Dr. Johnson once said:

“There are two things which I am confident I can do very well: one is on introduction to any literary work. Stating what it is to contain, and how it should be executed in the most perfect manner: The other is a conclusion, shewing from various causes why the execution has not been equal to what the author promised to himself and to the public”.

There is no need to make any such apologetic observations in this concluding part of the thesis. On the other hand, it can be safely asserted that some measure of success has been achieved in doing what we proposed in the introduction to do, namely, leaving the peripheral features and concentrating on universals in the fiction of Updike.

Updike’s treatment of the incest shows his concern for universal human traits. Incestuous fixations are shown to have very grave consequences, whether it is mother-son incest, father-daughter incest or brother-sister incest. The son views his father as a rival, competing for mother’s love and the daughter views her mother as a rival for father’s love.
The greatest harm done by incest is that the mother and the son, fixated on each other, deny each other an independent sex life. Also, the mother–fixated son prefers very old women to young ones, as the former act as surrogate mothers. In the same way, the father fixated daughter finds in very old men father-figures and prefers them to young men. Updike makes extensive use of dreams to bring into the open the incestuous fixations of his characters.

Some critics trace the mother-fixation found in the writings of certain writers (D.H. Lawrence is a typical example) to their personal experience. For lack of concrete biographical evidence, much of psychological approach cannot be tried in the case of Updike. Freud, and not his own personal problems, seems to be the source of much of his thinking about incest.

Adultery is shown to be caused by a number of sexual and non-sexual factors. The sexual inadequacies of one’s partner and one’s pre-marital sexual experience are two powerful sexual factors that are shown to promote adulterous connections. Childlessness, temperamental incompatibility, pity for a helpless person, the wish to take revenge, poverty, the spell cast by vivacious adoration – these are shown to be some non-sexual causes leading to adultery.

By exploiting the causes of adultery in depth, Updike shows his unwillingness to pass pat judgment on sinners. Adulterers are shown to be inhibited not only in the repressive Tamil Nadu but also in the permissive American Society.
Fear of being punished by God, of being found out by one's marriage partner and children, of being exposed to public scandal—adulterers are paralyzed by such fears. Weaklings in Updike unnerved by such obstacles, resort to such harmless enjoyment as sexual fantasy and ribald talk to satisfy themselves.

The impartiality of Updike is seen in the way he portrays not only the destructive but also the constructive effects of adultery. Families certainly crumble because of adulterous relationships. At the same time, the novelist shows that adultery gives an ecstatic sense of fulfilment and equate this feeling with the rapture felt by a mystic on union with God. Such fulfilment is shown to boost one's interest in one's vocation. Also, adulterers are shown to be in harmony with nature whereas pursuits are shown to be causing only havoc, with their stern disapproval of several lapses.

Updike considers various alternatives to the traditional monogamous pattern. Updike, accustomed to the sexual permissiveness in his country, toys with the idea of group marriage and wife swapping.

Updike is much more an artist than a propagandist attached to a particular bandwagon. He depicts both sides of the issues and explores with equal persuasiveness, without leaning towards any one side and conveying a palpable message. That is why he can show the virtues and weakness of both the rulers and the ruled, of both traditional moralists and anti-traditional libertiness.
Critics like John W. Aldridge bent up to present a one-sided representation of life and, disappointed with his depiction of life in all its roundness, complain that he" has nothing to any"1 The truth is that Updike has too many things to say which are contradictory to one another.

Updike cannot be confined to a particular niche. In this respect, he claims kinship with Walt Whitman who prized his multiplicity and contradictoriness:

"Do I contradict myself?

Very well then I contradict myself

I am large, (certain multitudes)" ²

Like Whitman, Updike also celebrates contradictory ideas of a society in which everyone would flow together in a loving ensemble, and of individuality. If one is asked to name the dominant note in the fiction of Updike one has to come to the conclusion that he prides self above society. He shows the problematical and ambiguous relationship of the self to patterns of all kinds – political, social, psychological.

This is a theme very much stressed by contemporary social anthropologists like Edward Hall whose influential book *The Silent Language* Points out that "man has no direct contact with experience per se but ...... there is intervening set of patterns which channel his senses and thoughts" ³ The contemporary Behavioural Psychologist John B. Watson also has insisted
that" the situation we are in dominates us always"^4.

The brilliant American linguist Benjamin Lee Word says that our thought processes are controlled and conditioned by the very language we inherit; "every language we inherit is a vast pattern system different from others, in which are culturally ordained the froms and categories by which the personality not only communicates, but also analyses nature, notices or neglects types of relationship and phenomena, chennals his reasoning and builds the house of his consciousness".\(^5\)

Updike follows these contemporary trends and exalts the self above society. The vision that remains constant in his fiction is a vision of the sacred self, a strong, indestructible sense of identity that is life's most treasured possession. He fervently wishes that the individual should survive sui generis, uniquely, outside the decorums of society.

Since Updike has gained a wide range of technical and thematic achievements, it is difficult to classify him among contemporary American writers. His themes deal with the splitting of man, which bring forth man's duality. At the same time, when the spiritual potential of man is lost, as it is in Rabbit Redux, we do have as protagonist who has a sense of self Updike's dualism separates him technically from those contemporary artists for whom the external world is doubtful. Unlike his contemporary novelists, Updike creates his characters not only as themselves, but also as representatives of
a society. His fiction holds a mirror to the contemporary reality in the United States of America.

The full thematic implications of the novel Poorhouse Fair revolve around the use of sight as the one unifying symbol. Devotion to the material world by good works is connected with a physically perfect sight which, like a scientist, divides and differentiates by paying attention to details. Experimental evidence is all there when sight is confined to this world. Conner is created in the novel to demonstrate this divine devotion to the physical. It's an irony that he cannot see the ultimate God who can be seen by Hook, the old man with a failing eyesight. Conner works for bodily comfort and reduction of physical suffering. The total focus of religion is shifted to the body as a substitute. Updike adopts a similar theme in his future novel Couples.

Updike's writing is predominantly symbolic whatever he wants to impart to his readers, he imports through the use of symbols. The passage in The Poorhouse Fair in which Lucas chases an bird is clearly symbolic. He chases the escaped parakeet and returns it to its cage in the poorhouse. The bird is the traditional symbol of soul, the caging of it is denying the soul's freedom. The old man who sees Lucas chase the bird into his room, compares the bird to a flower, and Lucas to a bear because it is towards the animal that Lucas' way of life leans. Lucas does the job of caring for the hogs at the poorhouse. The work is given by Conner, the only inmate with a job to help Conner's management. Again Updike has used the hogs as symbols. He tells us that
any person who is fully devoted to the body, who insists on caging the soul, is only like a pig.

So, we see that Updike is sad about the changing conditions, of the world, changing ideals of the people. He depicts a world in *The Poorhouse Fair* in which all religious and spiritual ideals are fading away. The people who live in the poorhouse, are the last representatives, old and dying, of a way of life that is informed by the spirit. As a matter of fact, meaning and the metaphor cannot be easily separated. The images which Updike depicts in the novel may be divided into two groups, one group consisting of those depicting the superiority of the past, the spiritual way of life, the other group depicting the limitations of the contemporary society, concentrating on the physical happiness, and denying the spiritual values.

Updike portrays the first group of images to maintain the spiritual superiority of the American past which fulfilled God's purpose. Updike is unhappy to notice that we are drawing further and further away from that fulfillment. Many of the symbols combine Christian and cultural historical references eg. Wood stands as a symbol of a combined religious past since Christ was a carpenter and an American cultural port in which the careful craftsmanship of the earlier carpenters is most obviously displayed in Andrew's mansion. For Hook, carpentry in a holy profession demonstrating a fulfillment of God's purpose for man, and he often uses wood and woodwork
as parallel to spiritual values:

‘As to being a carpenter it has often struck me that there is no profession so native to holy and constructive emotions or so appropriate for god-made flesh to assume’ (p.100).

Updike maintains that in the contemporary world, wood is replaced with metal, which again is used as a symbol.

The theme is presented again in *The Centaur* (1963). As the title of the novel suggests, Updike takes the help of some archetypes from Greek mythology to put his ideas forth, which also help him to continue with the use of symbols.

In Greek mythology, there were three generations of Gods. Centaurs were recognized as a branch of this family who were known as half man and half horses. Out of these Chiron, an immortal Centaur once had a war with his forefathers and other gods, so it was a war in the family. During the war, Chrion, the noblest and the wisest of the Centaurs, was painfully wounded in his foot, and yet he was unable to die since he was gifted like other gods, with immortality. In bitter pain, he prayed to his father who then told him that he could die if he gives his immorality to somebody else.

As it is known Prometheus had introduced the use of fire to man. Since Prometheus had been good and kind to mankind, Chiron gave up his immortality on behalf of Prometheus. In the retelling in the novel of John Updike, Olympus becomes Illinger High School, Chiron – a teacher of General
Science, Mr. George W. Caldwell, and Prometheus – his 15 year old son, Peter Caldwell.

Updike is very sad to notice that in the contemporary society, materialism has over-shadowed spirituality and that we have lost our past, the high vision of life. Any good human being would like to follow the spiritual path in life, but since the circumstances and environment of men are entirely changed, to be a successful person in life, one has to be practical and follow materialism. According to the writer, our souls are dead now. Though it is believed and well known that soul is immortal and hence it cannot be cut or burnt or destroyed in any other way, yet man has so much changed that he lives only with his physique without caring for his soul. He does not visualize the significance of high vision and spirituality, as he is so hectic in earning all the luxurious comforts of life.

Thus the novel focuses on the relative importance of spiritualism and materialism in life. Updike, through the character of Mr. George Caldwell, emphasizes that in this imperfect world materialism defeats spiritualism. Without compromising between both, man cannot survive in this world.

Like Updike, we have a group of American novelists who do retain a belief in imaginative fiction, and at the same time recognize the existence of an external reality, or particularly a social reality. Among these novelists, Oates, Malamud, Johan Gardner and Bellow seem to be the closest among the contemporary American novelists to Updike. They all share a common belief and also have a commitment to the art of story telling.
Updike and Oates are similar in their strong emphasis on realistic existence, their fidelity to the ordinary events and details of day to day existence, their choice of protagonists of humble origin, and their focus of domestic situations. Though both the writers have plenty of similarities, yet we find an essential difference in their fiction. This difference again emerges from Updike’s duality, his constant belief in the spiritual as well as the physical world.

The world presented in Oates’ fiction is entirely earthly, and hence without hope of redemption. This difference between Updike’s fiction and Oates’ gives a higher place to Updike in the world of modern fiction. Updike’s superior grasp of details of this world also gives him a superior place when his fiction is compared to that of Malamud’s.

We find similarities in Updike’s and Gardner’s fiction also. Like Updike Gardner also gives importance to the spiritual dimension and the commitment to the past as a combined aesthetic and philosophical model. Gardner, like Updike, lavishes great artistic care in building his plots. But the difference between these authors lies in the fact that Updike is much more concerned with sexual experience. He also uses the sexual experiences and activities as the focal point of imagery in his novels. Gardner lacks this special quality in his fiction. He makes no symbolizations of sexual activities to present his philosophical ideas.

If we compare Updike’s fiction with that of Bellows, we will find many similarities. Bellows’ fiction resembles Updike’s more than that of any other
contemporary novelist. Both the writers have a similar commitment to artistic care and integrity. They also give importance to contemporary history, and the individual being and his place in society. They often connect their story to the domestic background.

But, as we have found Updike’s fiction different from that of any other contemporary novelist, we find it different from Bellow’s fiction also. The main difference lies in the expectations concerning the physical scene which they describe, and in the social setting in which their protagonist live. Bellow’s protagonist always hope for the best, and thus they become victims of their own expectations. They experience a certain innocence of expectation. Their unrealistic and impractical expectations and hopes ultimately lead them to disillusionment and the resultant frustration. Though his protagonists are full of human feelings, Bellow assests the unfeelingness of contemporary American society.

Updike’s protagonists lack this innocence of expectations, of course with the exception of George Caldwell. Since Updike’s protagonists do not expect for the best, they do not become victims of their expectation. On the contrary, Updike’s protagonists make others their victims, all the while wrestling with their feeling of guilt. It is always a vaguely defined guilt, like the sense of responsibility which Rabbit feels at the end of Rabbit is Rich.

It has been pointed out by critics that Updike’s Couples contains many echoes of Hawthorne’s The Blithedale Romance. Of course, both the novels deal with experiments in communal living and in both the novels the
experiments end in a fiasco. But the two experiments have vastly different aims. The Blithedaleans want to establish a socialistic community where every one works and all share the profits. The Tarbox couples in Updike’s novel, on the other hand, try to practice group sex. But both the projects fail because of human selfishness. Hollingsworth’s selfishness breaks up the Blithedalen community. To quote A.N. Kaul,

“(Hollingsworth) is brutal in personal relations and dishonest in public ones, laying his purposes deep, and following them out with an inveteracy of pursuit that knew neither rest nor conscience: trampling on the weak, and, when essential to his ends, doing his utmost to beat down the strong”

The Updikean’s attempt at group sex also fails because of their jealously and possessiveness. Georgene is jealous of Foxy’s hold on Piet and breaks up their affair by informing Foxy’s husband about it. Ken Whitman and Angela are both too narrow-minded to forgive their adulterous spouses. Eddie Constantine is a jealous monster and gets his wife’s lover sacked from service and sent out of Tarbox. There are a few other reasons for break-up of the community, such as the guilty feeling of the couples, and their fear of God’s wrath and of public criticism. But the selfishness of the couples is the major cause of the disruption of the community.

There is a faint resemblance between Hawthorne’s Priscilla and Updike’s Angela. Both the women are incapable of violent passion. But,
where as in *Blithedale* the passionless woman is sought after by both Coverdale and Hollingsworth, in *Couples* it is the passionate Foxy who is preferred by Piet to the passionless Angela. This shows that the sexual atmosphere has vastly changed in America from what it was in Hawthorne’s time. People have come to accept stark sexuality as a part of life and no longer shudder at it. The passionate Zenobia, dreaded and scorned by all men, becomes disappointed and commits suicide. Foxy of the Updike world does not have to die. She leaves her passionless husband and settles down to a comfortable life with the passionate Piet.

Dr. B.D. Sharma bluntly compares *Couples* with *Blithedale*, stating that in both the novels communitarian life breaks down. He does not give due recognition to the fact that the Updike world gives more freedom to passionate women than the Hawthorne world. In the matter of treating sexual problems also, Updike is vastly different from Hawthorne. Hawthorne is too squeamish to bring to light the nature of the dubious relationship between Westervelt and Zenobia. But Updike discusses all kinds of sexual aberrations with a coolness that would have shocked Hawthorne. Updike might have borrowed a few elements from Hawthorne, but his attitude towards sexual freedom and treatment of sexual problems are strikingly different from Hawthorne’s.

Critics like Larry B. Taylor have suggested that Updike’s *Rabbit, Run* would have been derived from Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye*. But, as in his re-working of the Blithedalean project to suit his different vision and
different environment, Updike's version of the quester motif is radically different from Salinger's. Holden, in Salinger's novel, more sensitive and idealistic than the boys around him, leaves his prep school, and gets involved in disgusting New York high-life. Finally he ends up in an institution recovering from an illness, probably a mental breakdown. As Donald Heiney and Lenthiel H. Downs say, "Salinger's ending promises no happy future for Hoden, and leaves him still struggling with the muddle of his adolescent temperament."

There is a world of difference between what Holden seeks and what Rabbit does. Holden, like most idealistic adolescents, shrinks from sex. He feels a strong revulsion at the physicality of the human condition. He is disgusted with the mossy-looking teeth, pimpled face, and stinking room of Ackley. He recoils from Antolini for the physicality of his approach. As James B. Miller, Jr., says, Holden does not realize that "physicality is a phenomenon of all human relationships, all human situations, by their very nature of being human". His "is a quest to preserve an innocence that is in peril of vanishing — the innocence of childhood, the spotless innocence of a self horrified at contamination in the ordinary and inevitable involvements of life. In another sense, the quest is a quest for an ideal but unhuman love."

It is in this matter that Rabbit glaringly differs from Holden. Rabbit is attracted towards sex as much Holden is repelled by it. It seems Rabbit cannot think of anything without associating it with sex. Even the rhododendron flowers in Mrs. Saith's garden remind him of the kind of
unsophisticated girls he would like to have sex with. It is not sexual varietism alone that he seeks. He seeks a genuine religious faith (not the kind of lip-homage that his wife and others pay), a fulfilling job (not his selling kitchen gadgets and used cars, which is nothing but cheating buyers) and an exciting life (the kind of life he led as a star basket ball player before his marriage). These unattainable things that Rabbit seeks make him a very complex, multi-dimensional character. Compared with him, Holden appears very thin and shadowy. Updike has chosen just one element from Salinger's novel, the quest motif, and elaborated upon it to suit his complex vision.

Updike's novels are unique in the sense that they raise points of debates among his readers for the meaning of goodness, and the nature of morality. His constant concern and reliance on symbolism is often ambivalent. His novels are deeply concerned with Christianity and man's need for a steadying faith. Yet he refuses to equate religion with the traditional morality of totems and taboos. More often, he protests, man has to break the traditional codes of morality to visualize the spiritual reality. Like Hawthorne, he looks to the past to clear the meaning of the prevalent moral concepts. Like Hawthorne, he also relies on a metaphoric vision, and emphasizes artistic care and integrity.

But again we find Updike with his own qualities, the qualities which are foreign to Hawthorne's fictions. We see that the burden of realistic details lies more heavily on Updike's shoulders, and that his metaphoric vision brings forth the importance of contemporary history, and that of the physical work.
Howthorne wrote romances to sustain a vision of the American past which did not succumb to the pressure and importance of the contemporary society, while Updike has a peculiar strength of creating a present based on the past. Updike's *A Month of Sundays* is the best example of his thematic as well as technical independence. It would not be exaggeration to say that in American Literature we neither have had an Updike in the past, nor will we have one in the future.

We have seen that Updike is a writer who attempts to focus upon the duality of man's life, Spiritualism versus Materialism. But every time he closes his novel in a sad mood because he finds that in the present circumstances, man fails to be a spiritual being. To live his life, one has to be mundane, at least, to some extent. Thus in *Of The Farm* he leaves back the spiritual past of life and commences his novel with a note of moralism. He also outgrows the mythology used rather extensively in *The Centaur*.

It is also his first novel in which the male protagonist has entirely accepted the domination of women. In Updike’s novels, being tied to women is being tied to this world. Updike’s women seldom feel that the spiritual searching is the need for myth, the yearning for belief in another world that his man are constantly attempting to realise. Most of them lack the difficult duality, that tense opposition between body and spirit, that attraction towards the other world as well as this, which Updike’s male protagonists feel. His female characters are primarily physical, closer to the world of nature and more comfortable with their physicality.
The domination of Updike's women over men brings about the male's rejection of his spirituality and the religion, or myth. His partial physicality and the woman's total physicality make him abandon his yearning for the other world. Men's relationship with women leads men to the physical world which, in Updike, women represent. Thus, desire for women is at once the barrier to spiritual fulfillment and the means to physical fulfillment in men.

Updike seems to assert that man's duality – spiritualism Vs materialism – makes him the whole man. Hence, his portrayal of Joey Robinson as 'half-a-man'. In him there is not tension between physical and spiritual needs. He is entirely physical person committed to this world.

Updike has written here about the permissive society, a society in which everything is permitted. There remains no shame, no religion and no mortality. People are absolutely frank about their affairs, as Updike portrays in Couples married men and women openly keep mistresses and lovers. Families break easily. The very name of the place in the novel suggests the theme – Tarbox which means a box filled with tar i.e., place where nobody is spotless or immaculate, every body is black and the couples living in Tarbox have affairs among themselves making their married lives and children unhappy.

Updike's Marry Me (1976) reinforces his perennial thesis that man is pulled by opposite forces of materialism and spiritualism, and in this struggle for the human soul it is the earthly concerns that overwhelms the indefinable longing for the sky. Simply told, it is the story of Jerry Conant, an artist who
has killed his artistic urge to keep a well-paying administrative job. He is married to a clergyman's daughter, Ruth and has three young children Johanna, George and Geoffrey. In the shallow socializing circle of 'yuppies' in Greenwood, he meets and falls in love with Sally Mathias, a married woman who is gorgeously pretty. Their affair runs smoothly for a few months before he has to face the reality on the ground and choose between his family and his mistress.

Nervous and thematic, Jerry is torn between his love and his sense of duty. His wife and Sally's husband, Richard, also have a short clandestine affair, unknown to him. Tossed, between his beloved and his wife, the miserable Jerry has to choose between a secure continuity and an uncertain liaison with a dream woman. After many vacillations and escapades, Jerry comes back to his wife and children.

The post-modern authors are discovering new perspective in literature. Major modern novelists are adopting and presenting a culture to their readers which distrusts and often rejects the framework of beliefs upon which literature has been traditionally based. The contemporary writer finds a cultural part which lacks meaning in the present, and the traditional fiction modes which are no longer adequate. Rejecting the traditional thematic and technical basis, a modern writer relies more on the self. Hence the literature of today is as varied as the individuals creating it, and it would be little wonder of this isolated literature disappears gradually.
However, John Updike enjoys a distinctive position among the contemporary American authors, specially because his novels are so different. His novels are distinctive technically as well as thematically. The mode and meaning of his novels present a style of his own.

As we have seen through the preceding chapters Updike’s primary theme is the duality of a sensitive man pulled in two different directions by his earthly concerns and his spiritual urges. The debate between the physical and spiritual aspects of human existence is sometimes carried on by try two different characters representing the two view-points (as in *The Poorhouse Fair* and *Marrying Me*), or the protagonist (As in the Rabbit Quartet).

Updike draws widely on history, religion, philosophy and mythology to illustrate and elaborate the debate with wide-ranging metaphors and imagery. In his writing career of nearly 30 years, ranging from *The Poorhouse Fair* (1958) to *The Witches of Eastwick* (1984), Updike has not really been able to resolve this conflict as the two levels of consciousness seem to be inherently opposed to each other. However, a sort of compromise between the physical and spiritual longings seem to have been worked out in what is Updike’s most satisfying novel today, namely *A Month of Sundays*.

Updike emphasizes the role of spiritual longings in shaping the personality of a sensitive human being. Yet his obsession with spiritualism as a necessary prerequisite for a perfect life does not lead him to a negative of physical life. Physical reality, bodily desire and sexual pleasures are as integral a part of Updike’s world as God, religion and theology. His novels
throb with earthly life, the life of action. They are never vague and anemic like the works of modern psychological novelists who sacrificed all action for the sake of internal monologues and moral dilemmas.

Updike harmonises the internal world of meditation with the external world of action, and this is his special feature as a novelist. Although he has experienced with the supernatural phenomena in some of his stories, Updike usually keeps his feet firmly planted on the ground and meets the real world four-square. He believes, and makes his readers believe, in the existence of a mundane life that follows the diurnal round.

Updike's greatness as a novelist is that he does not believe in non-existence or nothingness of human beings. That is why he is not inclined to write romances like those of the other contemporary authors. His novels are more mythical than anything else. When we look at the contemporary novels in relation to Updike's, we find certain definite distinctions. Updike presents a framework of his beliefs and traces the roots back to Fielding, which are perpetuated by Sterne. If we look back to Fielding's novels we will find that they are built on a framework of mythic references. We will also find a familiarity between the author and the reader in Fielding's, as well as in Sterne's novels. Similarly, Updike also uses the mythic references, and directly addresses his readers.

Updike is greatly concerned with the past, and he used the mythic past very frequently. But in using it he is different from his contemporary writers because instead of looking to the past for aesthetic models, Updike looks to it
for a cultural and religious model. He looks to the past in context to the present. He feels that by looking or forgetting the past, man will forget the higher values of life which he wants to regain in his mind as well as in his reader's. By presenting a model of the past, Updike tries to present the dualism of man, and makes us feel our present dwarfishness.

The thematic innovations and stylistic devices make Updike's novels unique in the whole range of contemporary American fiction. He has a commitment to the external reality, and also committed himself to character and plot in a way that is foreign to his contemporary writers. Updike's dualism determines the nature of for technical experimentation in his novels. His hold on external reality helps him depict events and characters convincingly. It is customary with Updike to make his readers a part of his story, and hence the narrator is not merely a character in his novels.

He presents his plot and characters in a unique way, in as much as the exchanges his view with his readers. Except of The Centaur, Of the Farm and A month of Sundays the narration is always in third person, with the variation in the four Rabbit novels of using the present tenses. This is why in most of Updike's novels, the narrator is nothing less than reliable.

Updike's presentation of an interaction between the narrator and the reader creates an illusion of spontaneity. At the same time is couple of Updike's novels there is no close relationship attempted between the reader and the narrator, and the novels have been presented to the reader as complete works of art. In The Centaur though Peter Caldwell is the narrator
from first to the lost page of the novel, he nowhere directly addresses his readers. He moves from the first person to the third, and from third to the first, with an uncertainty concerning the meaning of the story he is telling. On the contrary, in *A Month of Sundays*, an intimate connection is established between the narrator and readers, and hence the narrator is discouraged or encouraged by the response of Ms. Prynne, or the lack of it.

Updike is what to be called a 'Wit'. He has some old-fashioned humour to recommend him. But he has also a habit of yoking incongruous ideas violently together. He writes like an angel, though an angel who knocked around a bit. What he gets to work on more regularly are full frontals, oral sex, and the other components of late 20th century playtime and breathing life into these Worn Wares is a challenge even for him.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


2. Walt Whitman,


5. Benjamin Lee Word,
