Introduction
INTRODUCTION

John Updike remarked in a 1968 interview that 'nothing that happens to us (novelists) after the age of twenty is as free from self-consciousness, because by then we have the vocation to write -- writer's lives break into two halves. At the point you get your writerly vocation you diminish your receptivity to experience'.\(^1\) In a 1974 address he returned to this conviction and elaborated upon it by saying:

A writer begins with his personal truth, with that obscure and vulnerable and, once lost, previous life that he lived before becoming a writer: but those first impressions discharged - a process of years - he finds himself though empty. still posed in the role of a writer, with it may be an expectant audience of sorts and a certain habit of communion. It is, then that he dies as a writer, by resubmitting his ego, as it were to fresh drafts of experience and refined operations of his mind. To remain interested of American novelists, only Henry James continued in old age to advance his art, most indeed, wrote their best novels first, or virtually first. Energy ebbs as we live ... almost alone the writer can reap profit from his loss.\(^2\)

---

Updike's remarks resonate with a personal ring, for a retrospective look at his writing career discloses his career broken into two halves. Updike now has been a professional writer for more than four decades. His first decade's work mostly records the strife, observation and feeling of a pre-twenty young man whose nostalgic recollections of boyhood are transmuted by an adults' imagination and youthful biography is altered into art. In his Foreward to Olinger Stories 1964, he characterised his early stories as 'crystallizations of memory', a most apt description of stories collected in The Same Door (1959) and Pigeon Feathers (1962) collections. But it is also an important designation for his novels, not only for the most obviously autobiographical The Centaur (1963) and Of the Farm (1965) but even for the futuristic The Poorhouse Fair (1959) and others. As he later remarks, "I was full of Pennsylvania thing I wanted to say" and it is evident that the Pennsylvania thing of his youthful memory informs almost all the fiction of 1955-65 decade.

The Olinger of Updike's stories is evidently the Shillington, Pennsylvania, where Updike himself grew up. Some of the early short stories during this period

figure a young boy as the protagonist who is, in fact, an alter ego of Updike himself. Like Peter Caldwell's father in *The Centaur*, Updike's father too was a High School teacher and Updike himself, as one can guess from his stories, was the brightest boy in the local high school. From the age of twelve, he had a strong ambition to be on the staff of the *The New Yorker* Magazine. His aspirations were constantly encouraged by his mother, who was herself an aspiring writer. Updike's aspirations were rewarded when he got a scholarship for Harvard from where he graduated Summa cum Laude in English literature. During his graduation he got an opportunity to be on the Editorial Board of Harvard Lampoon to which he contributed frequently as a cartoonist. He had not yet given up his early ambition that he shared with Peter to become a painter, and after Harvard, he spent a year at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art in London on a Knox scholarship. In 1955, he came back to New York and embarked upon his literary career with "Friends from Philadelphia", the first story that he sold to *The New Yorker* in 1955. He worked with *The New Yorker* for two years doing pieces for "The Talk of the town" column as well as writing short stories and poems. In April 1957, he left *The New Yorker* to write full time and moved to Ipswich, Massachusetts.
Aware of the tendency among some critics to dismiss *The Centaur* and many of his short stories as little more than surrogated glimpses of the past, Updike defends it as an honoured tradition in American tradition. "I'm still running on energy laid down in childhood .... I really don't think I'm alone among writers in caring about what they experienced in the first 18 years of their life. Hemingway cherished the Michigan stories out of proportion, I would think to their merit. Look at Twain, Look at Joyce. Nothing that happens to us after twenty is as free from self consciousness because by then we have the vocation to write.\(^4\)

One key to *The Centaur*, however, is not the reverie of childhood but homage to the parent. Updike’s belief in the mystery of the quotidian, in the always surprising variety of the everyday life explains his preference for verisimilitude in art. A child of the Great Depression, Updike is aware of what he calls ‘the despair of the daily’. ‘One suspects ... that it’s good to be alive, that there is much more beauty around us than we ever notice, that existence is charged with goodness. Yet even though one isn’t willing to die, life still, day by day, often seems

monotonous and long'.

Updike’s father Wesley Updike had to live the long monotony. Forced into high school teaching by the economic distress of the Depression, he nevertheless, held his family together inspite of the despair of every day and his conviction that he was unsuited for the special demands that Public Schools place on their teachers. One result was that the son watched the father resolve to live even though he sensed the shrinking of his spirit and the deterioration of his body. One of the reasons for Updike’s workman like habits, given by himself, is the example of his father, who despite his hardwork could not earn enough for his family. The reason Updike leads a strictly measured life is that perhaps unconsciously he fears a return to the bad old days.

Time and again Updike mentions his father’s suffering during the years that frame the novel. ‘The main motive force behind The Centaur would be some wish to make record of my father. There was the whole sense of having for fifteen years watched a normal, good doing Protestant man suffering in a kind of comic but real way’. And ‘The Centaur was to some extent

5. Howard, p. 76.
motivated by the idea that my father was an economic victim and more specifically that Public High School was a kind of baby sitting service in which people at their most vital were caged with these underpaid keepers of which he was one; so there was some social idea that went with my psychological impression of him as a suffering man. Updike realised that one way to tell his father’s tale was to view it from the perspective of classical myth, especially the Chiron version of the Hercules saga which is one of the few classic instances of self-sacrifice. Updike has written about the same figure in shorter, more conventional ways, for example in the short stories Tomorrow and Tomorrow and So Forth, Home and the poem Leaving Church Early but none has the imaginative richness of The Centaur.

Updike’s another important autobiographical novel Of the Farm seems to be a sequel to The Centaur. The homage in this novel is to the mother and the son is here called Joey Robinson. Quite like Updike’s ambitious mother, Joey’s mother, now

widowed, had wanted him to be a poet, but his talent and his Harvard education have led him only to a job as a specialist in advertising dollar distribution. Although, his own father is dead, Joey’s memories of him indicate that the myth of The Centaur reverberates in this tale too. Updike has himself acknowledged the connection between his autobiography and the novels The Centaur and Of the Farm, thus he indirectly supports the suggestion that Joey has taken up Peter’s pen. ‘I suppose there’s no avoiding it - my adolescence seemed, interesting to me. In a sense my mother and father, considerable actors both, were dramatising my youth as I was having it so that I arrived as an adult with some burden of material already half formed. There is true, a submerged thread connecting certain of the fictions and I guess the submerged thread is the autobiography--- Of the Farm was in part a look at the world of The Centaur after the centaur had indeed died’.\textsuperscript{11}

By comparing Updike’s interviews with his fiction and stories, we find that much of his fiction is thinly disguised autobiography. Whether we read them in The Centaur or in The Dogwood Tree (A Boyhood reminiscence), Assorted Prose, whether the hero is

\textsuperscript{11} Pick-up Pieces, p. 497.
called Allen Dow, Clyde Behn or John Updike, the facts are always the same. The 'genius' of his mother, Updike has written, 'was to give people closest to her mythic immensity'. Similarly Updike uses his family to construct a myth of parents and children.

Updike wrote the Foreword to Olinger Stories in 1964 with the intention of saying farewell to Pennsylvania and to his boyhood memories. After the novel Of the Farm, his favourite fictional locale moves from Pennsylvania to New England and his themes no longer reflect boyhood recollections but adult concerns. In the decade 1965-76 the tensions of marriage, the process of dying, and the varied loses of faith-religious, political, sexual became his central themes. However, he himself observed that 'the difference between Olinger and Tarbox is much more than the difference between childhood and adulthood than the difference between two geographical locations. They are stages on my pilgrim's progress not dots on a map.'

The years 1964-66, therefore, mark an important transitional stage in Updike's progress and so are crucial for a comprehensive understanding of his


writing career. *The Music School* collection holds a distinctive place in Updike's writings because it contains several stories that in addition to more familiar Updike themes, deal with the issues of artistic self-consciousness and the act of composition itself. In the story *The Bulgarian Poetess*, published in March 1965, Updike created a spokesman who would explicitly engage these issues, Henry Bech. Later these stories were compiled and published in book form, *Bech: A Book* and later in a second series, *Bech Is Back* and recently in a third volume *Bech At Bay*. Of these stories, Updike said, "... at any rate, I have used the writer in *Bech: A Book* as a subject in order to confess sterility in a truthful way.... In my book, I tried to -- and I believe I did package and dispose of a certain set of tensions and anxieties which I have as a practising writer." Updike not only transmuted his own anxieties as a writer through Bech but also found an outlet for his experience of visiting Russia, Bulgaria and Romania.

*Midpoint*, though a lesser known work, is another milestone in Updike's career in which he sets forth his outlook on life and art. In 1968, having first passed his thirty fifth year, the midpoint of the traditional

Biblical span of three score years and ten, John Updike undertook the writing of a long poem which would evaluate his life and set forth the framework in which he envisioned to live and write. The poem was largely ignored when it was published and has received little attention since. Nevertheless, the poem has a serious purpose despite its seemingly light and satiric tone and deserves attention as a central document in a consideration of Updike's development as a writer. In an interview first published in 1972, Updike said, 'when asked about what my philosophy was, I tried to write it down in *Midpoint*....'*15 The philosophical and theological concerns, which are an integral part of the poem, offer an insight into the underlying intent of Updike's novels from *The Poorhouse Fair* (1959) to *In the Beauty of the Lilies* (1996). The commitments Updike sets forth in his poem provide the screens through which we may sift the complexities of his seventeen novels. Throughout the five cantos Updike reveals that he is committed to the centrality of the reality of the material world, and a life of mystery and faith. In the poem, he clearly aligns himself to the theology of Kierkegaard and Karl Barth and sings praises for them.

In Updike's less autobiographical fiction, themes from the *Olinger Stories* recur in various forms. Instead of personal nostalgia, there is a nostalgia for pre-urban America. The dominant characters in the later fiction are old men or young ones who feel at odd against the modern world. Instead of the efforts to capture one's past, there is a quest for permanence that involves religion.

*The Poorhouse Fair* (1959) is quite unusual for a first novel, but it has the germs of Updike's mental and spiritual concerns which were later explored in his novels especially *The Scarlet Letter* trilogy. It is set 20 years in future and is written as an anti *1984*. In this novel, there is an ongoing debate between Conner, the prefect of the old age home, who in fact, stands for the humanist approach to life, and Hook, the ninety four year old protagonist who shares Updike's views on faith and spirituality. Conner represents the secularization of American life, the increasing concern with material values, an idealist dedicated to his duties and responsibilities. He enhances the physical comfort of the people, looking after their health and needs but at the same time ignoring their real need, spiritual security, which is

more important for the elderly than anything else for their attention is now focussed upon the ultimate fact of life—death, and this fact is one for which Conner's socialism has no room. Hook, however, shares with Updike his belief that there is no goodness without belief. The key to goodness is faith.

Among all his works, Updike's most celebrated work is the Rabbit tetralogy in which he has chronicled the America of the nineteen fifties, sixties, seventies and eighties. The quartet portrays the protagonist's quest for identity in an ambiguous environment. The quest is also for a set of values—religious, ethical or social that could give meaning to the flux of existence. In other words it is Updike's attempt to grapple with the problems of his own generation.

It was *Rabbit, Run* (1960), his second novel, the first of the quartet, that earned him the reputation of a novelist of his times. The novel draws heavily on the author's own personal experiences. The novel also marks the initial exploration in a fictional form of what has since become the author's characteristic use of immediate personal experience as the matrix for the works of his imagination. Published eight years before *Midpoint*, the novel clearly foreshadows the poem's concerns and commitments. The protagonist is the representative of the universal angst of modern man.
At 26, Harry is already a has been. A former high school basketball star, he finds the mediocrity of his present life compromising, hence he does what his instinct tells him to do—flees his home, his denigrating job, his dull and unintelligent wife and son. Through the rest of the novel he keeps himself on the run but discovers to his dismay that there is really no way out. The novel was, as Updike says, 'a deliberate attempt to present both the escapist, have- it- my- way will to live versus the social restraints.'

Updike did not originally intend to continue the story of Harry Angstrom beyond the scope of Rabbit, Run, but returned to it after ten years when he realised that Rabbit was a suitable medium to pack off the angst and social conditions of the sixties. Rabbit is now a paunchy middle American, who has given in to more or less a passive existence. In Rabbit Redux the juxtaposition of self and the world that characterized Rabbit, Run is continued, but the external circumstances which intrude on Harry Angstrom in 1969 are of a scale significantly different from those he confronted in 1959. Political and philosophical apathy typified the last year of the Eisenhower era,

but the first of the Nixon years is characterized by the Vietnam war, its counter culture opponents, black militancy and the forays into the outer space through man's first successful flight to the moon. In both novels there is the immediacy of the present tense narration. This story opens on the very first day of the moon launch; and the Vietnam war, and race riots in the cities are subjects for heated debates among the characters. Harry's home is invaded by a run away hippie and a black militant. The issues of family and financial responsibility that he refused to balance against the inward reality of his own insistent ego in 1959, are still present.

*Rabbit is Rich* (1981) which won for Updike both the Pulitzer prize and the National Book Award, is set in the summer and fall of 1979, and the few first days of the new decade of 1980. These were the last months of Carter administration, times of long queues at gasoline pumps high inflation rates. Harry has been the manager of the Toyota Agency in Brewer since his father-in-law Fred Springer's death in 1974. The novel portrays the newly found American affluence in general. The dominant imagery is that of running out of gas. As James Wolcott finds the novel dramatically static, its basic message being, 'every thing is running
down." Wolcott has correctly pinpointed one of Updike's important themes. On a personal level, Rabbit finds that his desires and wants have shrivelled. Also his early misconceptions of freedom have changed. The novel shows the signs of Rabbit's new found affluence. There is a shift in his priorities as well. Like an average upper middle class American, he is more concerned with his social life, is a regular member of the country club. The very things that he had found suffocating in *Rabbit, Run*, have become his routine. There is only a slight reference of his religious or spiritual concerns.

*Rabbit at Rest* gives the reader the vision of a man who looks out at a world in which he soon will not exist. *Rest* is death-saturated from the first scene. Physically Harry has deteriorated. Harry's physical degeneration, however, is only one sign among many of how he has been thrown back, almost without his understanding how it has happened into a solitude even more isolating than that he experienced as a young man in *Rabbit, Run*. He is semi-retired living half the year in Florida, deprived of the milieu of work and the social circle at his country club. Springer Motors is managed by Nelson, taking away from him his position of the manager, a man of importance leaving

---

him with a tightly constricted identity. His social world has dissolved and he is superannuated, irrelevant, a thing of the past.

The Rabbit novels impress with the fullness of life they contain, more specifically the life of the middle class American versus his social milieu. The quartet also provides a touchstone for testing thirty years of Updike’s writing.

Updike’s other predominant concerns are themes of love and marriage that have occupied his interest from the beginning of his literary career. The restraints of marriage was one of the underlying themes in Rabbit, Run as well, but Updike was acclaimed as one of the masters of this genre with the publication and overwhelming success of Couples in 1968. Marry Me: A Romance, although published eight years after Couples i.e. in 1976, deals with the same theme of adulterous sex lives of young couples in their thirties. Both protagonists Jerry Conant and Piet Hanema believe in God, fear death and seek release in adultery. The reason is that the bulk of Marry Me was written before Couples. The action of Marry Me occupies the year from the spring of 1962, to the spring of 1963. The events of Couples fill the months from the spring of 1963 to the spring of 1964.
Both the novels are set in a small New England town, each is a carefully rendered sociological study of American culture of the sixties, and as Updike himself has pointed out, 'all deal with marriage in progressive states of deterioration ... and people in deteriorating states of innocence in small town Edens.' 19 Couples may be seen as an inversion of Marry Me. The adultery of one man and one woman becomes the way of life, a light hearted examination of individual human foibles is turned into a serious evaluation of social trends.

Updike’s fascination with Denis de Rougemont’s locating the explanation of the inescapable conflict in the west between passion and marriage in the Tristan myth is reflected in these novels. Also, as Updike said ‘As in The Poorhouse Fair, in this novel (Couples) I was asking the question, ‘After Christianity what?’ 20 Updike in the sixties felt that a new kind of religion might be emerging, not like the rational, socially engineered welfare state posited in The Poorhouse Fair, but rather ‘a religion of human interplay including sexual interplay.... The generation after mine seems to be attempting to find religious values in each other rather than in looking toward any supernatural or


transcendental entity.  \(^{21}\)

*Marry Me* was followed by *The Witches of Eastwick* in 1984, the third of Updike's New England novels dealing with deteriorating marriages. Like its predecessors, it is set in the 1960s, and probes American culture's attempts to find a replacement for an abandoned Christianity. The novel is the first attempt by Updike to write from the point of view of female consciousness. Like Harry in the Rabbit novels, both youth and adults of Eastwick solipstically deny the outer world to seek meaning in momentary feelings. The witches, seeking to mould outer circumstances to their own inner wants, are only representatives of the culture at large.

In these novels Updike has examined a variety of attempts to find a meaningful successor to Christianity which now seems largely abandoned. To the question, "After Christianity What", the novel suggests that the attempt to find a successor to Christianity is futile.

Throughout his writing career, religious faith has been a dominant aspect of Updike's writings. In his early twenties when he was facing a religious crisis, he read such theologians as Karl Barth and Kierkegaard.

21. Ibid.
whose religious views left an indelible impression on his consciousness. Updike's love for Barth finds obvious expression in such full blown characters as The Reverend Thomas Marshfield and Professor Roger Lambert. In fact, Updike's religious views are clearly reflected in his three novels - *A Month of Sundays* (1975), *Roger's Version* (1986) and *S* (1988). The three novels constitute Updike's reworking of Hawthorn's material in *The Scarlet Letter*. *A Month of Sundays* is the Dimmesdale version, with the protagonist being a weak willed Protestant minister struggling with sensuality and a flickering faith. Marshfield is strictly a Barthian figure who refuses to attach morality with faith.

Updike's trilogy is however, not a direct reflection but a transformation of Hawthorn's masterpiece. Updike joins his predecessor in investigating adultery, sin and salvation, but the trilogy is as much a contemporary musing on Hawthorne's themes as an adaptation of the Hawthornian dilemma. Updike confirms his sympathy with Barth's argument that humanity cannot reach God, only God can touch humanity. The result is that faith always outweighs good works.
Marshfield is a minister caught between the apparently conflicting demands of stern faith and insistent eroticism. He engages himself in adulterous affairs with his parishioners. When discovered, he is sent to a rest home for disturbed clergymen, where he is suggested to write for therapy. Still he is far removed from pangs of consciousness suffered by Hawthorne’s Dimmesdale. Instead it is Barth’s definition of faith that sustains him during his sojourn in the desert. Confident of his belief, Marshfield unifies the material and the spiritual and emerges victorious.

Updike’s position on the unimportance of ethics has its source in Barth’s assurance that evil is always relative because it is not part of God’s positive creation. Such an opinion does not, however, negate the necessity for faith. Bernard Schopen has given the soundest analysis of the relationship between religion and Updike’s fiction. He says that the faith discussed in the novels, ‘is one to which many of the assumptions about the Christian perspective do not apply, especially those which link Christian faith with an absolute and divinely ordered morality.’

The next novel in the trilogy Roger's Version (1986), portrays Roger Lambert, a dry bookish scholar, a professor of early Christian heresies, who is drawn after Hawthorne's Roger Chillingworth. The main action of the novel consists of the long discussions between Roger and a 28 year old student Dale Kohler, possessing a startling idea put as "God is breaking through". He seeks to prove His creation and His existence through advanced computer technology. With Roger's help he obtains a grant from the university to pursue his project. The clash is between two contrary thoughts - Lambert's Barthianism—God is beyond all human understanding against Dale's insistence that he is knowable and even tangible. But Roger maintains that to reveal God is to eliminate God's majesty. Dale may be a believer but his effort to reveal God's face makes him an anti Barthian heretic.

In keeping with the erudition of Chillingworth, Updike directs Roger's version with intellectual intensity. Another feature that the novel shares with Hawthorne's masterpiece is Roger's reaction on discovering Dale's affair with his wife Esther (Hester). The older man uses the relationship to irritate Dale's conscience, as Chillingworth did Dimmesdale's, preventing any open confession that might bring repentence and release to the young man.
Updike turns to Hester's version of *The Scarlet Letter* with *S: A Novel* in which he investigates rebellion from a disgusted wife's point of view. Updike's Sarah (Hester) pursues mystical eroticism with an oriental flavour. Calling attention not to Hester's artistic skills but to her sexuality, he stresses her association with the serpent in Eden when he designs the letter S on the book cover to resemble a snake.

Sarah Worth, the protagonist deserts her "dark and unheeding" philandering physician husband Charles to join an Ashram in Arizona desert. Her search is for an enlightenment beyond her highly privileged but suffocating upper middle class life. The ashram is an object of satire but soon it becomes clear that what has actually misled Sarah is another form of antinomianism—feminism. When Hester's adultery is discovered, she retreats to a cabin in the forest and keeps silent, while Updike's Sarah travels to her ashram and speaks up. The epistolary style in *S.* gives Sarah the voice that Hawthorne denies to Hester. Unlike her predecessor, Sarah escapes with her eroticism. Both women reflect their cultures, but Sarah has the advantage of knowing that much of the society supports her rebellion. Barth's theology is not an issue in *S.*, more the dominant concern is feminism.
Updike's insistence is on the unification of body and soul, separated by the Puritans and kept asunder by Hawthorne even in his most radical transformation of *The Scarlet Letter*. Marshfield, Sarah and Roger Lambert pursue freedom to extremes because they know with Updike that Barth's formulas are apt. Since only God is perfect, humanity by definition is free to transgress. To remain human, humanity must resist God's perfection.

After *Rabbit at Rest* was published in 1990, Updike has written a few novels in this decade, but he is yet to make an impact. Three novels *Memories of the Ford Administration* (1991), *Brazil* (1993), *In the Beauty of the Lilies* (1996) were published, but were treated with less enthusiasm in the literary circles. *Memories of the Ford Administration*, Updike's fifteenth novel, deals with the role that eros and error have played throughout American political history. The narrator speaks about his impression of Gerald Ford's days in the White House. Alf can remember only two things -- his knot of extramarital affairs and his never completed opus on the life of President James Buchanan. The novel alternates between these two loosely related subjects. The novel also explores modern American terrain of desire, guilt and moral ambiguity that Updike has made distinctly his own.
Brazil is an offbeat subject for Updike who has, over the years, positioned his fictional worlds in varying social and geographical milieus, his most familiar being, American suburban life. The novel in its new fictional locale is similar to an earlier attempt of writing about African life in The Coup, which is offbeat in more than one sense. Firstly, it is unusually positioned in the imaginary African nation of Kush. Secondly, the narrator is a departure from the usual Updike point of view. He is Colonel Felix Hakim Ellelou, the black President-dictator of Kush. The novel is, in fact, his memoirs that describes the events that led to the coup that displaced him in 1974. The Coup is unique in that it centres around events and matters of worldwide historical significance. In the other novels, the historical setting only provides a backdrop to highlight the basically personal story of the characters. The Coup is overtly political using the emergence of the third world nations as a vehicle for satirical attacks on the two super powers.

Brazil begins and ends on the beaches of Rio de Janeiro. The subject is a twenty two year love Odyssey of a black slumboy Tristao and Isabel, who hails from the higher circles of the society. The novel realistically portrays Brazil’s teeming city streets, poor countryside and hyper inflation. As the novel progresses, Updike
takes us deep into remote forests, to Sao Paulo, Brasilia, into the mineral rich hills. so that the novel reads more like a travel book with a picaresque plot. In Brazil Updike seems to be writing about his own version of South America with all its enchantments.

_In The Beauty of the Lilies_ published in 1996, is a four generation saga which is partly a fictional version of Updike's family history, partly an account of the decline of religious faith in America, and partly a reflection of Updike's own angry, personal struggle to find religious meaning. Updike told _Publisher's Weekly_ that in this novel he has attempted 'to make God a character, although in ways that illuminate spiritual emptiness in American life.'²³ The Reverend Clarence Wilmot loses his faith and consequently his career in ministry. Updike also links Wilmot's loss of faith to the rise of movies. He suggests that the movie industry fills the void left by an absent deity. Hollywood is the new repository of values and its stars provide the models of behaviour.

Till date, Updike has produced seventeen novels, nine collections of short stories, five volumes of essays and criticism, one play besides poetry and children's

---

²³ Quoted in Mall, James M., _Among the Lilies_. _Christian Century_, March 6, 1996. p. 251.
books. A brief survey of his novels reveals Updike to be a writer of diverse interests. He has tried his hands at various genres, has dealt with various themes, but the underlying thread connecting all his works is the concerns of the middle class American life. Also dominant is a strong regional element, a majority of works being set in Pennsylvania and New England. The present study seeks to study Updike's treatment of the middle class American life in the Rabbit Tetralogy. The Rabbit quartet spanning three decades is a bildungsroman, that gives Updike an opportunity to deal with a particular character, his preferences, and the tenor of his life being influenced by the changing mores of the American society.