, Speech, Character as Seen by Another, and Conversation of Others. These five methods are very useful in giving a clear picture of Rabbit's personality and character. Rabbit is a soft-hearted person who reacted impulsively to undesirable situations.

The biographical analysis to answer the second question results in finding the fact that Updike's personal life experiences largely influenced his central character. Often Rabbit's perceptions and beliefs turned out to be Updike's. For instance, Rabbit was a religious person but he did not like people who went to church just to give the impression to others that they are faithful. Updike also has the same opinion, for him, to do good and simple daily life activities is much worthwhile than to talk about God but do nothing. However, though his character was greatly influenced by him, Updike never takes a stand for or against his character. He refuses to say whether Rabbit was a good or a bad man. He leaves the decision to the readers.

The sociocultural-historical analysis results in finding that the novels are considered shocking because firstly, Updike presents the novels in the present tense which was unusual in the world of literary works. The only precedent was Joyce Carry's Mr. Johnson. Secondly, the novel described the sexual activities in the novels explicitly. Thirdly, the novels were hated because they had mercilessly uncovered the veil of America, revealing much evidence that the traditional values and beliefs the American were so proud of, are drifting apart. Finally, The novels are admired because they present 'Rabbit', a character with the nerve to act. The character of Rabbit gave them confidence that America was not paralyzed once and for all, and that America could survive through its crisis.