CHAPTER - II

INCEST

Updike is concerned with three kinds of incestuous relationship — mother-son incest, father-daughter incest and brother-sister incest. He bestows attention not so much on incestuous longing as on the other sexual problems that incestuous longing gives rise to. The mother-son incest is shown to strain the relationship between the son and the father and cause deadly clashes between them over possession of the mother. Also, the mother and the son, inordinately possessive, curb and cramp each other’s sex life. The son’s unwillingness to get married, his impotence and effeminacy and the stunting of his emotional development—all these problems are traced by Updike to the incestuous intimacy between the mother and the son.

The father-daughter incest is seen to be no less destructive. The possessive father is shown to overshadow his daughter and deny her an independent sex life. The father-fixated daughter exhibits a morbid desire to stay unmarried with her father or, if married, to tear herself from her husband and return to the father. Most of the father-fixated women are shown becoming frigid with their husbands, just as mother-fixated become impotent with their wives.

A much more serious problem created by these fixations is that the mother-fixated son keeps searching indefatigably for a mother figure. His search involves him in amorous relationship with elderly women exuding
maternal love and affection. Similarly, the father-fixated daughter finds that she can be happy only with an old man showering paternal love on her. Love relationship between a young man and a much older woman is not customary and hence the quest for a mother figure becomes as futile as the quest for a will-o’-the-wisp.

Thus, what makes incest a matter of grave concern in the fiction of Updike is that he sees in incest the primary source of much that deeply disturbs human sex life. In Updike’s opinion, without a healthy relationship with one’s parents, one cannot have a healthy sex life. It is, therefore, understandable that the study of incest forms the fulcrum and core of his depiction of sexual problems.

Updike nowhere deals with incest in isolation. He might have thought it inartistic and unnatural to single out a particular aspect of sex and specialize in it. He combines the theme of incest with so many other themes, some of them allied with incest and some of them not. Incest is only one element in a mixture containing several different ones. This might be one reason why not many critics have cared to separate it and study it. Another reason might be that in novels like The Centaur, the myth obtuseates the treatment of incest.

Updike seems to have derived his knowledge of incest and other related problems not only from direct observation of life but also from Freud. Updike admits in an article how the psychological findings of Freud have been quarried by modern novelists. Though Updike acknowledges the validity of Freud’s incest theory, he chose not to go all the way with Freud. (For that
matter, even psychologists do not totally agree with Freud\textsuperscript{2}). Unlike Freud who would trace all father-son conflicts to sexual jealously and rivalry between the two to possess the mother, Updike shows that the father-son conflict is traceable to several other causes, sometimes even to non-erotic causes. Updike refuses to put on Freudian blinkers.

The paucity of critical material on the incest theme in Updike's fiction is something astounding. Even Leslie Fiedler who draws attention in Love and Death in the American Novel to the touches of incest in Sherwood Anderson's short stories, Poe's The Fall of the House of Usher and Melville's Pierre has not said anything about the incest theme in Updike. Some stray observations on the maladjusted characters in Updike are found in Joyce C. Markel's Fighters and Lovers: Theme in the Novels of John Updike.

I. Mother-Son Incest: Causes

Direct anatomical incestuous relationship between the mother and the son is not depicted by Updike because of relatively infrequent occurrence. The son's incestuous longing might originate in his seeing his parents' coitus. This is largely, though not always, the case in the fiction of Updike. Thomas Marshfield, the mother-fixated priest of A Month of Sundays, has had the dreadful experience of seeing his parents' coitus in his boyhood (pp.18-20).

Joey of Of the Farm, the most mother-fixated of Updike's men, refers twice\textsuperscript{3}, to the traumatic experience of a boy watching parental coitus, which leads one to suspect that the boy Joey might have been exposed to a similar searing scene. This dreadful experience probably sank deep into his mind,
arrested his love unfoldment along healthy lines and left him perennially longing for his mother.

As for the incestuous passion of Joey's mother, it too might have had a similar origin. She used to talk admiringly of the bigness of the boy Jeoy's phallus (p.160). And now, after-many years, bent double with age, she laboriously climbs upstairs and stands gazing at him, when he is in bed stark naked under the blanket. From her conversation with him, one can infer that she would not be displeased to see him naked in her ripe old age also (p.148).

Thus, the mother and the son seeing each other naked might have resulted in mutual fixation. None of the critics who have written on incest in Of the Farm has located this origin.

Effects of Mother-Son Incest

Updike portrays in ample detail the harmful effects of abnormal mother-son intimacy. Firstly, it creates mutual antagonism between the father and the son, as both try to monopolize the mother's favours. Updike traces the son's patricidal tendency to his incestuous fixation on his mother. The greatest harm done by mother-son intimacy as shown by Updike is that it makes the mother and son mutually possessive. Each curbs the other's sex life. Neither can have an independent sex life. Impotence, effeminacy, mental retardation—these are some of the serious evils that befall the mother-dominated son.
Updike shows that the sons' incestuous fixation develops in him a liking for such abnormal sexual practices as cunnilingus, voyeurism, preference for sex with married women and the like. Also, the mother-fixated son is shown launched on an endless search for a mother figure. This entangles him in unseemly affairs with elderly, motherly women. As there is a strong social disapproval of marriage between a young man and an older woman, the young man's inclination towards old and motherly woman is shown to end abortively. Understanding wives can cure their husbands' mother-fixation by showering a gentle, soothing, maternal love on the husband's nestling like children in their laps. But, as Updike shows, not all wives have this understanding and adaptability.

Hatred and Jealousy between Father and Son

Updike shows that mother-son intimacy poisons the relationship between the son and the father. The father feels acutely jealous of the son who has succeeded in drawing the mother towards himself. When the sensitive father finds his wife's interest in him diminish and interest in her son correspondingly increase, he becomes distraught. If he happens to be very sensitive, he either goes mad or commits suicide.

All these disastrous consequences of mother-son intimacy are portrayed by Updike. In A Month of Sundays, Thomas's father, a neurotic confined in a nursing home, accuses Thomas of having "used" his mother and threatens to strike him (p.110). Tom, being the last child, might have been excessively petted and coddled by his mother, which might have roused the
father's sexual jealousy to such a maniacal extent as to derange his mind. Thus, a woman's indifference towards her husband and excessive regard for the son are shown to increase acute pain in the sensitive husband. There may not be any real incest in the mother-son relationship. The fact that the mother gives more of her love to the son is enough to set ablaze her husband's jealousy.

The other side of this picture is the woman leaning towards her husband and causing misery to the son. The son boils with rage and jealousy, when he sees his father basking in mother's warm love. He adopts all the means available to him, fair or foul, in a pathetic attempt to attract the mother towards himself. The boy Thomas in A Month of Sundays poses naked, sending encouraging signals to his mini-skirted mother. Peter of The Centaur urinates in such a way as to be noticed by his mother—an infantile form of rivalry with the father's sexual activity.

He even takes a leaf out of his father's book and exaggerates his suffering due to fever at the end of the novel, in order to elicit his mother's love and sympathy. Also, he does silly things to defeat his father's efforts to ingratiate himself into mother's favours. When Peter's father buys sandwich for mother, he sits on it and spoils it. It appears to be an accident but is really "symptomatic", as Freud would say of the boy's unconscious desire to frustrate his father's attempt to please mother.

In Totem and Taboo an allegory about the savage working of Oedipal complex in a "Primal horde", Freud shows the younger sons banding together
and slaying their father, so that they can have their mother and sisters who were till then enjoyed by the father. The sons in Updike's fiction are too "civilized" to bring themselves to murder the father in order to enjoy the mother. But traces of the ancient patricidal tendency can be seen in the wish of these sons for the father's death.

Peter of The Centaur harbours a sinister wish for his father's death. He indulges in a riotous fantasy of his father dying and himself gadding about with his widowed mother. In Chapter VIII of the novel, Peter records his going out with his young widowed mother. The end of the novel makes it clear that his father has not died. So, the father's death recorded in Chapter VIII is only an objectification of the son's deepest wish to have his father dead, so that his "flirting" (p.61) with his mother can be carried on unhampered. The son and the widowed mother pass through scenes of sexual enjoyment such as swans preening in pairs, ducks and frogs throating in sexual exultation and linked pairs of lovers and finally reach a museum (The museum is other backdrop for lover's meetings in Updike's fiction). In the museum they see the statue of a woman straining in vain to drink the water pouring just an inch away from her lips. Joyce C. Markle, interpreting the statue along Keatsian lines as symbol of art's capacity to fix up a few passing seconds, is blind to the fact that the unquenched thirst of the statue can be an after symbol of mother Cassie's unfulfilled sexual longing for son Peter.

Freudian critics attribute all conflicts between the father and the son to the father's sexual jealousy of the son's success in drawing the mother
towards himself. Updike differs from Freud and shows that father-son clashes arise even when no sexual jealousy is at work. In Updike's *Rabbit, Run*, a father is angry with his son for his untold suffering. Of course in all these instances, the mother is forgiving and protective towards the son, which might have irritated the father still more. The novelist refuses to raise an imposing superstructure of Oedipal wrangling on this slender basis. He even goes to the extent of showing his mother-fixated Joey cherishing loving memories of his father.

Updike also shows his mother-fixated men wanting the mother to die. This is in flagrant opposition to the Freudian finding that the mother-fixated son wants to retain the mother. Rabbit hating his mother's persistent attempt to create dissension between himself and his wife and wanting her to die and Joey striking his bikinied wife's buttocks while the mother is suffering from a fatal stroke are two characters desperately trying to liberate themselves from the mother's deadly grip. Like Paul Morel of D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, they would not flinch from consigning the mother to death to achieve freedom for themselves.

Thus, Updike shows that mother-son intimacy sours the relationship between the father and the son. Relegated to the background by his wife, the father even contemplates suicide. The son, when he sees his darling mother gravitating towards father, grows jealous and wishes for father's death. The son and the father are thus at the opposite ends of an emotional see-saw. When the father is elated, enjoying his wife's favours, the son is dejected.
When the son is the recipient of his mother's love and affection, the father is dejected. Most father-son clashes are shown stemming from sexual rivalry between the two to possess the mother. At the same time, Updike recognizes the importance of non-erotic causes of father-son clashes also. In this respect he deviates from Freudianism which sees sex and sex only at the bottom of all father-son conflicts.

Son and Mother Cramping each other's Sexual Life

A subtle form that mother-son incest takes is inordinate possessiveness. The son wants to possess the mother himself and would not allow her to have a sex life of her own. Similarly, the mother tries to possess the son herself and denies him an independent sex life. As a result of his attachment to his mother, the son is not able to give himself wholeheartedly to his wife.

As a result of his mother’s excessive influence, he becomes effeminate and mentally retarded. All these dangerous consequences of mother-son incest are pointed out by Updike. Updike goes one step further and traces such abnormal sexual practices as cunnilingus, voyeurism, passion for married women, and the like to mother-son incest.

The possessive son cramps his mother’s sexual life. He does not allow her to turn to any other man, even though there is justification for her seeking a sexual outlet. Peggy of Rabbit Redux, abandoned by her husband, seeks lovers to compensate for the loneliness of her life. But her son rages against them and sabotages her love affairs. The sons may attribute their action to
such conscious motives as the desire to protect the honour of the family and keep a week mother from falling. But, as the Freudian psychiatrist Dr. Ernest Jones convincingly proved in his diagnosis of Hamlet's problem, the incestuous son is prompted more by unconscious motives than by conscious ones. The consciously articulated motives only serve to hide the incestuous intention, which is entrenched deep in the unconscious.

When the son cannot stop his mother's straying, he cynically brands all women as false and unchaste. The classic representation of this tendency is Hamlet's outburst, on being disappointed with his mother, into the sweeping generalization "Frailty, thy name is woman".

In *The Centaur*, the boy George Caldwell, unable to contain his mother who "cut loose" (p. 54) after her husband's death became embittered to the extent of calling all women "shallow, narrow, and selfish". (pp. 24, 25)

The other side of the picture is the possessive mother encroaching on her son's love life. If the son is married, the possessive mother tries to separate the son from his wife and bring him back to her fold. Mrs. Angstrom of *Rabbit, Run* and *Rabbit Redux* and Mrs. Robinson of *Of the Farm* are such possessive monsters. They try to create a rift between the son and his wife by dinning into the son's ears that his wife is an unworthy creature (*Rabbit, Run*, pp. 133, 185; *Of the Farm*, p. 43). Mrs. Robinson, more skilful than Mrs. Angstrom in poisoning people's minds through persistent efforts, adopts a variety of methods in turning her son against his wife. She says that Joey's
wife dresses sexily and puts on bikini so as to be eyed by the young man in the neighbourhood (p.140).

When her derogatory remarks fail to arouse her son's wrath, she tries to arouse his guilt feeling by talking of his abandoned first wife and children (pp.36, 104, 105). Frequently, she exaggerates her illness to elicit her son’s love. Sex is also one of the weapons in her armoury. At night, she appears before him with the strap of her gown deliberately awry, exhibiting her "strangely creamy" (p.40) shoulder. (He dreams of it that night). Her talk with him bristles with sexual innuendoes. She asks Joey to pump water from the pump—a phallic symbol—for the dogs (which are associated with Mrs. Robinson throughout the novel) and then go back to his wife (pp.40,42).

The implication is inescapable (and horrible, too) that she craves for sexual satisfaction at his hands and would like to demand priority in this matter. As for Mrs. Angstrom, she backs up her son’s running away from his wife in *Rabbit, Run*, and advises him to run away once again, even though he is middle-aged and unwilling to do anything rash (*Rabbit Redux*, p.172). Like Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Angstrom also exaggerates her illness to keep her son with herself.

If the son is in love, the possessive mother tries to wane him from his beloved. The mother may talk of such conscious motives as the need to suppress the son's sex life to promote his education but there is sexual possessiveness at work at the bottom of her heart. Updike has presented several such possessive mothers. The sexual motivation of these mothers is
not openly stated, but is nevertheless there, discernible to the reader capable of reading between the lines. The possessive mothers in Updike's short stories "Flight" "Museums and Women" and "Bech: A Book" frustrate all the love affairs of their sons under the pretext of promoting their academic progress.

Among the several evils done by the mother's excessive influence on the son, the worst is that the mother who is averse to sex infects her son with her pet prejudices. Bech's ambitious mother wants him to suppress his sexual impulse and devote himself to his studies. She describes sex in appropriate terms (p.117). He probably feels guilty of having failed to measure up to her great expectations and so he becomes impotent.

Excessive petting and fondling will feminize the son, especially if he is a delicate adolescent. Next to impotence, this is the worst damage that can be done to a young man's psychic development. In The Centaur, over-fondling by mother Cassie is shown to have made the boy Peter a little unmanly and effeminate. He wants to have not big feet but a dancer's quick-moving small feet (p.55). Left in a lodge to sleep, he masturbates. His effeminacy is such that homosexuals are attracted towards him twice in the course of his three-day wandering away from home. Thus, an overtly tender mother is likely to shear a boy of his manly attributes.

Such evils are pictured by James Baldwin in his famous novel Go Tell it on the Mountains. Marcus Klein in his After Alienation: American Novels in Mid-Century, has pointed out that the object of the boy John's sexuality, in
this novel, is his mother and that this is the reason that John turns first to
masturbation and then to homosexuality, which is hinted at in the relationship
with Elisha but specified in the short story “The Outing” in which John has a
homosexual relationship with David Jackson.

Excessive love between the mother and the son, besides making the
son impotent and effeminate, also arrests his emotional development and
leaves him boyish and unprepared to take up the responsibilities of manhood.
Such a son might even remain celibate life-long. Bech remaining unmarried is
traceable to his failure to overcome infantile attachment to his mother.

It is not the unmarried son alone who is childish. The childishness
might continue even after marriage. Hemingway called the type the “American
boy men”\(^{11}\). Joey of Of the Farm is a notable example. As Joseph Epstein
says:

“(Joey is) not quite a man at all. Hence, to both his
mother and his wife Peggy, he is neither Joseph nor Joe,
but Joey-the perennial boy"\(^{12}\)

Like Benjy of Faulkner’s The Sound and the Fury, Updike’s Joey keeps
dredging up the depths of his mind and bringing up to the surface memories
of the distant past when he had an undisturbed relationship with his mother.
He ecstatically recalls how his mother used to out race his father in the rain
(p.97), how she used to mother him with her good night kiss, and how she
once climbed a tree and brought down his toy airplane stuck up there (p.127).
Joey’s recollections show that he is stuck up in the past, especially in that part of the past connected with his mother. He has not had the umbilical cord binding him to his mother cut. Like Watt and Estragon of Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*[^13], Joey also expresses a strong yearning for embryonal repose, a wish to go back to, and rest in, the mother’s womb. He openly tells his wife: “It was wonderful in (the other’s womb) there” (p.144).

Updike probes deep into such abnormal sexual practice as fellatio, cunnilingus, voyeurism, and the like. Updike’s finding is that such abnormalities are traceable to the son’s inclination towards the mother. Piet’s and Rabbit’s interest in cunnilingus is traced by critics like Charles Thomas Samuel and Robert Detweiler to the men’s urgent desire to get back to the mother’s womb[^14]. Similarly, Rabbit’s desire to supplant his newly born child and drink milk at his wife’s breast and Piet’s passion for Foxy’s milky breasts are also traced by critics to the mother-fixated men’s longing to return to infant nurture[^15]. The hyper catharsis act of sucking is considered to be the outcome of a high degree of incestuous longing.

Wilhelm Stekel, talking of the way some men indulge in ‘serial’ repetitious love affairs with married women, observes that the married woman’s legitimate husband fulfils the role of the domineering father[^16]. The mother-fixated men seducing married women probably gets the sensation of outwitting his domineering father and enjoying his mother. Piet’s serial love-affairs with married women can be explained along these lines. Piet himself admits that the married women remind him of his mother (p.466)
In Updike, the un-possessive man ready to surrender to his wife or beloved to her lover is also explained in terms of mother-fixation. The husband delightedly looking on while his wife has intercourse with her lover is merely reactivating his childhood experience of watching coitus. Thus when Piet says that he will sprinkle rose-petals and bless wife and her lover having coitus, Callagher interprets it along Freudian lines:

“As you described that I pictured a child beside his parent's bed. He loved his mother but knows he can't handle (her) so he lets the old man do the banging while he does the blessing” (Couples, p.246).

In the same way, Thomas Marshfield watching his mistress having coitus with her lover derives the same pleasure that he had as a boy watching his parent's coitus.

Thus, Updike points out how incestuous inclination makes the mother and son sexually possessive. Each blocks the other's sexual fulfillment. The mother-dominated son becomes emotionally dwarfed. He also becomes impotent and / or effeminate. Mother-fixation induces in the son's mind a strong desire for cunnilingus and voyeurism.

**The Mother-Fixated Son's Love of Older Women**

Wilhelm Stekel has pointed out that the mother-fixated man prefers an older woman to one younger than himself, because the older women serve him as a surrogate mother. There is added advantage that he can have with
this surrogate mother the sex that he is forbidden to have with his mother. The relationship is all the more strengthened when the surrogate mother happens to be a childless woman. Such a woman finds in the mother-fixated man a substitute son.

Updike has presented a few such ‘complementary’ pairs. Man’s capacity for imagination is so vast that even when she is younger than himself, he imagines her as his mother and himself as her child resting content on her lap. In such cases, the relationship between the husband and the wife is filial rather than marital. Updike has presented a few such couples living in a world of make-believe. Finally, the mother-fixated son engaged in mate selection is shown choosing the woman have the same configuration of character traits or physical features that his mother has.

Peter of Of the Centaur and Rabbit of Rabbit Run and Rabbit Redux are mother-fixated sons who develop a liking for women much older than themselves. Peter loves married childless women who regard him as substitute son.

The mother-fixated Peter is not able to maintain a loving relationship with young girls. He has broken with Penny, his girl friend at high school and is on the point of breaking with the Negro mistress with whom he is now living (p.243). Old Vera Hummel attracts him because she is a surrogate mother to the mother-fixated Peter.
The scene in which she feeds Peter his breakfast is exactly parallel to the scene in the opening part of the novel in which Peter’s mother feeds him his breakfast. Both the women brush against the boy, giving him sensual pleasure. Peter feels for both the women a mixture of love and fear (pp. 66, 250).

Another reason why Vera is drawn towards Peter is that, being childless, she views Peter with the warmth and affection of a mother. Peter’s need for motherly love and Vera’s need for a child on whom to shower her dammed-up love are both met by their togetherness. Peter regards his brief stay in Vera’s house as the happiest “two hours” (p.249) of his life, “unlike any previous in my (Peter’s) life”. Vera also feels that Peter’s stay has “filled up the house for a little while”. (p.253).

Another Updike character who belongs to this group is Rabbit. In both Rabbit, Run and its sequel Rabbit Redux the mother-fixated Rabbit loves older women much more than younger ones because they are mother surrogates to him. In Rabbit, Run he breaks with his young wife Janice and the young prostitute Ruth, but maintains an abiding relationship with the old, wrinkled Mrs. Smith who is like a bride to him. Mrs. Smith lost her son in war and so she views Rabbit as a substitute son and showers on him all her pent-up affection. Having lost her husband (who was also named Harry), she finds in Harry Angstrom a substitute husband also. Thus, the height of incestuous satisfaction is attained by Rabbit when he is regarded both as a son and as a husband by Mrs. Smith.
In *Rabbit, Run* also, Rabbit prefers the old, wrinkled Negress Babe—for she is a mother-figure who can do the hot momma bit" (p.109), to such young woman as Peggy. However, he is too inhibited to take her, when she is offered to him. Like Chad in Henry Jame’s novel *The Ambassadors* loving the elderly Marie de Vionnet and not her young daughter, Rabbit also prefers Jill’s mother to Jill in *Rabbit, Redux*.

The incestuously inclined young man can attain peace if he marries the elderly mother figure he likes. But, as marital alliance between a young man and an older woman is not encouraged, in America, the young man’s search for an elderly mother figures is doomed to fail. The mother-fixated young man’s relationship with the elderly mother-figure is thus bound to be a transient, guilt ridden affair; he is accurse to be a voyager in strange seas without the hope of ever reaching the haven of peace.

Some mother-fixated men transform the marital relationship with their young wives into a filial relationship. They imagine their young wives as mothers and themselves as children. Milton’s Satan is shown recording himself to hell-torture, that

"The mind is in it’s own place, and in itself
Can make a Heav’n of Hell, a Hell of Heav’n".17

In the Updike world, there are not understanding wives transforming themselves into soothing mothers, mothering childish/child-like husbands. Janice learns to soothe and assuage her guilt-ridden husband at the end of
Rabbit, Redux, but one has to accept the fact that she has developed this capacity for mothering only through mothering her lover Stevros, a heart patient. On the whole, Updike presents the American wife as being incapable of mothering a mother-fixated husband. As a result, he has to seek mother-figures outside wedlock.

The unmarried man on the lookout for a woman to marry will, if he is mother-fixated, go in search of a woman who will resemble his mother in some respect or other. Analysing the factors governing mate selection, the sociologists Ernest W. Burgess and Paul Wallin attach much importance to the part played by parental image in mate selection:

"a person tends to fall in love and marry someone with the personality characteristic of the parent of the opposite sex... The manifestations of parental image may be divided into (a) the physical resemblance of the fiancee to father or to mother (b) the correspondence of their temperamental and other personality traits (c) the similarity of the affectional and emotional relationship between the loved one and the parent of the opposite sex..." 18

In Of the Farm, Updike shows Joey unconsciously influenced by his mother's image in the matter of mate selection. Joey marries such women, as have some qualities of his mother. He married Joan because she measured up to his mother's Wordsworthien ideal of womanhood as represented in such
characters as Lucy and the solitary Reaper. He liked Peggy because she is a second edition of his mother in several respects, minor as well as major. Like his mother, Peggy is in the habit of throwing seeds to birds. She has such smooth skin, such mass of hair and such mannish qualities as his mother has. Above all, both the women are identifiable with the farm (pp.32, 46).

The obverse of this situation is a mother drawn to her son because he has certain qualities of her husband and thus appears as a substitute husband. Joey attracts his mothers’ attention by wearing his father’s clothes, an unconscious trick on his part to play the husband to his mother. In The Centaur, Peter boasts several times of his close physical resemblance to his father; they look like indistinguishable twins (pp.81, 105, 195). The physical resemblance might be one reason why mother Cassie is drawn towards her son. Peter’s repeated boast might express his unconscious desire to substitute his father and usurp his father’s place in his mother’s affection.

To conclude, the mother-fixated son prefers an elderly, maternal lady to a young girl, because the former serves as surrogate mother. If the surrogate mother is childless and is in search of a son on whom to shower her love and affection, she will find a substitute son in the mother-fixated man. Because each serves the other’s purpose, the bondage between them might become well nigh inextricable. However, since marriage between a young man and an old woman is not vogue in America, such unions are bound to be furtive and brittle. Updike presents a few such cases in his fiction. Updike presents the American wife as lacking in maturity and incapable of a motherly
tenderness towards the husband. She is either highly sensual or utterly frigid but rarely has maternal love for husband. Updike also shows that the mother-fixated man chooses to marry the woman who resembles his mother in some way or other.

II. Father-Daughter Incest: Causes

The causes of father-daughter intimacy, as depicted by Updike, can be divided into two broad categories—sexual causes and non-sexual causes.

Just as the mother-son incestuous fixation has been shown to originate in the son seeing the parents' coitus, so also the daughter seeing or wishing to see parents naked or engaged in coitus. Ruth of Marry Me develops a sexual interest in her father when he, out of regard for her having come of age, begins to dress in privacy instead of in her presence. Janet and Foxy of Couples were attracted towards the father, ever since each saw her father shutting himself up in the bedroom to have coitus with mother (p.84). Angela traces her sexual interest in her father to her seeing him naked in the bathroom (p.430). Thus Updike shows that parents' secret sexual life attracts the daughter's attention and gets it fixed on the father.

Updike is not squeamish. With unflinching courage he shows how a man dissatisfied with his wife—the dissatisfaction may stem from sexual or non-sexual causes—is led on to forge an unnaturally close tie with his daughter. In the short story “Man and Daughter in the Cold”, a flirtatious wife's neglect throws the father and daughter together. In the story “Incest”, a tired wife's inability to cater to her husband's sexual needs is the cause of father-
daughter incest, whereas in “The Crow in the Woods”, a dull wife’s failure to appreciate her husband’s imaginative nature is the cause. In the last two stories, the daughter is a mere baby and the incestuous relationship is shown to be in an embryonic state.

**Effects of Father-Daughter Incest**

Updike shows that excessive father-daughter intimacy is bound to have ruinous consequences. First of all, mother and daughter, each trying to gain complete possession of father’s love, spar at each other. Secondly, the father-fixated daughter tends to become frigid with her husband. She is keen on withdrawing herself from her husband and rejoining her father. The situation becomes aggravated when the father is possessive towards his daughter and offers a tempting shelter to the daughter wishing to break away from her husband. Finally, the father-fixated daughter prefers marrying a very old man because the old man serves her as a surrogate father. Fatherless daughters in particular develop a liking for such old father figures. Even the young man whom the father-fixated woman chooses to marry is chosen because he possesses certain character-traits of her father and thus becomes a father figure in her eyes.

**Jealousy and Hatred between Mother and Daughter**

As the son’s incestuous fixation on his mother leads him to hate his father as a rival, so also the daughter’s fixation on the father leads her to view her mother as a rival claimant on her father’s love and so hates her. Updike portrays bitter clashes between mother and daughter. The Updike short story
"Should Wizard hit Mommy" is a subtle Freudian tale showing the animosity between a daughter and a mother. By way of expressing its sympathy for the suffering baby drunk in the bedtime story, the little girl in this short story shows herself hateful towards her mother and urges her father to banish her.

As in "Incest", in this story also Updike is concerned with the budding incestuous tendency of a female child. Ruth of Marry Me, grown up, consciously articulates her jealousy of her mother who is appropriating to herself all of her father’s love (p.130). The obverse of the daughter’s hatred of the mother is the mother’s hatred of her daughter for the latter’s greater hold on her husband. In Rabbit Run, Eccles’s wife is jealous of her little daughter because the daughter has a lion’s share of Eccles’s love and attention and leaves the mother starved.

Thus, Updike has consistently followed up his examination of father-son clashes caused by sexual jealousy with a portrayal of mother-daughter clashes motivated by similar jealousy. Updike’s picture of incest has thus a roundness and fullness.

Loss of Interest in Husband and Resting content with Father

The Father-fixated daughter keeps re-living her halogen days with her father. If unmarried, she wants to stick with her father. She abhors getting married, as marriage will snatch her away from her beloved father. If married, she breaks with her husband and returns home to live with her parents.
Updike presents both these types of women. Of Updike's father-fixated daughters, mention must be made of Angela of Couples, Janice of Rabbit, Run and Joan of Of the Farm. The father-fixation of these women has cost them their capacity for sex with their husbands. Angela is the most frigid of these women. She divorces her adulterous husband, turns down all new suitors and settles comfortably with her father. When deserted by her husband, Janice decides to divorce her husband and spend the rest of her life with her parents. Joan also does not think of re-marrying when she is divorced by her husband. In America, women who reject or are rejected by their husbands have abundant chances of re-marrying. The Updike woman's refusal to re-marry is due to her father-fixation.

Thus, the father-fixated daughter shrinks from her sensual husband and prefers to live with her father. If unmarried, she would like to remain so, and thereby perpetuates her intimacy with her father. The father-fixated daughter thus tends to lose her capacity for a sex life independent of her father.

**Fathers Possessive Towards Daughters**

Just as some daughters are fixated on their father, so some fathers are fixated on their daughters and would not relinquish their hold on them. If the daughter is unmarried, the possessive father would like to keep her unmarried and keep her to himself for ever.
In America, parents do not interfere much in the love life of their children. So, Mr. Angstrom of *Rabbit, Run* grudging his daughter Miriam’s independent sex life appears quite abnormal.

If the daughter, by some misunderstanding, separates from her husband and returns to her father, the possessive father does not try to patch up the differences and re-unite the separated couple. On the other hand, he gladly keeps the separated daughter with himself. In the Updike world, Angela’s father is of this type. He does not take any efforts to bring together his daughter and Piet. Instead, he gives her blue cape to console her or is it to reward her for having left her husband and come to the father?

Updike presents the daughter wishing to go back to the father and the father wishing to re-absorb his daughter as two sides of the same coin. As long as the father and the daughter have such a bent, the daughter cannot have a harmonious marital relationship with the husband.

**The Father-Fixated Daughters’ Preference of Old, Fatherly Men**

Just as a mother-fixated man is shown to prefer an old, motherly woman who will be a surrogate mother to him, so also a father-fixated woman prefers an old, fatherly man who will be a surrogate father to her. Fatherless daughters, in particular, prefer such old, paternal men. Such a situation is dealt with by Updike in *Rabbit Redux*. The fatherless Jill in *Rabbit Redux* is drawn towards the old Rabbit who is already married and has a child. Rabbit fails (after some unsuccessful attempts) to meet Jill’s sexual needs because he finds her too daughterly to rouse his passion. American society, as
represented in *Rabbit Redux*, is violent and sex-crazy. Jill dying in flames at the end of *Rabbit Redux* is a symbol of innocence and good nature getting destroyed in the flames of lust and violence in American society.

Besides being attracted to a man simply because he is as old as her father, sometimes a woman may be attracted to a young man because he has certain character traits of her father. Thus Foxy of *Couples* fixated on her father whom her mother has divorced, is drawn to the young Jew Peter because in his pride and mechanical selfishness he resembles her father (p.292)

Sometimes a woman is drawn towards a young man because, in his kind and considerate ways, he resembles her father. The fatherless Sally of *Marry Me* hates critical unsympathetic husband and is drawn to the young Jerry, because he sympathizes with her deficiencies such as her farm-girl gait and praise them, as her father used to do (unlike her husband who savagely mocked at her), and makes her feel profoundly relaxed, as she did in her father's company (p.30).  

Just as the mother-fixated Piet of *Couples* is launched on an endless search for a suitable mother figure, so also the fatherless Vera Hummel of *The Centaur* is seen restlessly searching for a father-figure. She finds a suitable father figure in old George Caldwell but he calls her his maternal aunt and would not like to cultivate an incestuous relationship with this mother figure. Disappointed, she pursues a never-ending round of flirtations, making herself miserable. Such a heavy toll does father-fixation take.
Thus, include, father-daughter incest, is shown by Updike to be detrimental to the daughter’s sex life. The father-fixated daughter cannot give herself wholeheartedly to her husband. She has a horror of sex. She has peace of mind only when she leaves her husband and returns to her father. Also, the father-fixated daughters are shown tending towards old, fatherly men, as such men are fit to be father surrogates.

III. Brother-Sister Incest: Causes

Sometimes, the nearness of brother and sister is likely to lead to incestuous fixation—a likelihood explored in a mystifying manner by Edgar Allan Poe in *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Updike shows that the brother and sister, growing up together, slowly tend to cultivate a seawall relationship with each other. Updike shows that close rearing of brother and sister is likely to foster an incestuous relationship between them. The sister need not necessarily be a sexually starved widow for the incestuous tendency to develop. An abnormal intimacy is shown to have developed between Rabbit and his sister Miriam right from their childhood. They are shown kissing and embracing and doing everything short of coitus.

In *Rabbit Redux*, Rabbit holds his sister in his arms, imagining himself to be one of “the hundreds of men who held her before” (p.301). As for Miriam, having no underpants on, she unashamedly exhibits her crotch to him (p.315). He recalls having seen her “girlish” breasts (p.325) and “rat-furred vagina” several times. Realizing that he cannot have sex with Miriam, he does the next best thing—he imagines Miriam’s lover Stavros having intercourse
with her and, identifying himself with Stavros ejaculates in bed. After this vicarious intercourse is over, he imagines himself going in a train to meet Miriam and settle down with her.

Thus close rearing of brother and sister is shown to result in incest. Incest is precipitated when the sister is a sex-starved widow.

**Effects of Brother-Sister Incest**

Over - attachment between brother and sister is likely to disrupt their relationship with their marriage partners. Updike portrays this damage in some of his works. In *Couples* Janet's sexual life is arrested by her over-attachment to her brother. Neither her husband nor her love can give her any satisfaction, as she keeps recollecting her sexual dalliance with her brother. (p.157).

Another evil effect of the brother's strong attachment to his sister is that he wants to possess her absolutely and refuses to give her any sexual freedom. All these brothers swear, like the brother in Webster's play *The Duchess of Malfi* that their severity against the erring sister is motivated by their wish to protect the family honour. But there must be something more than meets the eye in this violent wish of the brothers to control the sister's sex life.

Updike unhesitatingly attributes the brother's wish to control the sister's sex life to his sexual interest in her and wish to possess her. Updike's Rabbit is frenziedly possessive towards his sister Miriam. He flares up when he sees
her with her boy friend. The reason is that Rabbit is in love with his sister (p.148). In Rabbit Redux, he objects to her profession as a call-girl. He also objects to her going to Stavros, saying that he can allow his wife but not Miriam to sleep with Stavros. This clearly shows the sexual nature of his possessiveness.

To sum up, brother—sister incest is shown to be as harmful as that between mother and son and father and daughter. The brother and sister continuing to take a sexual interest in each other even after marriage poses a serious threat to their marriages. Infatuated with each other, they cannot bestow undivided love and affection on their marriage partners, with the result that their marriages collapse. Also, the incestuously inclined brother tries to possess his sister himself and denies her an independent sex life.

**Dream and Incest**

Ever since Freud made it clear in his treatise *The Interpretation of Dreams* that one's abnormal desires, repressed in day-time, are expressed in dreams, dream-analysis has come to be regarded, as Richard Wollheim says, as “the royal road to the unconscious”\(^1\). Freud stumbled upon the connection between dream and incest, when he analysed his own dreams and found that as a boy he had sexual feeling towards his own mother and jealous rivalries with other children.\(^2\) Updike pays much attention to dreams, in his analyses of cases of incestuous fixation. An account of the incestuous cases in Updike will therefore be incomplete, if we do not take into account the dreams they report.
Updike shows that the dreams of incestuously inclined people give them wish-fulfillment of sorts. He pays pointed attention to such features of dreams as symbolism, identification, composing figures, and the like.

**Dream and Wish-fulfillment**

The wish that cannot be fulfilled in real life is fulfilled in one's dream. Hence Freud called the dream a wish-fulfillment.

“If wishes were horses, beggars would ride”. In dream, wishes produce horses as readily as fairies produce chariots to take Cinderella to the ball and to her prince. Mother-fixated sons fulfill their deepest wish by dreaming of themselves having coitus with their mothers or establishing a closer tie with them than they are able to in actual life. The hostile mother of reality is transformed in these dreams into one exuding love and affection for the son.

Some of the dreams presented by Updike are of this type. Joey of Of the Farm dreams of his wife who takes on his mother's appearance and this woman invites Joey to come up to her bedroom. This is a sexual overture, but Joey is too shy and inhibited even in the dream to venture to have sex with his mother (p.48). Joey's mother figure also tells in the dream about her and Joey's "history of fear". The son's fond hope that his mother would have come to him but for her fear is thus expressed.

**Dream and Symbolism**

We have seen that inhibitions paralyse Joey even in his dream. To escape from inhibitions and inner repressive forces sometimes a dream gets
clothed in symbols which have an inattentive surface meaning but which really convey forbidden incestuous sex. Almost all the dreams in Updike are loaded with symbols, some of them transparent and some others very obscure and mystifying.

The symbol in Lee's dream is quite simple. Lee in "Incest" dreams of dousing and rinsing his blond-haired daughter with a lawn hose. (pp.109-121) The dream signifies sexual act. The hose with which the young girl is rinsed is a phallic symbol. Freud says that some symbols in dreams constantly mean the same thing. The lawn hose in Lee's dream is such a symbol having a fixed genital meaning attached to it, whoever might dream of it.

But most symbols in dreams, Freud says, derive their meaning from the special memory. Material of the dreamer has nothing in common with dreams by others. The symbols in the dream that Angela of Couples has after her separation from her husband have a special import and no 'constant' meaning can be attached to them. Angela dreams of herself in an elevator. She presses a button but nothing happens. So, Angela thinks she must be on the right floor already. That is, separating from her husband and living a non-sexual life (the pressing of the button without anything happening might symbolize a sexless life) with her parents is the 'right floor' on which she would like to settle.

Such strange symbols as freezing, starving, ice and the like., in mom's dreams (in Rabbit Redux) become intelligible only when viewed as
manifestations of her desire to “freeze” her son Rabbit and to stunt his growth and make him dependent on her. She dreams of having a man frozen in the icebox (p.169), in another of her dreams. Rabbit has died because she “couldn’t get the food on the table” (p.170). Mom’s feeling that her failure to satisfy her-mother-fixated son’s sexual hunger has caused him death-in-life is probably expressed in this dream through the symbol of death by starvation.

Thus, the dreams—a bootlegger trafficking in repressed desires—escape being repressed by the ego and the superego—the internal revenue officers of the moral and social world—and smuggles his wares by wrapping them in camouflaged packages and employing ingenious dramatic disguises.

**Dream and Identification**

A common feature of dreams, as explained by Freud, is that the dreamer identifies himself with the personages of his dream, when he himself does not appear in his dream. Freud says that the identification of persons serves various purposes in our dreams:

“in the first place, that of representing a feature common to two persons; secondly, that of representing a displaced common feature; and, thirdly, that of expressing a community of features which is merely wished for.”

Piet in his dream identifies himself with his father (his mother’s husband) and with the boy Piet (still dependent on his mother). All the three persons are warmly welcomed by Piet’s mother who appears with “her
threadbare sweater unbuttoned" (p.477). The unbuttoned sweater shows that in the dream the mother is ready to yield her breast to the son thirsting for it. Piet's identification with the little boy as well as his father shows his inner urge to be dependent (like the little boy) as well as masterful (like the father) towards his mother.

There is identification in Mom's dream also. She identifies herself with her glamorously dressed daughter Miriam not because there is any connection between the two but because she wishes to be transformed into a young, glamorously dressed daughter Miriam, so that she can easily attract her son to herself. Mom identifies herself with Miriam in her dream also because she knows that Miriam is the object of Rabbit's intense incestuous longing (Rabbit Redux, p.170).

Dream and Composite Figures

Freud says that dreams abound in composite figures.²⁴ Joey telescopes his mother with his wife in his dream. In the dream, Joey's wife Peggy appears like his mother. She wears her gown in the same way as the other does, with the strap loosened. Besides this physical semblance, Peggy of Of the Farm loves the farm, as the mother does. Thus, the mother and the wife are blended into a composite figure. This composite figure invites Joey temptingly for sex. The composite figure is an indication that Joey is after a mother-like wife/wife-like mother.

In Rabbit, Run Rabbit dreams of his mother, wife and sister towards all of whom he is sexually inclined. While talking with his sister about his mother,
the sister changes into his wife and the wife also literally melts into an unidentifiable figure. This reflects Rabbit's wish to have a 'composite' woman, having the features of his mother, sister and wife. The melting indicates his childish desire to melt these different women as if they are just metals and to create a fresh compound.

**Dream and Condensation**

Freud says that often several disparate things are put together in dreams in a seemingly chaotic fashion. On deeper analysis, however, the disparate elements are found to be parts of a coherent picture, conveying a forbidden desire. Ruth's dream in *Marry Me* is a typical example. It appears to be a jigsaw puzzle, containing "scenes and faces from remote corners of her life" (p.149), but on deeper analysis, it reveals Ruth's father-fixation. In the dream, she is pursuing her father, her neighbour David Collins and a Lady—seated between them. Her father, David, and the old lady fall down and crushed and are dying. The scene suddenly shifts from the rutted road "the Caribbean... where she had once gone with Jerry, years ago, when she was pregnant with Geoffrey".

Analysed closely, the dream throws light on Ruth's father-fixation. The old lady who dies in the accident stands for Ruth's mother. Ruth's jealousy of her mother and her wish to have her mother dead so that she can possess her father entirely appear in the dream as the death of old lady. The dream thus fulfills her deep wish. The scene shifting at the end of the dream to the place where Ruth spent the happiest period of her life with her husband
makes explicit Ruth's desire to live with her father in idyllic circumstances as she once did with her husband. The presence of David Collins in the dream may seem puzzling at first. But it too fits into the incestuous dream. David Collins, a neighbour of Ruth's and father of many children, is the man with whom both Ruth's husband and lover suspect her to be carrying on an affair. This suspicion is baseless. Others regard David Collins as her lover but she does not accept him as so. She herself regards her father-as lover but others do not accept him as so.

This uneasy tension caused in her mind by the conflict between her own deepest longing and public opinion is resolved in the dream by including both the father and David Collins. The reference to the "buggy" in which her father travels is intimately connected with Ruth's adultery with her lover Richard in the woods where she sees a buggy path (pp.83, 142).

It is thus implied that Ruth wants to have with her father the kind of sex that she had with her lover. As for the muddy ruts covered by the overhanging branches of trees and never dried by sunlight (p.150), this seems to represent the depths of the unconscious never penetrated by the light of reason. The 'race' in which these people are involved represents the sexual pursuit of the father by the daughter. The presence of child Geoffrey is an indication of Ruth's desire of go back to her father with her children, when she is divorced by her husband.

Thus, even an apparently confusing jumble of details yields rich insights into the incestuous workings of a woman's mind.
To conclude, the dreams, in Updike have certain common features such as the mother inviting the son to have sex with her. Also, the dreams, bring a modicum of wish-fulfillment to the dreamers. It should be noted in this connection that Updike’s dreams are very complex. The reason may be that Updike’s characters are complicated, being products of a complex environment.

Updike does not make a case for incest. Marcia of Couples arguing in favour of brother-sister incest, says that the brother growing up with the sister is much more capable of understanding her than her husband who is after all a stranger to the woman compared with her brother (p.158). But Harold objects on the grounds of Eugenics, saying that close in-breeding will in the long run sap the race and produce only diminutives like Marcia. Also, Piet’s sexual failure with the “sisterly” (p.59) Georgiana shows that a sister, because of her excessive intimacy with her brother, is as likely to fail to evoke the brother’s sexual response as to evoke it. Thus Updike counterbalances arguments in favour of incest with very weighty arguments against it.

The images that Updike associates with incestuously inclined people also make clear his disapproval of incest. Joey’s mother who denies him an independent sex life is associated with the cobweb (p.75) and the fox (p.78). She plays foxy tricks to draw her son towards herself and, like the innocent-looking spider waiting patiently and finally catching its victims in the finely spun meshes of its web, slowly and steadily weaves a web around her son that he finds well-nigh inextricable.
Peter’s mother Cassie is associated with a hunting dog killing a skunk. (In the short story “Should Wizard Hit Mommy?” we have a skunk dominated by its mother). Cassie is associated with the serpent image also. In chapter VIII of The Centaur, we have Cassie showing Peter a snake swallowing a chattering field mouse. C.G. Jung says, in his book Four Archetypes: Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, Trickster, that the serpent is a symbol of the possessive mother. Cassie is presented as a boa constrictor, crushing out of existence her son’s capacity for normal sex life. Thus, the incestuously inclined mothers in Updike’s fiction are associated with predatory, destructive creatures.

As for the mother-fixated son, he is associated with images of sickness, stagnation, stunted growth, immobility, and the like. In The Centaur, Peter’s psoriasis, got from his mother, is taken by Charles Thomas Samuel’s as a “psychosomatic symptom of maternal domination”. Peter is immobilized by his mother-fixation, which is symbolized by the rock on which he is chained. The rock is interpreted by Charles Thomas Samuels as “the maternal power that alienates Peter from his peers”. Chapter VIII of The Centaur speaks of the small river Tilden Creek being dammed up and made into a stagnant lake. This is Peter’s face also. His sex life has been dammed up by his mother and made to stagnate, instead of being allowed to flow freely. Updike uses the rocking chain image—Joey, chatting with his mother, uses a rocking chair. Despite its incessant rocking, the rocking chair does not move on, which aptly conveys the stasis immobility of the sex life of these mother-fixated people.
To conclude, Updike is all sympathy for victims of incestuous fixation. But he is not in favour of incest. Both through direct statements and suggestive images, Updike conveys his disapproval of incest.

**Is Updike himself Mother-Fixated?**

Ever since Freud propounded his theory that art is nothing but an embodiment of the artist's neuroses, both literary critics and psychoanalysts have busied themselves trying to trace the incestuous conflicts in writings to a similar conflict in the writer's personal life. In America critics like Harvey O' Higgins and Ludwig Lewisohn undertook to psychoanalyze authors as well as their works and were convinced that the real trouble with most American writers was their puritanical repressions.²⁸

For proper elucidation of the neurosis in the author, biographical dates are indispensable. Where such data are missing (as in the classic example of Shakespeare), the critic can only speculate, a temptation which it is wiser to resist.

Charles Thomas Samuels suggests that Updike's mother Linda Crace Hoyon might have dominated him in real life in the way in which such situations are repeated in his fiction.²⁹ But Updike nowhere mentions his mother as a domineering woman.
A Sum-up

Updike traces Oedipal complex and Electra complex to sons and daughters seeing their parents' naked/or engaged in coitus. Brother-sister incest develops when the two are reared closely.

Updike devotes attention to the study of the evil effects flowing out of incestuous fixation. The mother-fixated son and his father view each other with enmity, as the two compete for mother's love. When there is an incestuous bond between mother and son, each is possessive towards the other and denies the other an independent sex life. Over-dominated by mother, the son becomes impotent, effeminate, and mentally retarded. The mother-fixated son prefers older women to younger ones, as they serve him as surrogate mothers. The Updikean wife is seen incapable of such transformation and adjustment and hence the large number of restless mother-fixated husband in Updike's fiction futilely searching for suitable mother figures.

Updike's picture of father-daughter incest is symmetrical with that of mother-son incest. The father-fixated daughter and her mother are at feud with each other, competing for father's love. The daughter, having become stuck up with father emotionally, loses interest in marriage and sex with husband. She attains peace when she leaves her husband and rejoins her father. The father-fixated daughters in Updike prefer old, paternal men to young ones, because they serve as surrogate fathers. Even when they are
drawn to young men, it is because the young men resurrect in some way or other the father image buried deep in their hearts.

Updike shows that brother-sister incest springs from the close rearing of the two. When the brother and sister are glued to each other, their marriage partners feel shot out. They cannot tolerate it and therefore their families crumble. Also, the incestuously inclined brother is extremely possessive towards his sister and denies her an independent sex life. He behaves as though he has an exclusive copy right over her body and soul.

As the incestuous undercurrent spurts up to the surface when a person dreams, Updike has assigned dream a significant place in his portrayal of incestuous aberrations. As Updike’s incestuously inclined men and women are complex and ramified, the dreams they dream are also correspondingly complex and puzzling.

Updike is all sympathy for the incestuously inclined people who devastate their lives as well as those of their near and dear ones. But he is by no means in favour of incestuous relationships. He sympathizes with, but not encourages, incestuous sufferers.

As concrete evidence is lacking, we cannot conclude that Updike’s interest in incest is born of his personal incestuous involvement. To use T.S. Eliot’s famous analogy, Updike’s mind might have acted as a mere catalyst, making possible the fusion of different psychological problems into artistic wholes.
What makes Updike’s treatment of incest so enduring is not merely its psychological veracity but also its superb artistry. It is this artistic handling of the theme—evoking reader’s sympathy for the excruciating problems of the incestuous people, showing the universality and the protean shapes that incest takes, using such varied techniques as dream analysis, connotative imagery, making the id speak out, and the like—it is such artistic ways that have raised Updike’s works far above the level of dry-as-but case-histories. What Updike says in the Paris Review interview about the relationship between psychological insights and fiction is applicable to his own fiction:

“narrative should not be primarily packages for psychological insights, though they can contain them, like raisins in buns. But the substance is the dough, which feels the story-telling appetite, the appetite for motion, for suspense, for resolution.”

Updike’s craftsmanship is in evidence not only in putting the insights about incest—the ‘raisins’—in his works but also in artistically setting in ‘motion’ incestuous, maintaining ‘suspense’, and bringing about a ‘resolution’.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


2. Jung and Adler have severely attacked Frieud's sex theory. Jung's complaint is that Freud has attached too much importance to the sexual basis of oedipal complex omitting such serious factors as the infantile pleasure-urge and the desire for the power, and the infantile urge for the protection, Adler, though not discrediting the incest theory, attaches more importance to organ inferiority, contending that most neuroses are traceable to a feeling of organ, inferiority. See Joseph Jastron, Freud : His Dream and Sex Theories (New York: Pocket Books, 1969), (pp.82-96.)

3. Seeing his mother's "soft pale neck,"(this is Joey's emphatic way of referring to his mother's partially fared bosom) Joey feels acutely embarrassed : "My throat engorged, as if I had surprised my parents in coitus" (John Updike, Of the Farm (New York :Alfred A. Knoff, 1972,) p.142)


8. Joyce C. Markle, Fighters and Lovers, p.77. Spotting her husband's mother-fixation, Cassie says: "I think it's so sad... that they don't' allow men to marry their mother, (The Centaur, p.54) Here Cassie could be projecting on George her own innermost wish to be married to her son.


15. Joyce C. Markle, Fighters and Lovers, p.122. Joyce says: “after her abortion Foxy loses her full-stomached, large-breasted maternity and Piet abandons her”.


27. Ibid. p.18.

