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‘You don’t mind my calling you Harry?’ Terms of Address in John Updike’s *Rabbit* Tetralogy

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Abstract: This paper examines the use of address terms in John Updike’s *Rabbit* tetralogy (Updike 1995). The first part of the analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the great variety of terms used to address the protagonist, Harry Angstrom, in the decades covered by the novels. The second part focuses on two important side characters, Reverend Eccles and Harry’s mother-in-law. It demonstrates how address term usage with these two characters reflects ongoing changes in their relationship with Harry. The main aim of the paper is to demonstrate the potential of fictional data for the study of address terms and, in return, to capture the manifold functions of address terms as a literary device in fiction.

1. Introduction

When John Updike first started experimenting with the motif of the ‘Ex-Basket Player’ in the early days of his career (Updike 1958, 1959), he could not have known that he was going to create one of the central monuments of American postwar literature. Four decades, two Pulitzer prizes, and about 1,500 pages later, Updike had developed this idea – of a former high-school basketball prodigy struggling to come to terms with the dullness and temptations of adult life – into a whole universe of places and people. In the very center of it are the doings and misdoings of a Pennsylvanian *everyman* who is both utterly normal and yet very special. His name is Harry ‘Rabbit’ Angstrom.

This article[1] uses the densely woven fabric of Rabbit’s world to study terms of address. The analysis will both derive and reconfirm some general trends about address terms in American postwar society. The ultimate goal is to (1) illustrate the overall potential of fictional data for studying the social phenomenon of how people refer to one another, and (2) demonstrate how a systematic analysis can enhance our understanding of address terms as a literary device. As I will argue, works of literary fiction offer a unique opportunity to study what in everyday linguistic interaction often remains inaccessible to the researcher. This

[1] I would like to thank my friend and fellow reader Andrew James for substantial feedback on an earlier draft of this paper. Two anonymous reviewers provided many insightful comments that greatly helped to improve this paper. I gratefully acknowledge support by Marissa Galiley, who tagged the corpus for this study and had a final look over the manuscript.

opens up a novel view on how terms of address are selected, received, processed, and internalized in an individual’s mind. Moreover, the decades covered by the *Rabbit* saga provide us with sufficient time-depth to scrutinize the protagonist’s linguistic behavior throughout a longer part of his adult life, and identify a number of changes on the way.

The next section introduces the sociolinguistic background of terms of address, with special focus on American English. Section 3 provides a synopsis of the *Rabbit* books and describes the methodology of this study. The analysis consists of two parts. Section 4 explores the great variety of address terms used to refer to the protagonist of the series and the factors determining their choice. In section 5, we focus on two important side characters, Reverend Eccles and Bessie Springer, to analyze how their relationship with the protagonist is defined and redefined over time through terms of address. Section 6 develops the findings from the analysis into a larger framework that can also be employed for studying address terms in other works of literature.

2. Terms of address

A key issue in research on address terms in Western languages is the distinction between a casual, informal way of referring to the other person, and a more respectful, formal way of address. A seminal work on the topic is Brown and Gilman’s (1960) study on address pronouns in Indo-European languages, many of which are equipped with a binary T/V distinction. The abbreviations derive from the two Latin second-person pronouns *tu* (singular) for informal, and *vos* (plural) for formal address.

In English, a similar dyad has been known to exist until the end of the Early Modern period, with the second person singular pronoun *thou*/*thee* and its plural counterpart *ye*/*you* (e.g. Walker 2007). In present-day English, social relations are expressed using nominal devices, most notably an addressee’s first or last name. This phenomenon has been examined in a follow-up study by Brown and Ford (1961), which identifies two main forms of address in (American) English: first name (FN), corresponding to T address, and title + last name (TLN), which functions as V address. One chief finding of the study is an overall preference for mutual FN in American English. In addition, Brown and Ford describe various nonreciprocal patterns in which age or occupational status result in dyads in which one person would use FN but receive TLN by the other.

In the decades that followed, the trend toward FN address has further increased. In the 1980s, Hook (1984: 186) describes the situation as follows:

> The average American of mature years knows from casual observation alone that there is nowadays a greater use of FN than ever before. His doctor or clergyman may address him by his FN – and chances are he doesn’t object. Automobile salesmen, real estate brokers, casual acquaintances at a cocktail party, even telephone pitchmen or -women try it

> daily, generally with success – that is, hardly ever does anyone state his objection.

Although Hook's assessment is not based on empirical data, a later study by Murray (2002), who replicated Brown and Ford's (1961) methodology, has confirmed these observations. Murray observes a further increase of mutual FN address, now even extending to non-acquainted adults and dyads with larger age differences.

Syntactically speaking, an important difference between pronominal and nominal address forms is that the former are (mostly) obligatory arguments of a predicate, whereas the latter are used as vocatives, i.e. syntactically free forms that can be dropped (Zwicky 1974). In consequence, this means that in English it is far easier to avoid making a choice between formal (TLN) and informal (FN) address than in classical T/V languages, such as German or French, where no neutral *you* form is available and the distinction is all but hardwired into the grammar (see Ervin-Tripp 1972: 232).

The use of literary texts for the purpose of studying English address terms is not a new approach. Studies on pronouns and nominal forms in the language of Shakespeare are particularly prominent (cf. Bruti 2000, Busse 2002, 2003, Busse 2006, Brown & Gilman 1989, Mazzon 2003, Mulholland 1976, Stein 2003), but literature from both earlier and later periods has also been examined. For instance, Jucker (2006) and Mazzon (2000) have looked at address terms in *The Canterbury Tales*, whereas the aforementioned study by Brown and Ford (1961) heavily relies on data from twentieth-century American plays.

Another common type of data are dialogues from films and TV dramas, as used by Murray (2002), for instance, to match up Brown & Ford's (1961) stage data. Subsequent studies on films and film subtitling were conducted by Bruti and Perego (2008), Formentelli (2014), Levshina (2017), and Zago (2015). Oddly enough, almost no research is available on address terms in contemporary American fiction, which provides the data for the present study. The next section introduces these data and outlines their specific potential for address term research.

3. The *Rabbit* data

John Updike's *Rabbit* tetralogy tells the story of Harold C. Angstrom, a former high-school basketball prodigy from the fictive Pennsylvania town of Brewer. The nickname *Rabbit* originally derives from his physiognomy, but also serves as a reference point for a number of motifs dealt with in the novel (cf. Davis and DeMello 2003: 200–201). His life is described in four books: *Rabbit, Run* (1960), *Rabbit Redux* (1971), *Rabbit is Rich* (1981), and *Rabbit at Rest* (1990). These were later published as a single volume in the Everyman's Library (Updike 1995), which is the source for the present study.

The story starts in 1959, when Harry is 26 and working as a sales representative for kitchen gadgets. He has a young family consisting of his wife Janice and their infant boy Nelson. *Rabbit, Run* describes how Harry runs away from home and has an affair with a part-time prostitute. He briefly returns to his wife for the birth of their second child, only to run away again soon after. This sets in motion the tragic chain of events that leads to the drowning of the baby. Ten years later, in *Rabbit Redux*, the situation is partially reversed in that Janice is the one who leaves Harry for another man. In the events that follow, a female teenage runaway and a young black activist temporarily move in at Harry’s place. The novel ends with the death of the girl when the house is set on fire and Harry’s subsequent reunion with Janice. *Rabbit is Rich* returns to the story in 1979. Harry is now in charge of the car agency his wife inherited from her parents. This provides the Angstroms with some unforeseen wealth. When son Nelson prematurely returns from college to start his own family, new frictions emerge. The birth of Harry’s first grandchild in early 1980 marks the endpoint of this third novel in the series. *Rabbit at Rest* describes Harry’s life as a pensioner who spends half of the year in Florida away from Brewer. Nelson is now in charge of the car agency, but his drug addiction almost ruins the family. Harry has a fling with his daughter-in-law and suffers two heart attacks, the second one causing his untimely death at age 56, in September 1989. A follow-up novella, *Rabbit Remembered* (2000), describes what happened to the Angstrom family after the events of *Rabbit at Rest*, providing a moderately happy ending to the series that its protagonist did not live to see. This last instalment of the *Rabbit* saga is not part of the present analysis.

The *Rabbit* series was chosen because it provides a short-time diachronic perspective on American society from the late Eisenhower years to the end of the Cold War. As Boswell (2001: 1) holds, ‘the Rabbit novels serve as a fictionalized timeline of the postwar American experience’. Incidentally, the decades described in the *Rabbit* series roughly cover the period between when Brown and Ford (1961) published their groundbreaking paper on address terms in American English and Murray’s (2002) follow-up study.

Updike, through Harry, becomes a chronicler of the second half of the twentieth century. However, unlike other ‘historiographical’ approaches by the author, such as his *In the Beauty of the Lilies* (1996) or *Villages* (2004), the *Rabbit* series was not produced at one single point in time. Instead, each book was written at the very end of the decade it describes: *Rabbit, Run* in the 1950s, *Rabbit Redux* in the 1960s, *Rabbit is Rich* in the 1970s, and *Rabbit at Rest* in the 1980s. This enables us to follow the protagonist and the events that were happening around him as they are narrated in what comes close to ‘real time’ (De Bellis 2005: xxiii). As Updike (1995: ix) himself puts it: Each of the four *Rabbit* novels ‘was composed at the end of a decade and published at the beginning of the next one; they became a kind of running report on the state of my hero and his nation’.

Adding to the impression that the events are unfolding right in the here and now is the fact that the *Rabbit* series is written in present tense. Excepting a few clearly identifiable passages, the story is told from Harry’s point of view, in free

indirect style. Being a blend of third person narration and interior monologue, this technique ‘places the reader inside a character’s mind, representing his or her thoughts in a vocabulary and dialect appropriate to the character while maintaining the implicit presence of the author through the use of the third person’ (Quinn 2006: 173). In effect, this means that most of the time we are observing things from the protagonist’s perspective, or, as Krieg (2017: 97) puts it, ‘his voice merges with the narrative’. Schiff (2013: 255) points out that ‘Updike takes us directly inside Rabbit’s head, where at close range we experience his urges, fears, and desires’. As the subsequent sections will show, this ‘close range’ viewpoint also holds some insights into the use of address terms.

Fictional data do not represent real language. As previous researchers have emphasized, scripted dialogues substantially differ from how people speak in reality. For instance, Formentelli’s (2014: 78) study of (English and American) film dialogue has shown a ‘marked quantitative divergence between film talk and spontaneous speech, with audiovisual dialogue showing a much higher frequency of [address] forms’. In this respect, Mazzon (2003: 223) reminds us that ‘literary evidence cannot substitute other, more direct evidence, but only supplement it’. In what follows, I would like to show that this supplementation can be quite substantial.

The analysis of the data is supported by corpus linguistic tools. Electronic versions of the four *Rabbit* novels were converted into text files. A total of 58 files were produced, divided by chapters and, where applicable, shifts in narrative perspective. All terms of address used towards Harry were manually tagged through close and repeated reading of the text. The tagging distinguishes between narration and direct speech. Each tag contains information about point of view (in narration) and speaker (in speech), respectively. Terms of address in narrative passages were tagged ‘NAR’. For direct speech, a distinction was made between syntactically free vocative forms, which were tagged ‘SF’, and syntactically bound forms, tagged ‘SB’. Personal pronouns were not tagged, except for vocative *you* (see 4.8). Figure 1 gives an example for each type of tag.

The data have been analyzed using AntConc (Anthony 2019), a freeware concordance program available at https://www.laurenceanthony.net/software. For reasons of readability, the examples presented in the subsequent sections will normally be shown without tags. The tags are retained only where necessary for a better understanding of a given point in question.

Tag	Example	Explanation
NAR	Rabbit$_{\text{NAR=Harry}}$ takes off his coat. (Updike 1995: 6)	Address term used in narrative passage told from Harry’s point of view
SF	Janice asks, ‘Harry$_{\text{SF=Janice}}$, do you have a cigarette?’ (Updike 1995: 10)	Address term used as a vocative in speech by Janice
SB	‘I feel Harry$_{\text{SB=Eccles}}$ is in some respects a special case’. (Updike 1995: 133)	Address term used by Rev. Eccles to refer to Harry in speech

Fig. 1: Types of tags

4. Addressing the protagonist

In this first part of the analysis I examine the manifold forms used to directly address the protagonist, Harold C. Angstrom, in the four books of the series. I concentrate on syntactically free ‘SF’ forms in direct speech (see previous section), the most frequent of which are summarized in Figure 2. The numbers themselves must be taken with some caution, as they are highly dependent on whether certain characters are more prominent than others.[2] A complete list of all 90 terms is given in the appendix.

4.1 First name

The most common vocative is *Harry*, a diminutive of *Harold*.[3] As can be seen in Figure 2, it is used more than 500 times by a total of 31 people, most notably Harry's wife Janice (206 times), his former basketball coach Tothero (57 times), his father (49 times), and his late lover Thelma (27 times). *Harold*, by contrast, is used by only one person, Harry’s cardiologist Dr. Breit. When first addressed in this way by the surgeon, the narrative voice takes specific note of this oddity commenting that he, Harry, ‘was never called Harold, though that was his legal name’ (Updike 1995: 1296).

A second diminutive is *Hassy*. Most likely derived from an early mispronunciation of *Harry*, it is now used almost exclusively by his mother, in real interaction or as remembered by Harry in one of several flashback scenes (e.g. Updike 1995: 1041). The irregular occurrence of the diminutive indicates that some names may be used only by a clearly defined group of people, falling out of use as these people grow old and die. In Harry’s later years, *Hassy* feels to him like a name from ‘those lost days never to be relived’ (Updike 1995: 1486).

[2] For instance, *Chuck* is third on the list, but it is only used by one character, Skeeter, and in only one book, *Rabbit Redux* (see 4.6).

[3] In counting *Harry* as a first name, I follow previous approaches such as Brown and Ford (1961) and Biber et al. (1999). Other studies classify such forms as nicknames (e.g. Dickey 1997, Poynton 1984).

Term of Address	Frequency	Number of people
Harry	515*	31
Dad	200	1
Chuck	39	1
Man	36	4
Grandpa	30	2
Mr. Angstrom	18	13
honey	18	3
champ	17	1
Rabbit	15*	4
Angstrom	12	7
Hassy	10*	2
Harold	8	1
Darling	7	2
friend	6	3
my friend	6	3
Sir	6	6
Friend Harry	5	2
Daddy	5	2
Sweetie	4	1
you	4	3
Harry Angstrom	4	3
fella	3	2
you son of a bitch	3	2
young fella	3	2

* Includes instances of the following: written communication; delivered by unspecified group of people; reported in speech; in narrator’s mind (remembered, imagined, dreamed). For a complete list, see the appendix).

Fig. 2: Vocative forms of address used towards Harry

4.2 Last name

Harry’s last name, *Angstrom*, is used far less often. It occurs mainly in combination with the title *Mr.*, the classical TLM address (Brown and Ford 1961), which is used 18 times by a total of 13 people. It is followed by last name address without a title, used by seven people. This ‘bare surname address’ (McConnel-Ginet 2003: 81) tends to occur in situations of larger power differences, as when, in *Rabbit Redux*, Harry is interrogated by a police officer or gets summoned by his surly foreman (Updike 1995: 549, 398).

Other characters who regularly use LN-only address are Harry's golf pals in Florida, where the Angstroms have bought a condominium after retirement. Harry's narrative first introduces them as follows:

> Bernie Drechsel, Ed Silberstein, and Joe Gold are all older than Harry, and shorter, and usually make him feel good about himself. With them, he is a big Swede, they call him Angstrom, a comical pet gentile, a big pale uncircumcised hunk of American white bread. He in turn treasures their perspective; it seems more manly than his, sadder and wiser and less shaky. (Updike 1995: 1100)

Whereas Harry refers to the three men by their first names, they call him *Angstrom*. Rather than power differences, age and religion seem to be major factors here, entailing, as Harry feels it, a different 'perspective' on life (see Wilson 1998: 102). Their Jewishness is also manifest in Ed's and Joe's Jewish surnames, *Silberstein* and *Gold*, as opposed to the Scandinavian *Angstrom*. Harry's past as an athlete may come into play as an additional factor. The use of second names is common practice in sports, and his golf buddies may be alluding to this past by their preference of *Angstrom* over *Harry*. Taken together, their use of LN suggests a certain reserve towards a more intimate relationship with Harry.

On some occasions, however, Bernie, Ed and Joe do shift to FN address. One instance is an early scene in *Rabbit at Rest*, where Harry tries to get their advice on his troubles with Nelson. When he starts to get drunk after a lost golf match, his dark mood at last 'thinning like a squirt of ink in alcohol's gentle solvent', they tell him 'Harry, you don't want another beer' (Updike 1995: 1112, 1113). The more intimate connotation of FN address here is exploited by the three men to admonish him not to get more drunk.[4]

4.3 Nickname

Although the word *rabbit* is featured in the title of all four books of the series, the people around Harry rarely ever use it. It comes up continuously as a term of reference throughout the narrative, yet occurs a mere 17 times as a vocative in speech. *Rabbit* is used by only three of the main characters: Harry's old basketball teammate Ronnie Harrison, his lover Ruth, and the black youngster Skeeter. Ronnie is Harry's eternal opponent, who has known him from the days when he still went by as *Rabbit*; Ruth and Skeeter are later acquaintances that were explicitly informed about the nickname when they first met Harry (Updike 1995: 48, 373).

The exceptionality of being called *Rabbit* is acknowledged by Harry himself ten years after his extramarital affair, in a passage in *Rabbit Redux*, where he tells his wife Janice of a chance encounter with his former lover Ruth. Harry recounts how he briefly talked to Ruth outside a local shopping center, and how, in parting, she addressed him with his old nickname. As he confesses to Janice, 'Nobody ever calls me Rabbit, was what sort of got me' (Updike 1995: 325).

Another two decades later, in a scene in *Rabbit at Rest*, the nickname has a short and unexpected revival. On Independence Day 1989, Harry has agreed to join his hometown parade as Uncle Sam. And even though his glory days from high school are long past, some people in the crowd of spectators seem to recognize both him and his old nickname. Harry experiences the scene as follows:

[4] I thank two reviewers for sharing their thoughts on how to interpret the unequal use of address terms between Harry and the three men in these passages.

> The crowd as it thickens calls out more and more his name, ‘Harry’, or ‘Rabbit’ – ‘Hey, Rabbit! Hey, hotshot!’ They remember him. He hasn’t heard his old nickname so often in many years; nobody in Florida uses it, and his grandchildren would be puzzled to hear it. (Updike 1995: 1384)

As these examples demonstrate, Harry’s nickname is a thing of the past. Like *Hassy* (see 4.1), it is hardly used by the people around him, and those who got to know him only later in his life are not even aware it ever existed.

Rabbit is not entirely gone though, remaining a relevant means of identification for the protagonist himself. The nickname occurs throughout Harry’s narrative passages with high frequency. Figure 3 presents a list of all 1431 instances in the four books where Harry refers to himself as *Rabbit* (e.g. ‘Rabbit$_{_NAR=Harry}$ has secrets too’, Updike 1995: 820) as opposed to *Harry* (e.g. ‘As always when he sees his son unexpectedly Harry$_{_NAR=Harry}$ feels shame’, Updike 1995: 839).

	Rabbit	Harry
Rabbit, Run (1960)	339 (72.6%)	128 (27.4%)
Rabbit Redux (1971)	615 (78.2%)	171 (21.8%)
Rabbit is Rich (1981)	196 (19.8%)	793 (80.2%)
Rabbit at Rest (1990)	281 (26.9%)	765 (73.1%)
Sum	1431 (43.5%)	1857 (56.5%)

Fig. 3: Use of *Rabbit* vs. *Harry* in Harry’s narrative

The frequencies reveal that *Rabbit* is the predominant way of (self-) reference in both *Rabbit, Run* (72.6%) and, even more so, *Rabbit Redux* (78.2%). By contrast, in *Rabbit is Rich* (19.8%) and *Rabbit at Rest* (26.9%) it is *Harry* rather than *Rabbit* telling the story. Yet even in these latter two his old nickname pops up with some regularity, as though to remind us that the *Rabbit* inside Harry is still alive. Although Updike never explicitly commented on these shifts, they may be taken as recurrent indicators of ‘the paradox of being a social creature and still longing to be an individual’, as the author once put it in an interview (Updike 1978: 133). As Bailey (2006: 252, note 3) has observed, there are ‘few aspects of the conflicting impulses of Harold Angstrom’s character that aren’t contained within the binary opposition of his nicknames’.

4.4 Kinship terms

The second most frequent term that Harry is addressed with is the kinship term *dad*. It is used by his son Nelson a total of 200 times. In Nelson’s childhood, we also find a few instances of the diminutive *daddy*, which in *Rabbit Redux* partially overlaps with *dad*. Being a young teenager in this book, it seems that Nelson is just about to learn that *dad* is the ‘more adult and appropriately masculine’ choice (McConnel-Ginet 2003: 87).

The data contain a number of passages where kinship terms do not faithfully reflect the actual relationship between the participants. Common in many cultures, this practice is known as the ‘fictive use’ of kinship terms (Braun 1988: 9). One example occurs in *Rabbit Redux*, after Harry has taken in the teenage

girl Jill at his place, with whom he is having an affair. When one day he comes home from work and finds her rather confused in the kitchen ‘crying over a pan of lamb chops’, he asks her if she has taken any drugs. Jill replies saying ‘No, Daddy. I mean lover’ (Updike 1995: 489). Her use of *daddy* here seems to mock Harry’s sudden feelings of paternal responsibility, while its subsequent replacement with *lover* is to remind him of their actual relationship. The two address terms nicely concur with Schiff’s (1998: 45) observation that Jill in *Rabbit Redux* encompasses both ‘the daughter and lover Harry has lost’.

An entirely new kinship term occurs in *Rabbit at Rest*, with the appearance of Nelson’s children Judy and Roy. Now Harry is *grandpa*. As a bound ‘SB’ form (see section 3), the term is also used by people other than his grandchildren, most notably Harry himself, as when he announces to Judy and Roy that today ‘grandpa$_{_SB=Harry}$’s going to take you to amazing places’ (Updike 1995: 1132). And there are even instances in Harry’s narration where the term is used this way. Here is one example from during the announced family trip with the two grandchildren, where Janice has to explain to Roy that

> ‘Grandpa$_{_SB=Janice}$ was just teasing. Haven’t you learned that about your grandfather yet, Roy? He’s a terrible tease’.
> Is he? Harry has never thought of himself that way.
> Judy smiles knowingly. ‘He pretends to be mean’, she says.
> ‘Grrr’, Grandpa$_{_NAR=Harry}$ says. (Updike 1995: 1146–1147)

The passage contains two instances of *grandpa* that technically qualify as fictive use of kinship terms. The first one, where Janice uses the term to refer to her husband, is a relatively straightforward ‘SB’ case. Of main interest is the second instance, where Harry’s narrative voice observes that Grandpa says ‘Grrr’. By fictively using the kinship term in the narration, Updike grants us a glimpse at how thoroughly Harry has now come to conceive of himself as *grandpa*.

An earlier scene suggests this has not been so from the start. Briefly after his first grandchild Judy was born, towards the end of *Rabbit is Rich*, Harry meets his friend Charlie Stavros, who on parting tells him:

> ‘Say hello to Grandma for me!’
> Meaning Janice, Harry slowly realizes. (Updike 1995: 1015)

The new situation of his wife being *grandma* and, consequently, him *grandpa*, is something Harry only ‘slowly realizes’. As Updike reminds us here, terms of address denoting new roles in an individual’s life do not always come naturally but may take some time to sink in. The author exploits this mechanism to psychologically align the reader with his hero and the life stages he is going through.

4.5 Terms of endearment

The people around Harry, particularly those with a close relationship to him, use various terms of endearment. Some examples are *baby*, *darling*, *dear*, *lover* (see 4.4.), *my boy* and *good boy*, *sweetie* and *sweetheart*. In the *Rabbit* books these terms occur almost exclusively in the speech of females, and mostly those with whom Harry is having (or has had) a sexual relationship. The only exceptions are *my boy* and *good boy*, which is how Harry's former basketball coach Tothero expresses his affection in an early scene in *Rabbit, Run*, before things change for the worse.

The large majority of endearment terms are delivered by Harry's wife Janice. Her default term is *honey* (14 times), but she also calls him *baby*, *Harry dear* and *Harry sweet*, *hon*, *sweet*, *sweetie*, *poor Harry* and *poor thing*. That her choice is not entirely arbitrary can be understood from an episode in *Rabbit at Rest*, where she visits Harry in hospital after his angioplasty. Most likely in response to his weakened physical state, she calls him *baby* in this scene (Updike 1995: 1324). Janice's choice here reflects her 'growing household power', which is a major theme in *Rabbit at Rest* (Clasen 2008: 144).

Honey, too, seems to become Janice's term of choice only in later years. At least this is how it feels to Harry, who wonders in a narrative passage in *Rabbit at Rest*: 'When did Janice start calling him honey? When they moved to Florida and got in with those Southerners and Jews' (Updike 1995: 1440). And Harry is more or less correct in this judgment, as a look at the data reveals. In fact, there are only two instances of *honey* address in the first three *Rabbit* books,[5] as opposed to 12 in *Rabbit at Rest.*

What Harry does not seem to be aware of is that he, too, has at this point started to use *honey*. While the term does not occur in his speech in the earlier parts of the series, we find him using it later on virtually as much as his wife. Updike here demonstrates how external circumstances (age, moving to a different region, meeting new people) may impact on an individual's patterns of language use. The diachronic development is summarized in Figure 4.

	Janice to Harry	Harry to Janice
Rabbit, Run (1960)	1	0
Rabbit Redux (1971)	0	0
Rabbit is Rich (1981)	1	5
Rabbit at Rest (1990)	12	9

Fig. 4: Use of vocative *honey* by Janice and Harry

[5] Oddly enough, the first one occurs right at the beginning of *Rabbit, Run*, during the very first interaction depicted between Harry and Janice (Updike 1995: 15). Kielland-Lund (1993: 85) observes about this scene that the couple's 'dialogue in the beginning of the novel represents the grotesque mixture of terms of endearment and swear words all too typical of male-female relations in America'.

One of the major themes in *Rabbit at Rest* is Harry’s delicate relationship with his daughter-in-law, Nelson’s wife Pru. What starts with a kiss in the opening scene culminates in a one-time affair that is later confessed by Pru to the family. Harry’s ensuing fight with Janice makes him go on his last run, a three-day drive from Pennsylvania to Florida, where he dies only a few weeks later. Below is a brief extract from the argument with his wife, in which the term *honey* is explicitly registered by Janice, if not exactly in a positive way.

> ‘I mean, Harry, what you’ve done is the kind of perverted thing that makes the newspapers. It was *monstrous*’.
> ‘Honey –’
> ‘Quit it with the “honey”’. (Updike 1995: 1444, italics original)

After what has happened, Janice considers her husband’s use of *honey* inappropriate in this situation, to the point of explicitly rejecting it. Obviously, she feels that this is not the right place for exchanges of endearments, and will not allow Harry to manipulate things in his favor. Janice herself does not use the term with her husband, neither in the extract nor in the exchange as a whole, instead simply calling him *Harry* (Updike 1995: 1442–1445). Through his betrayal with Pru, it seems, he forfeits his position as *honey* in her life.

4.6 Familiarizers

Another group of expressions used to indicate some (real or implied) familiarity are what Biber et al. (1999: 1109) call ‘familiarizers’. These include terms like *brother*, *buddy*, *champ*, *Chuck*, *man*, *white boy*, as well as various expressions containing the word *friend*. Except for *white boy*, all familiarizers occur in the speech of male characters. This makes them largely complementary to the female-dominated terms of endearment discussed in 4.5.

The choice of familiarizers in the *Rabbit* series seems to be determined in large part by a speaker’s ethnicity. Terms like *buddy*, *Chuck*, *Chuck babe* and *man* occur almost exclusively in the speech of African American speakers, as do, obviously, *white boy* and *white man*. The latter is used by the black activist Skeeter in *Rabbit Redux*, when during an argument about race he tells Harry: ‘We fascinate you, white man’ (Updike 1995: 470).

Skeeter is also the one who extensively calls Harry *Chuck*. Here, too, ethnicity appears to be a factor, given that the term was widely used by American soldiers during the war in Vietnam to refer to the enemy. Skeeter’s use of *Chuck* with Harry seems to indicate that for him, ‘white people’ are the enemy. This is further corroborated by the fact that he calls Harry’s son *babychuck*, and in an interior monologue refers to Harry’s (white) lover Jill as *ladychuck* (Updike 1995: 451, 494).

4.7 Generic terms of address

The group of generic address terms in the data contains expressions such as *fella*, *sir*, *son*, *señor*, *young fella* and *young man*. As may be expected, the age-indicative terms *son*, *young man* and *young fella* occur only in the first two *Rabbit* books. A difference between *young fella* and *young man* is that the former is used when people do not know the protagonist’s name – a man at gas station, a worried watchman (Updike 1995: 26, 553) – whereas the latter occurs in situations where this is not an issue at all.

One example is a scene in *Rabbit, Run*, in which Harry comes to see his wife at the hospital, where she is in labor with their second child. In the waiting room Harry meets his mother-in-law, Mrs. Springer, who is not exactly enthusiastic about seeing him after his affair with Ruth. Trying to ignore him for some time, she eventually blurts out:

> ‘If you’re sitting there like a buzzard young man hoping she’s going to die, you might as well go back to where you’ve been living because she’s doing fine without you and has been all along’. (Updike 1995: 171–172)

More than just emphasizing her older age, Mrs. Springer’s use of *young man* here is a way of ‘un-knowing’ him, by avoiding a more specific way of address. In a way, she is stripping him off his identity as Janice’s husband and, in connection, her own son-in-law.

The *Rabbit* books also allow for a few observations about the term *sir*, which is used a total of ten times by nine people. The honorific title tends to occur in anonymous situations that require a certain degree of formality and/or respect. For instance, it is used by a waiter in a restaurant in *Rabbit, Run*, and by a telephone operator in *Rabbit at Rest* (Updike 1995: 63, 1455). The formal nature of *sir* is explicitly commented on in a passage in *Rabbit at Rest*. Here Harry is renting a sailboat from Gregg, the son of one of his golf pals, who works as a local hotel beach supervisor. When at one point Gregg accidentally calls Harry *sir*, as he would do with ordinary customers, he instantly notices his lapse and ‘tries to revert to friendly casualness’ by saying: ‘No sweat if you don’t bring it [the boat] in on the dot’ (Updike 1995: 1160).

The distancing function of *sir* also comes into focus in a later scene in *Rabbit at Rest*, which describes an argument between Harry and a character called Lyle. Lyle has been hired by Harry’s son as the new accountant for Springer Motors, the family’s car agency. Harry (rightfully, as it turns out) suspects something has been going wrong with the finances after his retirement, so he asks Lyle to let him have a look at the books.

The usage of address terms by the two men in this scene (Updike 1995: 1244–1249) reflects their differing hierarchical standings: Whereas Lyle calls Harry *Mr. Angstrom*, Harry calls the accountant *Lyle*, just as described by Brown and Ford (1961) in their seminal study. However, Harry seems to be somewhat ill at ease with this arrangement, and in the course of the exchange asks Lyle to ‘call me

Harry' (Updike 1995: 1249). Rather than downgrading to FN address at this point, however, Lyle rejects this 'false claim to a solidary status' (Ervin-Tripp 1972: 231), and subsequently even upgrades to *sir*. Harry reacts by upgrading his own speech to *sir* address, too, which temporarily puts the two men on very formal, but equal, terms. Rather than conveying respect, *sir* here takes on a hostile, confrontational meaning.[6]

4.8 Terms of abuse

No small part of the charm of the *Rabbit* books derives from the fact that the protagonist is 'a character readers love to hate' (Pinsker 2006: 91). Given Harry's self-centeredness and his persistent antisocial behavior, it is perhaps not surprising that throughout the series he also becomes subject to various bouts of verbal abuse. Address terms that qualify for this category are *buster*, *fool*, *paleface*, *silly*, *stupid*, as well as the very special *sweet oh sweet sweet creep*. In addition, as can easily be confirmed in the lower lines of the table in the appendix, there is a whole arsenal of abusive constructions that start with *you* or *ya*, such as *you bastard* or *ya dummy* (Updike 1995: 12, 854). Not all of these are equally insulting, but as Dunkling (1990: 181) observes, 'a vocative beginning with "you" sets up an expectation of an insult, other things being equal'. To some extent this also holds for the (very rare) usage of a single vocative *you*, as when a friend of Harry's lover Ruth in *Rabbit, Run* tells him 'You're just a big clean-living kid, aren't you, you$_{\text{SF=Margaret}}$' (Updike 1995: 57).

The data include both well-established terms of abuse and 'nonce epithets' (Norrick and Bubel 2009: 39) created on the fly. For instance, at the funeral of Harry's long-time lover Thelma, her mourning husband Ronnie first throws him the standard phrase *you son of a bitch*, only to upgrade this to *you narcissistic cocksucker* a few moments later. The latter is clearly more makeshift – and definitely more to the point. As Ronnie continues, 'She wasted herself on you. She went against everything she wanted to believe in and you didn't even appreciate it'. Harry's attempt to refute this claim by saying 'I *did* appreciate her. I did. She was a fantastic lay' does not do much good either.[7] It earns him another term of abuse by the bereaved husband: 'You cocksucker' (Updike 1995: 1393, 1394, emphasis original).

A second feature of terms of abuse is their variety in force and underlying purpose. On the one hand, there are very strong and insulting terms with an unmistakable intention to offend. When Nelson, holding Harry responsible for the death of his friend Jill, calls him 'You fucking asshole, you've let her die. I'll kill you', he seems to mean it. This is evidenced by Harry's reaction: as though to defend himself from an imminent attack, he 'crouches and gets his hands up ready to fight' with his 13-year-old son (Updike 1995: 544).

[6] Derogatory use of vocative *sir(e)* or *sirrah* already occurs in Shakespeare's plays (Brown and Gilman 1989: 176) and even in *The Canterbury Tales* (Mazzon 2000: 149).

[7] Bailey (2006: 227) calls this Harry's 'most gratuitously insensitive assertion in the tetralogy'.

On the other hand, some of the things Harry is called are insulting only when taken literally. Lacking any real intent of abuse, they are what Dunkling (1990: 11) calls ‘covert endearments’. For instance, when during a conversation in *Rabbit at Rest* Janice calls her husband *silly* and *you big lunk* (Updike 1995: 1437, 1439), this may be slightly patronizing but does not contain any hard feelings. Incidentally, in the same exchange she also uses the more conventional endearment term *honey* (Updike 1995: 1438).

An even more drastic example is from Harry’s first night with his lover Thelma, after she has finally confessed her love to him. When Harry timidly asks her if she has really ‘liked me for a while’, her reply is: ‘Years. And you never noticed. You shit’ (Updike 1995: 998). Clearly, this ‘insult’ is not primarily intended to insult at all, but to lend emphasis to the extent that Thelma had secretly been adoring Harry. This aligns with Formentelli’s (2014: 77) observation that terms of abuse, in his film data, are frequently ‘employed by characters to express solidarity and even affection’.

5. Finding the right address

As described in section 2, one major topic in address term research is the binary distinction between a formal and an informal way of address. In English, this is normally expressed through a choice between title plus last name (TLN), the V form, as opposed to first name (FN), which is the corresponding T form. However, as human relationships are far more fine-grained than can feasibly captured using these two forms, there are bound to be borderline cases where neither V nor T feels quite right. The *Rabbit* books contain numerous such cases that allow for a closer look at this problem, both in interaction and as presented in the narrative. This second part of the analysis examines two examples in depth.

5.1 Reverend Eccles

Reverend Jack Eccles is the Episcopalian minister of Harry’s in-laws, the Springers, who ask him to keep an eye on Harry after he has first run away from home. This makes Eccles one of the main characters in *Rabbit*, *Run*. The reverend is ‘about his age or a little older’ than Harry (Updike 1995: 88) and, on account of his being a clergyman, higher in social status. But the two men also play golf together and develop a friendship that puts them on more equal terms. These differing coordinates of power and solidarity are played out in the way Harry and Eccles address each other.

Rabbit, Run contains a total of nine encounters between the two men. A tenth is added with a chance meeting during a bus ride in *Rabbit Redux*, a scene that was first cut and later restored by Updike (1995: xxiii). Figure 5 gives a quantitative overview of how Harry and Eccles address each other on each of these occasions. As in section 4, only vocative address has been included.

Encounter	Eccles calls Harry	Harry calls Eccles
1. On the street, Eccles' car (pp. 87–94)	-	-
2. Rectory, car, golf course (pp. 99–116)	FN (3)	-
3. Phone call (pp. 163–164)	FN (3)	-
4. Hospital (pp. 168–174)	-	-
5. Church (pp. 204–205)	-	-
6. Phone call (p. 230)	FN (2)	FN (1)
7. In-laws' (p. 233)	-	-
8. In-laws' (p. 241)	FN (3)	-
9. Funeral (pp. 253–254)	FN (2)	-
10. Bus (pp. 436–440)	FN (2) FN+LN (1)	TLN (1)
Sum	FN (15) FN+LN (1)	FN (1) TLN (1)

Fig. 5: Vocatives exchanged between Harry and Eccles

The figures illustrate that Eccles consistently calls Harry by his first name, but does not yet do so when they first meet, in encounter 1. In this scene he intercepts Harry outside his apartment and persuades him to visit him a few days later.

Encounter 2 starts with Harry's arrival at the rectory on the specified day, where he learns from Eccles' wife that her husband is taking a nap after a busy night of counselling. When she informs Eccles that there is a visitor, we hear him shout from upstairs 'Hello, Harry! I'll be right down' (Updike 1995: 102). Although from then on *Harry* is his default term, the scene illustrates that it takes Eccles some time – a first encounter without a vocative – and physical distance – he is shouting from upstairs without eye contact – to settle upon FN address.[8]

As for Harry, the data in Figure 5 show that he customarily does not use Eccles' first name. This concurs with Hook's (1984: 186) observation that clergymen in American society are normally exempt from the overall trend towards FN address. However, Harry does not use a more formal option such as *Reverend* (T) or *Reverend Eccles* (TLN) either. Instead he tries to avoid direct address as much as he can. One deviation from this pattern occurs in encounter 6, a phone call by Harry to Eccles. When the latter answers the phone, prototypically saying

[8] As one reviewer remarked, Eccles' use of FN at this early point can be construed as a salesman's strategy intended to strike a familiar tone with Harry, whom he sees as his 'customer'. There is some parallelism here with other characters in the novel framed as salesmen, including Jimmy, the 'big Mouseketeer' from the 1950 Walt Disney program, who appears on TV in an early scene in *Rabbit, Run* to sell wisdoms that are 'all a fraud, but what the hell' (Updike 1995: 10), Mr. Springer, with his 'car salesman's mechanical reflex of politeness' (Updike 1995: 172), and ultimately Harry himself.

‘Hello?’ without further identifying himself (Schegloff 1968: 1077), Harry is all but forced to use a vocative to make sure he is talking to the right person. In this situation, he goes for Eccles’ first name, asking, ‘Hey, Jack?’ (Updike 1995: 230). This scene suggests that, when forced, FN becomes Harry’s term of choice. Most of the time, however, he chooses not to choose.

Harry’s avoidance strategy also becomes apparent in his use of what could be called ‘surrogate vocatives’. For instance, when waiting with Eccles at the hospital while Janice is in labor, he soon becomes annoyed with the reverend’s fussing around. He eventually asks him: ‘Say, don’t you want to go home?’ (Updike 1995: 171). The imperative interjection *say* here has the same summoning function as a vocative, but it has the great advantage of avoiding a commitment to a specific address form. Harry uses the same trick again later in the scene, when he tells Eccles: ‘Look, you’ve done more than enough’ (Updike 1995: 177).

As these examples show, Harry goes out of his way to avoid directly addressing Eccles with a vocative. FN just feels too close, TLN too remote, and since there is no intermediate form, Harry opts for a ‘no-name’ address (Ervin-Tripp 1972: 222). Being in a ‘region of uncertainty’, as Brown and Ford (1961: 384) put it, he ‘avoids the use of any sort of personal name and makes do with the uncommitted omnibus *you*’.

A final scene of interest is encounter 10, where the paths of the two men unexpectedly cross again, about a decade after the events that first brought them together in *Rabbit, Run*. This is also when the somewhat unusual FN+LN address occurs. It seems to arise from a name-finding difficulty by Eccles, who approaches Harry during a bus ride in *Rabbit Redux* by asking him: ‘I *do* beg your pardon […] but aren’t you Harry–?’. The fact that he remembers *Harry* but struggles to come up with *Angstrom* further testifies to FN having been his default form of address in the past. When he finally manages to deliver Harry’s last name – ‘Angstrom, yes?’ – he seems so overwhelmed by the joy of recognition that he repeats the name in full: ‘Harry Angstrom. How very wonderful’. Harry on his part recognizes the clergyman by saying: ‘Hey, and you’re Eccles. Reverend Eccles’. His choice of address terms – LN followed by an upgrade to TLN – shows that for Harry, use of Eccles’ first name is not an option in this scene (Updike 1995: 437).

The subsequent parts of encounter 10 show the same pattern as before, with Eccles using *Harry* and Harry not using any vocative at all, but there is one important difference. Eccles in this scene takes the precaution of explicitly asking for Harry’s consent to use FN address:

> ‘Well, it’s rather curious, Harry. You don’t mind my calling you Harry? That all is beginning to seem as if it were only yesterday’. (Updike 1995: 439)

Although Eccles asks this question only after having factually used FN address already (and once even prior to the above extract, Updike 1995: 438), this indicates some new degree of uncertainty on his part. One likely reason is the

substantial amount of time that has elapsed since they last saw each other, which seems to call for some reconfirmation of the original address pattern. In addition, as Eccles will soon reveal, he is no longer a clergyman but does some odd counseling and PR jobs. His new occupational status could have made the former minister unsure if one-directional FN address is still appropriate.

A third reason is the homoerotic subtext that runs through the scene. Boswell (2001: 172) observes that even though Eccles’ homosexuality ‘is never commented upon directly, the attentive Rabbit senses something different about the new Eccles’ he meets in *Rabbit Redux*. This new Eccles’ use of FN could be a way to find out where he stands with Harry. Seen from this angle, Harry’s avoidance of FN address, even after he has been informed about Eccles’ new social status, makes it clear that he is not interested in getting any closer. ‘[A]mazing how that guy wants to cling, after all these years’, he wonders with a shiver, after getting off the bus (Updike 1995: 440).

5.2 Harry’s mother-in-law

The second case we will be looking into is the address term behavior between Harry and his mother-in-law. As in many families, Harry’s relationship with his in-laws is somewhat difficult. Early on in *Rabbit, Run*, the narrative voice already informs us that his wife’s parents, Fred and Rebecca Springer, ‘like to push you around’ (Updike 1995: 21). Updike specialist De Bellis (1988: 31) even speculates as to a possible allusion with the name *Springer* to dogs, which are ‘no friends of rabbits’. Be that as it may, the complicated relationship between Harry and his wife’s parents is to some extent reflected in their use of address terms. I will here focus on his mother-in-law.

The Springers own a car business which Harry will later take over as ‘chief sales representative’. After Harry and Janice’s house burns down, at the end of *Rabbit Redux*, they move in with the Springers and live there for about a decade, until the end of *Rabbit is Rich*. Fred unexpectedly dies in 1975, or, as Harry sees it, ‘make[s] space’ (Updike 1995: 624), but his mother-in-law continues to be a central character in the Angstrom family throughout the events depicted in *Rabbit is Rich*. She dies in 1982.

At the beginning of the series, Harry is 26 and has been married to Janice for just three years. In the few interactions with his in-laws depicted in *Rabbit, Run*, Harry never uses their names to address them but, just as with Reverend Eccles, makes do without any vocatives at all. His wife’s parents, by contrast, do address him directly. Mr. Springer consistently calls him *Harry*, whereas Mrs. Springer calls him *young man* in the hospital scene described in 4.7.

While Mrs. Springer is not part of the story in *Rabbit Redux*, she is back in *Rabbit is Rich*, now living with Harry and Janice. By then, Harry’s address behavior has dramatically changed. We notice this right in the first domestic scene in this third novel, where Harry comes home from work and learns from Janice that she and her mother have been having a fight. Insulted, Mrs.

Springer has retreated to her room on the second floor, so Harry calls to her from downstairs: ‘Hey Bessie, come on down! I’m on your side!’. Briefly afterwards, Mrs. Springer takes him up on this, complaining ‘You said you were on my side’. Harry reassures her, saying ‘I am, Ma, I am’ (Updike 1995: 659).

As we learn early on here, Mrs. Springer in *Rabbit is Rich* is no longer Harry’s ‘unaddressable’ mother-in-law, but, most likely due to the length of the marriage and their living together for so many years, Harry now uses two very intimate forms of address: Mrs. Springer’s nickname *Bessie* and the kinship term *Ma*. The same process of linguistic ‘familiarization’ between spouses and their in-laws has been documented in a number of empirical studies on the topic (Jorgenson 1994, Schneider 1980, Wilson & Zeitlyn 1995).

Due to the huge gaps between the novels, we cannot retrace how exactly Harry arrived at this intimate way of address, but one scene in *Rabbit is Rich* provides a few clues. When now 22-year-old Nelson brings home from college a girl called Melanie, who will move in with the Angstroms for the summer, Harry is taken aback when he notices the girl’s carefree use of FN address towards Mrs. Springer. Here are his thoughts when he first hears Melanie calling his mother-in-law *Bessie*:

> Harry didn’t know she calls the old lady by her first name. Took him years of living with her to work up to feeling easy about that, and it wasn’t really until after one day he had accidentally walked in on her in her bathroom, Janice hogging theirs. (Updike 1995: 708)

The change in Harry’s use of address terms can also be recaptured from two parallel scenes in *Rabbit, Run* and *Rabbit is Rich*. When Harry and Janice’s daughter is born, in the middle of *Rabbit, Run*, Janice thinks of naming the baby after her mother. When she tells her husband about this idea, the narrative voice informs us that ‘Harry never thinks of Mrs. Springer as having a first name. It is Rebecca’ (Updike 1995: 188).

Compare this to when two decades later, in *Rabbit is Rich*, Harry and Janice’s granddaughter is born. When Harry meets his friend Charlie Stavros briefly afterwards, he tells him that Nelson’s wife Pru, the baby’s mother, ‘doesn’t want to call it after her mother, she wants to name it after Ma. Rebecca’ (Updike 1995: 1013). The two scenes demonstrate that at the beginning of his marriage Harry is scarcely aware of his mother-in-law’s first name. 20 years on, he calls the same person *Ma* and has no problems whatsoever to refer to her by first name.

Another process the time-depth of the data brings to the fore is how Harry’s naming behavior changes internally, that is, how he calls his mother-in-law in his mind. Figure 6 gives an overview of the terms used to refer to Mrs. Springer in all narrative passages in the four books told from Harry’s point of view.

	Term used
Rabbit, Run (n=52)	Mrs. Springer (26) her [=Janice’s] mother (10) Others (16): his [Fred Springer’s] wife (3), Mrs. (2), the old lady (2), his mother-in-law (1), Ma Springer (1), mom-mom Springer (1), old lady Springer (1), the fat hag (1), you (1), you fat hag (1), you miserable nickel-hugger (1), you old gypsy (1)
Rabbit Redux (n=4)	her mother (3), Janice’s mother (1)
Rabbit is Rich (n=280)	Ma Springer (121) Ma (40) her mother (37) Bessie (28) the old lady (22) Others (32): his mother-in-law (7), old lady Springer (4), Mrs. Springer (4), his [=Nelson’s] grandmother (4), Bessie Springer (2), Janice’s mother (2), mother (2), the old woman (2), fat old Bessie (1), her mother Bessie (1), mom-mom (1), the old dame (1), the plump old lady (1)
Rabbit at Rest (n=46)	Ma Springer (26) Ma (8) Bessie (4) Others (8): Bessie Koerner Springer (1), Bessie Springer (1), dark plump old Bessie (1), his mother-in-law (1), his [Fred Springer’s] widow Bessie (1), old Bessie (1), the old lady (1), the tiny old lady (1)

Fig. 6: Terms of reference for Mrs. Springer used in Harry’s narrative

The list shows that the change in Harry’s use of address terms observable in direct interaction occurs in a similar way in his mind. In *Rabbit, Run*, the predominant term is the formal TLN, *Mrs. Springer*. For example, after his return to Janice he observes, somewhat ingenuously, that ‘Mrs. Springer is really quite warmhearted and seems to have forgiven him everything’ (Updike 1995: 234). A second term with some frequency is *her mother*, where the relationship is defined on the basis of Mrs. Springer being his wife’s mother, as in the intentionally repetitive ‘Janice comes down in a pinned-in black dress of her mother’s that makes her look like her mother’ (Updike 1995: 245).

By the time of *Rabbit is Rich*, Harry still occasionally thinks of Mrs. Springer as *her mother*. However, now the most common term by far is *Ma Springer* (‘Furious, he throws the magazine against the wall behind which Ma Springer sleeps’, Updike 1995: 667) or just *Ma* (‘Ma has that fanatic tight look about the cheeks women get when they hate one another’, Updike 1995: 752). Taken together, the changes in the two decades between *Rabbit, Run* and *Rabbit is Rich* reveal an increasing psychological closeness to his mother-in-law, from the stranger that happens to be his wife’s mother to the woman who becomes something like a real mother to him, too.

A final point to note is the large stylistic gap between the terms Harry uses, particularly in the earlier parts of the series. While, as we have established, *Mrs. Springer* is the default option, Harry’s narrative voice also uses various highly insulting terms. The following passage, from an early scene in *Rabbit, Run*, is

one such example. It depicts Harry pondering on whether to go to his own parents' house, where they are looking after little Nelson, or to first pick up the car at his in-laws' house, where Janice left it earlier that day when she went shopping with her mother.

> It would be quicker to walk over to Mrs. Springer's, she lived closer. But suppose she was watching out the window for him to come so she could pop out and tell him how tired Janice looked? *Who wouldn't be tired after tramping around trying to buy something with you you miserable nickel-hugger? You fat hag. You old gypsy*. (Updike 1995: 14, italics original)

In this most Rabbit-like stream of consciousness, he first refers to his mother-in-law as *Mrs. Springer*, followed by three neutral anaphoric references with *she*. But as often happens, Harry's emotions get the better of him, and so he begins insulting her with the terms *you miserable nickel-hugger*, *you fat hag*, and *you old gypsy*.[9] Note that, syntactically speaking, all three forms qualify as vocatives. The difference to the vocatives discussed in section 4 is that they are voiced only in the protagonist narrator's mind. The fact that there are no comparable 'vocative implosions' towards his mother-in-law in the narrative of the later books suggests that the availability of a more intimate manner of address, in direct interaction, prevents such inner outbursts of verbal violence.

6. Discussion

The analysis in the previous sections has outlined a number of factors that motivate address term choice in the *Rabbit* books. A first point with respect to vocatives is the sheer variety of expressions used in reference to the protagonist throughout his life. Apart from the two standard forms FN and TLN, with the former being much more common than the latter, there are nicknames, kinship terms, terms of endearment, familiarizers, generic terms, and a large assortment of terms of abuse. Many of the expressions are standard elements of the American address term system (e.g. *dad*, *honey*, *you son of a bitch*), while others are highly individualized terms that appear to be tailored for a given person (*Rabbit*) or purpose (*sweet oh sweet sweet creep*). Due to the time depth of the data, we can also observe how some address terms (e.g. *Hassy*) fall out of use, while others appear only in later years (*grandpa*).

In addition, we have come across several well-studied sociolinguistic phenomena that until now have hardly ever been examined in data from literary fiction. One of these phenomena is the fictive use of kinship terms, as when Janice refers to her husband as *grandpa* in front of the grandchildren. The data even provide a glimpse at the psychological complexities of processing and internalizing address term usage. As we have seen, it first takes Harry some effort to map the term *grandma* onto his wife. In later years, by contrast, he

[9] In a complementary scene in *Rabbit, Run*, Harry in his mind swears at his father-in-law in a similar way, calling him *you crumb* and *you slave* (Updike 1995: 172).

seems entirely at ease with being referred to, and referring to himself, as *grandpa* (see 4.4).

From an interactional point of view, we have seen how address terms can be used in an attempt to tilt a given situation in one’s favor, as when Harry asks Lyle to call him by his first name (4.7), or when he tries to appease Janice by calling her *honey* (4.5). Greg’s slip of the tongue when calling Harry *sir* (4.7) exemplifies how a ‘polite’ expression can convey the opposite of politeness. Similarly, we could observe how terms of abuse can be remade into terms of endearment, thus expressing closeness and even affection rather than hostility and contempt (4.8).

Section 5 has explored the complexities of finding an appropriate manner of address between adults. Focusing on two important side characters of the *Rabbit* series, a struggling minister and a cunning mother-in-law, the analysis has shown that FN address is a possible but risky option. Particularly when there are power differences, it may take a considerable amount of time to establish FN address. During this process, as is apparent in the interactions between Harry and Eccles, complete avoidance of vocatives may be a feasible option. As for Harry and his mother-in-law, the time-depth of the data makes it possible to retrace the overall process of linguistic familiarization between the two, as observable not only in the change of address terms in the dialogue but in narrative passages as well. Updike here lets us partake in the changing relationship through both Harry’s speech and his thoughts.

To develop this approach a little more systematically, this paper has used three textual resources for the study of address terms: syntactically free vocative forms, syntactically bound terms of reference, and meta-comments on a given form of address. In fictional data like those at hand, each of these can be studied both in direct speech and in the narrative. This yields a total of six dimensions of analysis, as summarized in Figure 7.

As the differing numbers of examples suggest, some dimensions appear to be easier to explore than others. Most frequent are vocatives in dialogues, of which in fact only a fraction of the examples from the analysis have been listed. By contrast, vocatives in the narrative constitute a very special case, and may not appear in a work of fiction at all.

Taken together, the six dimensions provide a multi-layered, diachronic picture of the various ways an individual is addressed or referred to in a society, and the many sociolinguistic factors that may come into play. Experiencing the story from Harry’s point of view, we can see how address terms indicate distance and intimacy, define and redefine social relationships, mark invisible lines that should not be crossed and are crossed all the same, invoke identities and reflect how these continue to change over time. The fact that, at the end of his long run, Rabbit feels so real to us, and perhaps more real ‘than any other fictional character of the latter half of the twentieth century’ (Schiff 1998: 28), is in part a result of Updike’s skillful use of address terms.

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In the Dialogues	Examples discussed
1. Vocatives	- Harry’s Jewish golf partners calling him *Angstrom*, with punctual shifts to *Harry* (4.2) - Nelson’s gradual shift from *daddy* to *dad* (4.4) - Jill’s mocking use of *daddy* and her subsequent switch to *lover* (4.4) - Janice calling her hospitalized husband *baby* instead of *honey* (4.5) - Harry’s mother-in-law calling him *young man* (4.7) - Lyle’s snubbing of Harry’s offer to call him FN (4.7) - Gregg accidentally treating Harry like an ordinary customer by calling him *sir* (4.7) - Janice’s use of *silly* and *you big lunk* as terms of endearment, Thelma calling Harry *You shit* when confessing her love to him (4.8) - Harry’s not calling Eccles by name (5.1)
2. Person-reference	- Charlie referring to Janice as *grandma*, Janice referring to Harry as *grandpa* (4.4) - Harry telling Charlie that they want to name his granddaughter ‘after Ma’ (5.2)
3. Meta-comments	- Harry confessing his surprise about a reencounter with Ruth, saying ‘Nobody ever calls me Rabbit’ (4.3) - Janice telling Harry to ‘quit it with the “honey”’ (4.5) - Harry’s offer to Lyle to ‘call me Harry’ (4.7) - Eccles asking for Harry's (re)permission to use FN (5.1)
In the Narrative	
4. Vocatives	- Harry internally swearing at his mother-in-law: ‘*You fat hag. You old gypsy*.’ (5.2)
5. Person reference	- Alternating use of *Harry* and *Rabbit* in the narrative, with increase of *Harry* as he gets older (4.3) - Harry’s narrative voice referring to himself as *grandpa* (4.4) - Harry’s changing reference when narrating scenes with his mother-in-law, from *Mrs. Springer* to *Bessie* and *Ma* (5.2)
6. Meta-comments	- Harry’s bewilderment about being called *Harold* by his cardiologist (4.1) - *Hassy* as a name of days long gone (4.1) - Harry’s annoyance about Janice’s increased use of *honey* (4.5) - Young Harry never thinking ‘of Mrs. Springer as having a first name’ (5.2)

Fig. 7: Six dimensions for studying terms of address in literary fiction

7. Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to demonstrate how works of literary fiction can be used as a resource for studying terms of address, and how terms of address provide novel ways of ‘access’ to a literary text. The analysis has concentrated on two points of interest. Section 4 has discussed the great variety of vocatives that are used in the *Rabbit* series to address the protagonist. In a second step, section 5 has explored two specific characters, how they address and are addressed by the protagonist, and how this changes over time.

It goes without saying that the data are not representative of American society as a whole, but necessarily blurred by the regional and socio-economic background variables of our male, middle-class WASP protagonist from the Northeast. An even larger qualification is that we are not dealing with language in real interaction but with fictive data. On the other hand, as I have hoped to show, data from literary fiction provide a unique perspective on address term usage that can enhance our understanding of the phenomenon in surprising and, in part, quite unexpected ways.

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Appendix: Complete list of vocatives used towards Harry (in alphabetical order)

Term of address	Frequency	Number of People
Ace	1	1
Angstrom	12	7
Baby	1	1
big brother	1	1
big Harry	1	1
Br’er Rabbit	1	1
brother	1	1
Buddy	1	1
Buster	1	1
champ	17	1
Chief	1	1
Chuck	39	1
Chuck Baby	2	1
Dad	200	1
Daddy	5	2
Darling	7	2
dear	2	2
fella	3	2
fine strong young man	2*	1
Fool	1*	1
friend	6	3
Friend Chuck	1	1
Friend Harry	5	2
good boy	1	1
Grandpa	30	2
Gunner	1*	1
Harold	8	1
Harry	515*	31
Harry Angstrom	4	3
Harry boy	1	1
Harry dear	2*	1
Harry old bunny	1	1
Harry sweet	1	1
Hassy	10*	2
hon	1	1
honey	18	3
hotshot	1	1
Lover	1	1
Man	36	4
Mr. Angstrom	18	13

my boy	1	1
my friend	6	3
my Rabbit	1*	1
old bunny	1	1
Paleface	1	1
poor Harry	2	1
poor thing	1	1
Pop	1	1
Pops	1	1
Rabbit	15*	4
Señor	1	1
Showboat	1*	1
Silly	2	2
Sir	6	6
sir, Whosie	1	1
Soldier	1	1
Son	1	1
Sport	1	1
Stupid	1*	1
Sweet	2	2
sweet oh sweet sweet creep	1	1
Sweetheart	1	1
Sweetie	4	1
the old master	1	1
white boy	1	1
white man	1	1
wonderful Harry Angstrom	1	1
ya dummy	1	1
ya jerkoff	1*	1
you	4	3
you baby-killing creep	1	1
you bastard	1	1
you big lunk	1	1
you chump	1	1
you cocksucker	1	1
you creep	1	1
you dope	1*	1
you dummy	1	1
you fucking asshole	2*	1
you goon	1	1
you honky prick	1	1
you jerk	1	1
you narcissistic cocksucker	1	1
you poor soul	1	1
you primitive father	1*	1
you shit	1	1
you son of a bitch	3	2
young fella	3	2
young man	2	2
your honor	1	1

*Includes instances of the following: written communication; delivered by unspecified group of people; reported in speech; in narrator's mind (remembered, imagined, dreamed).