The "Extra Dimension": Character Names in Updike's "Rabbit" Trilogy

Jack De Bellis

Reminiscing recently about Pennsylvania family names, John Updike remarked: "Updike . . . savored of high expectations and good self-regard; it was also . . . used more than once in Hollywood movies for comic minor characters, winning howls of local laughter" ("Personal History" 52). Though Updike's sensitivity for naming may not be rooted in such childhood experience, his earliest published poems reveal humor in his exploitation of names. Undoubtedly this device had been honed by his editing of the Shillington High School *Chatterbox* and the brash Harvard *Lampoon*, and his avid reading of *The New Yorker*.[1] Updike learned quite early to exploit "the general associations of the name . . . [and] the associations of the name that are derived from history and literature" (Hamiltons 54).

Although Updike's interest in allegorical naming is most obvious in his early work, his attention to "general associations" becomes complex, since to make "patterns," to "insert secrets" into his books signify for him what it means to be a writer.[2] As Updike remarked, "I am rather mystical about the naming of characters in my books . . .," and JDB he tries to find "this extra dimension."[3] The names of the characters in the "Rabbit" trilogy intensify the unity of the "Rabbit" chronicle and provide a sense of serious and witty interconnectedness of the most isolated and ordinary people.[4]

Such patterns are employed throughout Updike's "Rabbit" trilogy to create character names with ambiguity, wit and irony. Such naming advances theme, deepens characterization, and heightens meaning. Naturally, Updike shows these concerns throughout his work, from his first stories in the Fifties to his most recent ones collected in *Trust Me*, and from his first novel, *The Poorhouse Fair*, to his most recent, *S*. Not only does Updike enjoy using names as classical analogues in *The Centaur*, or as Hawthorne allusions in *A Month of Sundays*, *Roger's Version*, and *S.*, but his characters themselves sometimes reveal an interest in naming. Joey in *Of The Farm* resembles Adam in naming animals

and flowers, and Piet Hanema of *Couples* playfully unscrambles his surname: "me, a man, amen, ah," (omitting only "name" in his list), while discovering Hanema to be a palindrome: "amen, ah." Updike explains Piet's name thus: "Hanema/anima/Life." His name is the oddest of Updike's people, but Angela notes, "aren't all names funny until you get used to them?" While Foxy Whitman coins "funny phrases" for her lover Piet, Satanic Freddy Thorne calls Piet "Handball," "Handlebar," and "Enema." But Freddy and Piet conspire on a series of comic names like *Ora Fiss* and *P. Niss*. They also amuse themselves inventing names revealing the intimacy of the other couples; Piet constructs the "Applesmiths," compounded of the Applebys and Littlesmiths, and the "Saltines," a blend of the Constantines and Salzmans. Like Hanema, Tom Marshfield, Updike's most self-consciously verbal character, in *A Month of Sundays*, also delights in witty name-play, particularly concerning "prying" "Ms.terious" Prynne. Henry Bech admits he dislikes his surname in *Bech Is Back*, but in *S.* the search for the meaning of one's name and of naming itself becomes the quest for the meaning of life.[5]

The characters of the "Rabbit" trilogy restrict their awareness of naming to calling a child after the month of her birth, and the attaching of labels and nicknames. Yet the characters themselves are often clues to their own identities and their relations to one another; links appear among their names which they can't see. The critic is sent to etymological dictionaries and his own associative resources to track the implications in these names. Updike employs these procedures when he traces the derivation of the name *Dorothea*: "gift of God. The fanciful name would have been a curse had not the child lived up to it—an ethereal little girl with her mother's agility and that milky, abstracted blue-eyed gaze of her father's, set beneath not his bald dome but a head of angelic curls."[6] Such awareness of etymology may govern other name choices.

A small matter? No small matter of craft eludes Updike who has said, "I will try . . . to work steadily, even shyly, in the spirit of those medieval carvers who so fondly sculpted the undersides of choir seats" (Howard 82). Perhaps character naming forms such a playful underside to the brilliant surface of his fiction. Like those sculptures, Updike's naming in the "Rabbit" trilogy is playful and ingenious, and since these three inter-related novels span nearly his entire career, they provide insight into his persistent interest in the "extra dimension" of naming.

The use of names in the "Rabbit " trilogy relies on associations which develop several levels of meaning. Many critics have noted that the surname of

Updike's hero, Angstrom, punned on "angstrom," a measurement of the length of a light wave, and "angst."[7] Both fit Harry since he enjoyed resolving anxiety in basketball games by passing, so that he became "infinitely small" and players guarding him looked foolish because, "there was nobody there." As an "angstrom" Harry is a "measurement," a touchstone. As a figure of "angst," he may have experienced anxiety because of his parents' quarrels and his unresolved conflict with his father. His characteristic running may indicate an attempted flight from anxiety. Part of the etymology of his name, "strom," may mean "river" or a "flow of words," and though neither is directly connected to Rabbit, metaphorically, Updike presents Harry is through an interior "stream of words." Rabbit's marriage into the Springer family unites him to dogs, no friends of rabbits. The Angstroms' flights from one another, their hostility to the opposed in-laws, and the tension in Nelson to identify with father or mother, rabbit or dog, dramatize the opposition in their surnames.[8]

Larry Taylor cites "Angstrom" as indicating "allegorical naming," but a casual labeling of Nelson Angstrom's shows a more evident allegorizing. When Janice calls Nelson "Mr. Spoil-it-All" because he divulges part of the opening of "2001: A Space Odyssey" in *Rabbit Redux*, her tag is apt. Janice's conceiving of Nelson forced the premature Angstrom marriage leading to Harry's flight in *Rabbit, Run*. Nelson's innocent attraction for Jill in *Rabbit Redux* interferes with his relation to his father, further aggravated when he assumes Harry contributed to her death. In *Rabbit Is Rich* Nelson complicates both Harry's business, by forcing his way into Springer Motors, and Harry's sexual interest in Cindy Murkett, by mistreating his expectant wife, Pru, and fleeing to college, thus impelling the Angstroms' premature return. These are the familiar Oedipal acts of aggression which impair Harry's wish to enjoy his "riches." As Donald Greiner remarks, "Nelson has no manners, no consideration for others and, like all losers, he believes that everyone picks on him" (94).[9] Surely, Nelson is "Mr. Spoil-it- All." Such labeling also proves prophetic when Harry dubs his sister Mim "Little Miss Fixit" for sleeping with Janice's lover Stavros in order to end Janice's affair and repair Harry's marriage. Ruth viciously labels Harry "Mr. Death," and his acceptance of her judgment contributes to his life-in-death ten-year sexual abstinence. Taylor assumes allegorical naming creates satire, but in Updike's hands labels provide ironic foreshadowing of character actions and thus advance the "extra dimension."

The most dramatic case of labeling in the trilogy is, naturally, Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom's nickname, created by Harry's "breadth of the white face,

the pallor of his blue irises, and a nervous flutter under his brief nose."[10] The name sticks when as a basketball star he learns to "Run, run, run." Psychologically the label fits Harry perfectly since he erotically images the basketball net and links post-game sexual rewards to the "floating sense of power" of the court; of course, Harry becomes notorious for his several affairs and his sexual fantasizing. Other incidental images from the trilogy underline Harry's rabbitry—his preference for various "burrows," his crouching stance, and many images apparently derived from Beatrix Potter's *Tale of Peter Rabbit*.[11]

Harry's given name logically relates to "Rabbit," suggesting "hairy." George Hunt suggests "hurried," underlining his "angst," the rabbit's nervousness, and impatience, particularly during intercourse. Etymologically, *Harry* stems from *Harold* ("army leader") and *Henry* ("ruler of an enclosure"),[12] Harry's "floating feeling of high pride" is his real source of power. His running in circles in *Rabbit, Run* suggests an ironic "ruler of an enclosure," while his kingdom is invaded by Ruth and the homeless Jill and Skeeter in *Rabbit Redux*; however, in *Rabbit Is Rich* his "enclosure" becomes his forty-nine-percent ownership in Springer Motors and the purchase of a home. In *Rabbit Redux*, "2001: A Space Odyssey" illustrates how man is released forever from his earthly home, thanks to the computer "Hal," whose name is also derived from *Henry*. Thus, Harry appears locked in a battle with himself, for he resembles the astronaut's symbiotic relation to "Hal" when working at the linotype machine in *Rabbit Redux*. As Dave the astronaut saves himself by disconnecting "Hal's" mental circuits, so Janice figuratively kills Harry to protect herself from a mechanical existence. Janice runs to Stavros' apartment on Eisenhower Avenue just as astronaut Armstrong steps on the moon in *Rabbit Redux*.

Serious intentions clearly underlie whatever surface satire might exist in Harry's name, but no satire attaches to his parents, though they are treated reductively. Earl Angstrom carries a given name of nobility belied by his ordinary work as a typesetter at Verity Press and his subordinate relation to his wife.[13] Mary Angstrom's name recalls Harry's high school sweetheart Mary Ann, and may thus subtly indicate his Oedipal conflict. The name *Ann* means "Grace," and recalls the "Motions of Grace" segment of the epigraph to *Rabbit, Run*; so the etymology may indicate Harry's eroticized "saintliness" since Mary Ann conferred her grace in his car after Harry's first-rate basketball performances. Such "grace" reappears in *Rabbit Is Rich* in the apparent daughter of Harry and Ruth, Annabelle, whose name may create a "beautiful grace," particularly since Harry places his hope for the first-rate in his self-transmission

through his daughter Becky in *Rabbit, Run* and his granddaughter Judith in *Rabbit Is Rich*. Updike thus subtly underlines inter-relations of characters.

The Springer family, adversaries to "Rabbit," spring traps repeatedly. Janice traps Harry into marriage when pregnant with Nelson, and, when pregnant with Becky, traps him into returning to her. In *Rabbit, Run* Frederick Springer traps him three times: by selling Harry a Ford; by employing him to sell cars at the end of *Rabbit Redux*; and by willing him forty-nine per cent of Springer Motors, while giving Janice and Bessie controlling interest of the firm in *Rabbit Is Rich*. Also, Harry is trapped by the long reach of Frederick Springer. When Rabbit seeks to orient himself during his flight by locating "Frederick" Maryland on his map, his eye skids off-track, and in disgust he throws the map away. Since Nelson's middle name is Frederick, Harry is again trapped by his son. Bessie, who always thinks Nelson a Springer rather than an Angstrom, traps Harry into hiring Nelson, the cause of Janice's original entrapment.

"Springers," dogs used to hunt rabbits, hound Harry for his desertion and his responsibility in Becky's death. *Rabbit Is Rich* shows "the official family version is that the baby's dying at Janice's hands was all his fault" (343). Both Ruth and Jill call Rabbit "baby killer." Dogs, not rabbits, write history. Frederick Springer's name may recall Frederick the Great; he assumes nobility by giving expensive clothes to his wife and daughter and stuffing his house with furniture and pictures of dogs. The Springer's dog Elsie attacks Nelson, and his return snarl suggests he may be ensnared by Springer ways. Rebecca Springer (Hebrew "binding") ties the Springer family together by rejecting Harry's family as lower-class and identifying Nelson as a Springer.

Taylor suggests "Knell-son" for Nelson (72), and Harry does hear a bell which "rings to the edges of the universe" at the end of *Rabbit,Run* when Nelson forms the "balance" between "the right way and the good way." "Knell" is also related to "beat" and "explode," describing Nelson's smashing cars and abusing his pregnant wife Pru in *Rabbit Is Rich*, as though cheating Harry of a replacement for Becky which might end his guilt.

If Nelson's name buttresses relations of character and action, Janice Springer's, deriving from Hebrew of "John," "God is gracious," provides irony. She is not gracious, for once married, she is a poor housekeeper and indifferent cook, an unexciting sexual partner, an irresponsible mother, a resentful daughter-in-law, and coarse in her references to Harry's mother, as well as to Ruth, Margaret, and Jill. *Janice* may be etymologically ironic, yet her initial let-

ter shows a concealed kinship to others, triggered by a continuity of "J" names throughout the trilogy: in *Rabbit, Run*, Jack Eccles, who reads Belloc's story "Jim" to his daughter Joyce; in *Rabbit Redux*, Jill Pendleton, harbored at "Jimbo's Friendly Lounge" where Hubert "Skeeter" Johnson hides; and in *Rabbit Is Rich*, Jamie Nunemacher and Judith Angstrom.[14]

Janice is an etymological sister to most of these men, since *Janice* like *Jack* and *Johnson* derives from *John*, and *Jimbo* from *John* by way of *Jim-James-Jacob-Jacques-Jack*. However, *June, Jill and Judith* stand apart from all these links. Jill's name is connected to *Julius,* a Roman noble family (a reference to her wealthy family from Connecticut, where Eccles once lived?). Janice had insisted that her baby be named Rebecca, after her mother, but allowed the middle name *June*, which Harry preferred because of its connection to the month of the baby's birth. Janice agrees to the name *June,* because it alliterates with her own name. June surely "binds" the Angstroms in *Rabbit, Run*, but her accidental death unites Harry and Janice through guilt. Dead baby June stands between Harry and Janice throughout *Rabbit Redux*, and Jill's death in that novel only underlines the tiny corpse that has led Harry to a quasi-death. But in *Rabbit Is Rich* Harry's granddaughter virtually re-incarnates Becky June. Though as yet unnamed, she may eventually be named after Pru's mother, Judith, "praised." The first baby was born in June but spring proved ironic; "Judith," born in January, is presented to Rabbit in his den, a "temple," during the secular holy Sunday of the Super Bowl. She seems destined for a happier fate. Pittsburgh, bordering Pru's state Ohio, has just scored.[15]

Also aligned etymologically to death is Marty Tothero, Rabbit's basketball coach. Taylor and others divide his surname into "Tot-hero," to indicate his significance to Rabbit. But despite his sloganeering about the "sacredness of achievement," he uses fouls to win, teaches the "underhand" method of free throw shooting and, according to Ronnie Harrison, criticizes his greatest player behind his back. Tothero was never Harry's hero; in *Rabbit, Run* he remembers the scandal that ousted Tothero from Mt. Judge High, his involvement with political manipulators and "a depressing kind of sin." It is fitting that "Tot" (German *Tod*) is related to death, since his introduction of Rabbit to Ruth leads to Becky's death and a proposed abortion. Near the time June is born, Tothero suffers a stroke and later dies. Marty Tothero's given name derives from Mars, god of war, and this derivation subtly links him to another failure, Peggy Gring Fosnacht.

Peggy Gring Fosnacht's given name shows a sisterly relation to Ruth's fellow prostitute, Margaret, associate of both Tothero and Ronnie Harrison. "Margaret" derives from "pearl," and both Margarets think themselves "cast before swine," considering Peggy's denigration of her husband Ollie and Margaret's slapping ridicule of Tothero. Peggy's maiden name suggests estrangement: Gring, related to "gringo" (a foreigner), and, since "gringo" is cognate to "griego" (Greek), she may also be related to Janice's Greek lover in *Rabbit Redux*, Charlie Stavros. Her married name Fosnacht recalls "Fastnacht," the feast before Ash Wednesday. As Harry tells Eccles, custom dictates consuming "Fosnacht" donuts on Shrove Tuesday. (The sexual symbolism of the donut is plain, though Harry describes her as "gumdrops." Harry consummates his adultery with Margaret just before Hallowe'en.) As Harry's grandfather would intentionally go to supper last to keep Harry from becoming a "fosnacht" (a family joke) so Peggy acted as Harry's protector by supporting his alibi the night Jill died. Peggy's link to "Fosnacht" (Tuesday) connects her to the god of war, Tiw, hence to Marty Tothero (Mars). Her aggravation of the Angstrom estrangement in Rabbit Redux and her cantankerous objections to the Pope's remarks on birth control in *Rabbit Is Rich* typify her martial manner. The loss of her breast to cancer in *Rabbit Is Rich* symbolically defeminizes her, while giving her the aspect of an Amazon as well.[16]

Such ambiguity blends with irony in Jack and Lucy's surname, Eccles. Updike stated in his Moravian College talk that although he once played poker with a man named Eccles, in using the name in *Rabbit, Run* he "was totally unconscious of any . . . resonance in Eccles." Yet the name is quite resonant. "Eccles" echoes "ecclesiastic," as though this Episcopal minister's function rings hollow. Eccles does echo his father, reading his child the very Belloc poems his father had read to him. Though Eccles' father resisted his father's orthodoxy, Eccles mouths the "Our Father" while knowing it is his father he has been trying to please all his life; thus, "He murders faith in the minds of any who really listen to his babble" (*Rabbit, Run* 154). His faith has become a hollow echo; he admits to Lucy that he doesn't believe in anything. Yet he also echoes Harry's quest for the "it" of transcendent meaning, despite his initial resistance. In addition, his first name, Jack, recalls Updike's poem "Jack," a more thorough repudiation of Eccles than the novel's action might suggest.[17] In hopping from soda fountain to Harry's parents to Janice's mother to the golf links to the hospital, Eccles is like a jackrabbit; his "Forty Days in the Wilderness" sermon makes him a "Jack-in-the-pulpit"; since he wears black and frequents steeples, he

resembles a "jackdaw," a bird also known for its loquacity; in his automatic rejection of Harry's "thing that wants me to find it" he is a "jack-a-dandy," a "conceited fellow"; he may be a "jackanapes," a presuming fellow; another meaning of "jack-o-lantern" is "something misleading"; he may well be a jack-ass in his stubborn resistance to Kruppenbach; he is surely a jackstraw, a man of no consequence.

However, Eccles did hope to reform his wife Lucy, though she ridicules his opinion about raising their children and scoffs at his inefficacy. Her name derives from *Lucius*, "bringing light," the "light" to which Harry's retina responds during Eccles' sermon about "the dark, visceral aspects of Christianity." But when Rabbit "trembles in a light that seems her light" (*Rabbit, Run* 239) after the Easter sermon, Lucy now recalls Lucifer, the proud fallen archangel (is she Jack's "Jill"?); he rejects what he perceives as a temptation. Lucifer also refers to Venus, a role Lucy ambiguously plays in her winking flirtation with Harry.[18] Eccles' sermon, "Christ's Conversation with the Devil," comes very close to home.

Rabbit likewise places himself close to an ambiguous salvation with Ruth Leonard. This biblically-rooted Ruth goes wherever Harry leads, even to her own sexual humiliation. Yet his family can never be hers, for she demands that Harry choose her or his wife and children; if he returns to Janice, Ruth will abort their child. Her surname, Leonard, meaning "lion hardy," a male given name, underlines her strength, and though thus aligned to the cat world, she reveals her allegiance to the Springer's dog-world of traps when she offers Harry her ultimatum. "Ruth" was once associated with lamentation, remorse, distress and pity, but she is independent enough in *Rabbit Redux* to tell Harry his "day in the lettuce patch" is over, and to raise a family without seeking Harry's help. Her surname also recalls Belloc's poem "Jim," which Eccles reads to his child Joyce, since it concerns a boy who ran away from his nurse and was eaten by a lion. Might this refer to the second flight of Rabbit from the cemetery to Ruth, or even to the proposed abortion?

Since Updike writes about Pennsylvanians in the trilogy, it is surprising that he doesn't use German names more often, though he did remark at Moravian College that he doesn't know German. In *Rabbit, Run* the Barthian Reverend Kruppenbach's name means "horse's backside," but considering his admiration for Karl Barth, Updike probably meant this ironically. Perhaps Kruppenbach's insistence that ministers "Burn with Christ" rather than operate as amateur marriage counselors makes him seem a "horse's ass." Hunt has

proven conclusively that Kruppenbach is a chief value figure in this book. Since he is responsible for Harry's meeting Annabelle, the literal meaning of Jamie Nunemacher's name may apply, "present maker." As a "nun-maker", however, he fails; though he dates Ruth's daughter Annabelle, he doesn't seem capable of keeping Annabelle a "nun" or misuse her as a "nun" in the punning sense of whore. Considering Harry's attraction to Annabelle, however, Jamie lives up to his etymological root as "supplanter," acting as a Nelson substitute in his interference with Harry.

Charlie Stavros's name is also unresolved. "Stavros" suggests a stave or rod, underlining his sexual prowess, not only with Janice but the collegiate Melanie and "Miss Fixit," Mim. Certainly, through Charlie Janice feels she has at last met a man capable of liberating her sexual energy. *Melanie*, by the way, derives from the Greek "dark," an etymological link to her swarthy lover Stavros.

Darker still is Updike's most impressive Black character, Hubert "Skeeter" Johnson, also known as Farnsworth. *Hubert Johnson* alludes to those in charge of the Viet Nam War which produced Skeeter's nihilism, Vice-President Hubert Humphrey and President Johnson. Also, *Hugh/bert* (mind + bright) virtually defines Skeeter's devilish insight into the Second Coming through the Armageddon of Viet Nam, in which Viet Nam, the "asshole of the universe" forms a cosmic "black hole" through which God's apocalypse may begin. (A curious extension, perhaps, of "Kruppenbach," the "horse's ass?") Skeeter's "street name" has no shared etymology with others in the trilogy, but the jumbled *s-k-e-t-r* in Skeeter suggests, possibly, that Christ's name has become readable in the apocalyptic black man. Again, a character's name identifies his meaning.

Such name identification appears in Webb Murkett of *Rabbit Is Rich*, whose name re-introduces the net-web images of *Rabbit, Run*, and a little obscurity ("murk-et") in his motives. Harry faithfully follows Webb in golf, gold and silver speculation, and spouse-sharing. Although Webb never actually traps Harry, Rabbit feels betrayed when Murkett chooses a better golfer as his partner, curses Webb for the anxiety of the gold market, envies him bitterly for having acquired Cindy, and becomes distressed to learn Webb makes better love to Janice. Yet he is ensnared by Murkett's smooth manner; Harry alone takes him seriously.

Murkett's wife, Cindy, spins a murkier web. Her name echoes with *sin*, typified in the pornographic Polaroids she makes with Webb. Yet such "sin" is

inevitable, for *Cynthia* (Greek for Mount), is another name for Diana, the virgin huntress. Since Cynthia, or Artemis, was a sister of Apollo, the Sun God, she makes an ironic comment on the splashdown of Apollo 11 on its return from the moon in *Rabbit Redux* when, in *Rabbit Is Rich*, she rescues Rabbit from drowning after he capsizes their boat, "The Sunfish."

Less dangerous and less attractive to Harry in *Rabbit Is Rich* is his spouse-swap, Thelma Harrison and her husband, ex-teammate Ronnie. Since her lupus makes the "sun" her enemy, Thelma has committed herself to a "hairy" situation in marrying hairy Ronnie *Harri-son*. Some associated images tease the reader with possibilities: In *Rabbit, Run* Ronnie had shown a Ronson lighter to the Castanet Club waitress. This association of Ronnie Harrison with fire (Ronson), along with the lighter's lizard-skin jacket foreshadows Thelma's symptoms, browning modular tubercules on her face. In her adoration of Rabbit, she teaches him anal intercourse, a practice Ronnie enjoys and an experience which confirms Harry's dream in *Rabbit, Run* that the hole may be experienced without the entrapping net. Yet Thelma's method also directs Rabbit to the nothingness at the center of sexuality, and of life.

In *Rabbit, Run* Harry thinks of the towns his eyes spot on the Pennsylvania map, Intercourse, Paradise, Bird-in-Hand and concludes "a town has to be called something." So with its characters, as Updike exercises the Adamic power of naming. The critic may worry that like David Kern he may read "a word where in fact only a scribble exists" (*Pigeon Feathers* 120), but naming is clearly a persistent interest of Updike's, and facilitates the "legibility" of the trilogy. Small matter of craft though it may be, the richly inventive ironic naming of character is neither arbitrarily allegorical nor capriciously satiric, but ingeniously playful. Perhaps the names are a small part of a larger subject, the mythical guises of Updike's characters; the name may well indicate the person and become one way of approaching a mystery. As Updike has said, when you name characters, "you try to find this extra dimension." That dimension helps to show how people "conceal something mythic, perhaps prototypes of longings in our minds" (Samuels 103).

Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Notes

1. Samuels 87-88; Updike, "On One's Own Oeuvre," *Hugging the Shore* 839, 847-848.

2. "One Big Interview," *Picked-Up Pieces* 499.

3. Address at Moravian College, 12 March 1982.

4. The trilogy comprises *Rabbit, Run* (1960), *Rabbit Redux* (1971), and *Rabbit Is Rich* (1981). For *Rabbit, Run* I have used the 1970 revised edition, which represents Updike's most authoritative text.

5. *Couples* 13; see Samuels 104. In *S.* Updike uses names to allude not only to the chief characters of *The Scarlet Letter* but to minor ones as well (Liz Bellingham) and literary critics (Podhoretz, Aldridge) who were hostile to him. The Sanskrit language of *S.* produces a wealth of names with mystical meanings: Ahrat, "The deserving one"; Mahima, 'the power to swell to enormous size and touch the moon"; Vikshipta, "modality of consciousness halfway between total confusion and total concentration"; and Kundalini, Sarah Worth's ashram name, which identifies a god within, "the female energy in...all things." The letter "S" indicates virtually everything: the way Sarah abbreviates her name in her letters; names of philosophies, illumination, truth, peace, holiness, love, the void; the name of Buddha; manifold names of Hindu gods; and sexual nomenclature of the kamasutra; as well as Steinmetz, the last name of the "Arhat"; Sarah's New England town, and the one in the Bahamas to which she has retreated. Surely one of Updike's best jokes is the Arhat's ingenuous remark, "What does it matter what name I have? Or you have?" (S. 223).

6. "Leaf Season," in *Trust Me* 245. Ironically, despite his concern for names, Updike misspells the name of the Big Mouseketeer Jimmie as "Jimmy."

7. Taylor 75. To Taylor this buttresses a satirical view of Harry as "a kind of animal cipher." Updike, however, insists that "you can't be satirical at the expense of fictional characters" (Samuels 108).

8. Alice and Kenneth Hamilton note that his name "suggests existential angst; but the context . . . is not . . . Sartre's 'nausea' or Camus'... absurd" but Kierkegaard's "educated by reality"(142). Joyce Markle analyzes the images creating the "human net of involvements" fostering Harry's angst; she notes Harry's "upward vision" of the mystic, and identifies his isolation from conventional values, communication and sexual understanding as the ground of his existential nihilism (43). David Galloway calls his chapter on Updike "The Absurd Man as Saint." This religious existential view is developed at length by George Hunt, who sees Harry's surname as "stream of anxiety" and describes *Rabbit, Run* as a debate between Nothingness and Something pursued through Harry's pilgrimage and clarified by Fritz Kruppenbach's attack on Jack Eccles (41). Though Robert Detweiler (37, 44) declares that Rabbit is "not an antihero, Existentialist or otherwise," he does cite his "angst-deadening lust." Donald Greiner (50) traces Harry's pursuit of "grace" as a little man's rebellion against the insignificance of his life, though such rebellion goes into reverse in *Rabbit Redux*. Francesco Ancona charts the anxiety produced by Harry's own unresolved Oedipal conflict with his father and with his son.

9. "Mr. High-Mind" echoes Pilgrim's Progress, for Bunyan's allegory could quickly and efficiently marshal moral ideas—the Jury trying "Faithful" comprises "Mr. Malice," "Mr. No-Good," and "Mr. Lyar" among others. Updike's trilogy parodies this use of wordplay by cutting it from its source of moral engagement. In *Rabbit, Run* Eccles' daughter Joyce can be forgiven for labeling Jack's counseling clients as "the Silly Man," "Happy Beans," or "the Naughty Man" (Harry). Morton Levitt has suggested in correspondence that, conceivably, Joyce Eccles' name might lead to Eccles Street in James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

10. Markle and Detweiler are most concerned with sexual imagery attached to "Rabbit," but for a more comprehensive description involving a rabbit's posture, eating habits, refuges, and so forth see Cox's dissertation. Updike's admission that he used the Peter Rabbit story could lead to

interesting formal connections between the trilogy and Potter's work (Samuels 104). The remark also indicates the "complex simplicity" at work in the trilogy: allegorical naming encourages multiple meanings; a child's story offers a means to depth-analysis of character.

11. Updike typically provides an ambiguous view of Harry even in his rabbit analogue. "Rabbit" fails to emulate the sexual inuendo of his nickname in all three of the novels in the trilogy. In Rabbit, Run his only real "conquest" is an overweight prostitute pandered for him by his deteriorating ex-coach. He rejects Lucy Eccles' ambiguous flirtatious invitation. And he is maladroit in sexual experimentation and suffers apparently from premature ejaculation. In *Rabbit Redux* his wife leaves him because of his sexual exile, and he is consoled by two women: Jill, who again has been thrust upon him, and Margaret Fosnacht, who seduces him. In *Rabbit Is Rich* he is attracted not to the sexually available Melanie but instead to those he cannot lure, the taboo daughter Annabelle and daughter- in-law Pru. His only success, Thelma Harrison, instructs him in anal intercourse, but this leaves Harry with a knowledge of the emptiness of life. This assignation may have been engineered by Janice who wanted to sleep with Webb Murkett. To cap the ironies, Harry's planned conquest of Cindy Murkett fails because his son flees from his pregnant wife, emulating Harry's own "rabbit" flight. Retribution rather than satisfaction typifies Harry's sexual "rabbitry."

12. These etymologies are from the 1949 edition of *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, which may be the dictionary used by Updike, since he has Darryl Van Horne employ it in The Witches of Eastwick (321).

13. Harry refuses to settle for the small details of life, in opposition to Updike, who lovingly details the everyday. (See, for example, Updike, "Personal History.") Earl Angstrom, however, attending to his routine work, shows a similar "heroism" to that of George Caldwell in The Centaur. As Updike remarked, "Now either nobody is a hero or everyone is. I vote for everyone" (Howard 74c). Recently, Updike noted that the Constitution "relieves us all from the need for great men, and asks only . . . decent men, for our government" ("Contention" 57).

14. Since Janice married out of her species (her name rhymes with canis) in marrying a rabbit, she could be thought a "Janus." Fittingly, *Rabbit Is Rich* ends with Janice, like the god Janus, standing in the doorway in January. Joyce Ecclescarries another concealed "J" link in the network, one which James Joyce might have enjoyed; see note 9.

15. The month of June was named after both Juno Fortuna, goddess of fate, and Juno Regina, queen of heaven. She might also be Juno Moneta, guardian of the mint. However, the month is used ironically; no one in the trilogy is married in June. Juno's Greek analogue is Hera, and a "hero," as defined in Updike's The Centaur, was "one in the service of Hera," goddess of marriage. Harry's daughter June is thus "Hera," and the name "Harry" echoes "Hera," underlining the deep bond between them. Serving June places him in the role of a hero; his flight, therefore, shows him running from June/Hera and heroism; Harry runs from himself. For alliterative landscape, note that Harry grew up on Jackson Road and lived with the Springers on Joseph Street, over-shadowed by Mt. Judge. For further discussion of "Jack" words, see my comment of Eccles below.

16. As the Hamiltons observed, "The name Peggy has personal associations for Updike, ones going back to childhood" (188).

17. From "A Cheerful Alphabet of Pleasant Objects," *The Carpentered Hen* (77). To add the obvious, the author's name, John, also begins with "J."

18. Harry describes Lucy as a "sharp vanilla cookie" (*Rabbit, Run* 124) and warns her that her cake is burning. The Hamiltons have zeroed in on the etymological link between "vanilla" and "vagina" (149).

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