5th Biennial John Updike Society Conference

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology
Serbia - June 1-5, 2018

Book of Abstracts

The Fifth Biennual
John Updike
Society Conference

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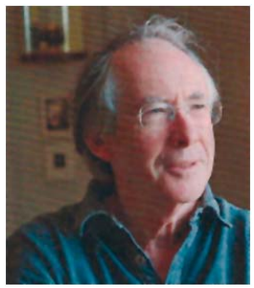
KEYNOTES



Ian McEWAN will reflect on his brief and late friendship with John Updike, describing the making of the TV interview he did with Updike, describing his stay with him one long weekend, and referring to premonitions of death in his work, among other topics. Long an advocate for Updike's legacy and an admitted beneficiary of Updike's influence, McEwan has gone on record as saying that Updike's Rabbit quartet is the prime contender for Great American Novel.

Prof. Alexander SHURBANOV will explore John Updike's method of rewriting Shakespeare's poetic tragedy *Hamlet* in his interesting prequel to the play, the novel *Gertrude and Claudius*, which first appeared in 2000. The focus is on the problems of transmuting such a secondary literary text into a tertiary one across a linguistic and cultural barrier, the particular case under examination being the Bulgarian translation of the novel, published in 2003. These problems arise on every level of language from the phonetic and the lexical to the logico-syntactical. The rendition must be calibrated carefully to reflect the complex and intricate correlation between the two works involved in Updike's reconstruction, that of Shakespeare and his own. As translator of *Gertrude and Claudius* into Bulgarian, the author of the present study has had the opportunity and the obligation to look closely into each meaningful detail of the novel's form and the possibilities of its recreation in the target language. The paper sets out to share some of these observations, and glances at the translator's personal contact with Updike.

Michael UPDIKE will share slides and talk about the year that his family spent in London after *Couples* was published. At the very first conference at Alvernia University in Reading, Pa., Michael took part in a panel with his mother, Mary, and sisters Elizabeth and Miranda. At the second conference at Suffolk University in Boston, he and Elizabeth mounted an extensive exhibit of objects mentioned in their father's fiction and non-fiction and Michael also led a walking tour of Ipswich, where his father had an office within walking distance of the 18th-century house the family lived in.

ABSTRACTS

Florentina ANGHEL
Associate Professor
University of Craiova, Romania

The Colours of John Updike's Narrative

John Updike's work covers all the literary genres, criticism and theory, and extends its diversity in different thematic areas which interlace in his novels. Most of his works have drawn readers' and critics' attention due to their complexity, originality and as cultural documents. Updike's particular interest in painting, reflected in themes, characters and technical devices and echoing his education in art, is obvious in his stories and novels. A less explored and controversial novel centered on abstract expressionism, *Seek My Face* was often criticized for being deceptive, as it shows neither Updike about himself nor Updike immediately about the abstract expressionist painters, for the fake female voice that guides the reader along a sinuous synthesis of Hope Chafetz's life, for the extended time allotted to an interview. Though the book is well-intentionally introduced as a "work of fiction", readers have probably expected realistic accuracy or rather a recognizable copy of reality in all aspects, even in the construction of the characters.

The novel, shaped as an interview, clusters many of Updike's interests and technical devices and delights with his unmistakable style. The title invites to a quest for identity, while the novel brings Hope's most intimate thoughts and emotions to the surface. The interview functions as a frame story and a pretext for the divergent and at times uncontrollable flow of information about Hope, her family, painters as friends, lovers or husbands. The metacritical texts ensure the novel's completion and self-sufficiency in a multilayered folding upon itself. By extension it obviously reveals not only itself, but also the author in relation to painting, despite the key books mentioned at the beginning.

An analysis of the narrative techniques through which Updike pulls the strings of the interview in *Seek My Face* reveals a relation between abstract expressionism and literature in both content and form and provides an explanation for the rigid frame of the interview contrasting and unsuccessfully trying to moderate Hope's outpourings of emotions and memories. In addition, colourful echoes in other works will contribute to the outlining of the influence of painting on Updike's narrative. The paper will provide an analysis based on interdisciplinary and structuralist theories.

Zorica BEČANOVIĆ NIKOLIĆ
Associate Professor
University of Belgrade, Serbia

John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius*: Parody and Narrative Expansions of Shakespeare's Indeterminacies

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has, like a number of the Elizabethan Bard's other works, perhaps even more, acquired a status of a modern myth. All myths, ancient and modern, linger as a permanent challenge for literary authors to retell them, complete them with the 'untold', 'unknown' or previously unimagined details. That's what Shakespeare himself was doing with myths, historical records, other authors' works, and that's what other authors have been doing with his plays and poetry. The proposed paper should argue that John Updike's novel *Gertrude and Claudius*, a 'prequel' to the plot of *Hamlet*, offers subtle and sophisticated parody built up on various medieval and modern cultural phenomena such as chivalry, courtly love and troubadour poetry, Byzantine politics and material culture, Machiavellian politics, psychoanalysis. The narrative strategy of the novel involves expansions of content and meaning of the well-known indeterminacies in Shakespeare's play. What was Gertrude's and Hamlet-the-elder's marriage like? What was the nature of her relation with Claudius while her husband was alive? Why did Claudius kill his brother? Was Gertrude aware of the murder? Was Polonius? What was going on between Hamlet and Ophelia before the action of the play? These are the famous unanswerable questions if we rely on Shakespeare's plot only. Updike provides the answers by filling in the gaps in the overall story of this modern myth in the form of imaginative variations based on the content offered by Saxo Grammaticus (*Gesta Danorum*) or François Belleforest (*Histoires tragiques*). He expands the taken motifs by developing them into cameo psychological studies of marriage, parent-child relations and adultery. This paper will analyze the intertwined strategies of parody and narrative expansion in *Gertrude and Claudius*.

Mirjana DANIČIĆ, Assistant Professor
Sandra JOSIPOVIĆ, Senior Language Instructor
Milica ABRAMOVIĆ, MA
University of Belgrade, Serbia

More Than Half a Century of Translating Updike in Serbia

In an attempt to relate to the conference name *Updike in Serbia*, the authors have dug into the more-than-half-a-century long history of translation of Updike's works into the Serbian language. The first translation of Updike into Serbian appeared in 1966 when his *The Same Door; Pigeon Feathers and Other Stories* was published in Belgrade by the then renowned publishing house *Nolit*. Even though the publication of Updike's works in Serbia has been unwavering ever since, it seems that the peak of popularity was recorded in the 1970s and 1980s. While preparing this paper, the authors have interviewed a couple of translators to try to find out what triggered their interest in Updike, to identify the challenges they faced and the (translation) techniques they used to overcome them. Trying to recognize the ineluctable changes of language and style during the course of half a century, and to analyze what effect these changes leave on the meaning, the authors have compared the mentioned 1966 translation to a more recent translation of the same collection of short stories done by David Albahari, the eminent Serbian author in exile, and published in 2004. The creative interaction which appeared in the process of literary translation between the two writers and the inevitable interaction between the two languages have also been points of interest in this paper.

As an endeavor to investigate the history of translating Updike in Serbia, the paper focuses on those translations which the authors have recognized as newer and more in touch with the contemporary world and language.

Scott DILL
Lecturer
Case Western Reserve University, USA

Brother Pig and Henry Bech's Hairy-Nostrilled God

As one of the few protagonists in John Updike's fiction who writes for a living, Henry Bech offers a candid look into how Updike thought about the writing life. While Bech might seem as different an alter-ego as Updike could imagine, what Bech claims about his writing can reveal more about Updike's own writing than his many interviews. For instance, the mere titles of Bech's books portray important aspects of Updike's. While Bech's first novel, *Travel Light,* is an obvious play on Updike's early success, *Rabbit, Run*, his second novel, *Brother Pig*, is named after "St. Bernard's expression for the body" (*Complete Henry Bech* 45). Here we see something of how Updike frames his own preoccupation with bodies.

As if to answer his own critics, Updike has Bech defend another writer's shallow lack of ideas by stating, "Shallowness can be a kind of honesty" (49). Later in that story Updike writes that Bech's writing had "sought to show people skimming the surface of things with their lives, taking tints from things the way that objects in a still life color one another" (53). Bech's shallowness, his insistence on a brotherly camaraderie with the body and its sensory responses, his attention to the surface of life, from which living things take their colors—this is Updike's own lavish attention to the human sensorium. The meaning of writing is not beneath those surfaces but right there on the surface, in the contact between bodies and objects in space.

Literature does not express complex ideas, but offers the details of experience up for more careful thinking. Moreover, Bech tells an interviewer that it is from "particular, concrete realities, whence all goodness and effectiveness derive" (116). All goodness derives from detail? There's a fascinating contradiction here: how does goodness, such a general and abstract concept, derive from details? What inductive

contortions of logic can discover in the diversity of concrete realities a blanket affirmation of goodness? Yet the human spirit, not the devil, is in the details for Bech. Any definition of goodness must begin with the variety of its "particular, concrete realities," and the work of literature is to reveal them. Thereby reading and writing can, as Bech puts it, "open the windows of the spirit" (105-6).

In this presentation I will focus on Bech's attention to the body's sense of smell and how his sensitivity to the "garbagy smells of life" (455) can open up the windows of the spirit to a notion of goodness captured in the Jewish Bech's boisterous, "hairy-nostrilled God" (245).

Prof. Biljana DOJČINOVIĆ, University of Belgrade, Serbia
Yoav FROMER, Lecturer, Tel Aviv University, Israel
Prof. Emerita Sylvie MATHÉ, Aix Marseille Univ (LERMA), France
Scott DILL, Lecturer, Case Western Reserve University, USA

Moderator:
Prof. James PLATH, Illinois Wesleyan University, USA

Updike & Politics: Does Rabbit Angstrom's Political Evolution Help to Explain Trump Supporters?

This panel discussion will raise following questions, among others: How does Updike use literary forms to engage political themes?; Does Updike express any specific political ideals in his work?; How has Updike's work been received – especially politically – outside the USA?; Does Updike's work address contemporary political themes?; How are the politics of identities treated in Updike's fiction?; Is Updike's work relevant in the Trump era? What would Updike, fascinated with the office of the president in USA politics, have to say about the current one?

Prof. Zorica ĐERGOVIĆ-JOKSIMOVIĆ
University of Novi Sad
Serbia

Staying Alive: Updike's Harry Angstrom and McEwan's Michael Beard

At first glance Ian McEwan's Michael Beard and John Updike's Harry 'Rabbit' Angstrom seem impossible to have much in common, the former being an English Nobel Prize-winning physicist and the latter being an American former high-school basketball player. Yet, the epigraph to McEwan's novel *Solar* (2010), which reads: "It gives him great pleasure, makes Rabbit feel rich, to contemplate the world's wasting, to know the earth is mortal too", comes from Updike's *Rabbit is Rich* (1981). Although some *Solar* reviewers claimed that the epigraph was misplaced (e.g. Leo Robson in *New Statesman* and Tim Flannery in *The Monthly*), McEwan, who was Updike's friend, admitted himself that "Having decided to heap Michael Beard with a fair number of faults, Updike was on my mind as someone who shows you how it can be done" (McEwan 2010). Besides Beard and Rabbit being unlikeable heroes, they share another more significant common trait. Indeed, they are both living lenses through which their authors manage to catch the reflections of the dynamics of social changes in a world obviously facing multiple mutually interconnected crises. The aim of this paper is to investigate the two personalities caught in the intricate web of political, economic, cultural, and climate changes and to show that their narcissistic behaviour is the logical product of their – and our – times.

Mina ĐURIĆ
Teaching Assisstant
University of Belgrade, Serbia

"Calligraphy of Parallel Spaces" – Musical Net in the Works of Joyce, Updike and Kiš

The aim of this paper is to present and problematize the flow of modernization of the 20th-century prose from the perspective of the creative reception of musical elements in the works of James Joyce (*Dubliners, Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*), John Updike (*The Music School*) and Danilo Kiš (*Hourglass*). The basic hypothesis of the interdisciplinary research raises the question how these examples of the prose bear an essential similarity with the definition of the creative reception of musical categories (rhythm, harmony, counterpoint, syncope, coda, leitmotif, cadence etc.) in the processes of the modernization of the prose in the 20th century. In comparison to the appearance, creative actualization and critical reception of musical elements in the opuses of James Joyce, John Updike and Danilo Kiš, it could be marked an active dialogue of those authors with musicalization of the fiction, which inevitably leads in the direction of prose changes – from the modernization of the novel in the works of James Joyce (fugue of motives, polyphony of narrative perspectives), to the philosophy of music in Updike's prose and postmodern approach in the novels of Danilo Kiš (form of symphony, contrapuntal structure, aleatoric music). In these cases it could be noticed that musical canon is connected with the problems of modernization of prose – analyses would indicate difficult and rare but very important occasion in which some characteristics of musicalization of fiction have become inevitable stabilizers of modern and postmodern poetics of the 20th-century literature.

Matthew Asprey GEAR
Edinburgh, UK

Mustered Opinions: John Updike's Non-Fiction Collections

John Updike was one of the most wide-ranging and conscientious book reviewers in the history of American publishing. For half a century he operated as a "psychotic Santa of volubility" (in the words of Martin Amis), producing hundreds of reviews and occasional essays for the New Yorker and other publications. Updike assembled compendiums of this non-fictional prose at regular intervals throughout his career: *Assorted Prose* (1965), *Picked-Up Pieces* (1975), *Hugging the Shore* (1983), *Odd Jobs* (1991), *More Matter* (1999), and *Due Considerations* (2007). Despite the seeming modesty of their titles, and the mock-apologetic tone of their prefaces, these collections are enormously ambitious and comprehensive. This paper will critically examine Updike's methods of collating his non-fictional prose, the efforts of a meticulous self-anthologist building a uniform oeuvre. It will discuss critical responses to Updike's collections, as well as contrasting publication practices by contemporary essayists including Anthony Burgess and Gore Vidal.

Alexandra GLAVANAKOVA
Associate Professor
Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"
Bulgaria

What's in a Name? Authenticity in Autofiction: John Updike's "The Bulgarian Poetess"

The inspiration for this paper is as much academic as it is anthropological and comes from the reference to my own surname, Glavanakova, in the short story "The Bulgarian Poetess" by John Updike, first published in *The New Yorker* on March 13, 1965. Several researchers have delved into the text aiming at a detailed and, more significantly, an *authentic* reconstruction of events, places and people appearing in the story (Vesela Katsarova 2010; Iordan Kosturkov 2012; Ward Briggs and Biljana Dojčinović 2015). A main preoccupation of these analyses has been to establish the degree of factual distortion and fictional fakeness of the text, as well as to illustrate how one culture translates into another "at the opposite side[s] of the world".

Suggested by the pervasive imagery of the mirror in the story, implying both the reflection and the doubling of reality, and by the repetitive use of words associated with "truth", the focus in this paper will be on the dynamics between plausibility and artifice in autofiction. Gerard Genette claims, "*True* autofiction is authentically fictional," (*Fiction & Diction* 77), for it collapses the distance between the fictional and the mimetic, between narrator, protagonist, and author. Therefore, autofiction opens ample spaces for representations and discussions of identity and self-reflexivity in a transcultural context. The discussion of the correlation between authenticity and identity in autofiction will include more recent examples of Americans writing about their experiences in Bulgaria, such as Garth Greenwell's novel *What Belongs to You* (2016).

Prof. Avis HEWITT
Grand Valley State University, USA

Religion Is the New Sex: Juxtaposing Updike with David Foster Wallace

In his *John Updike Encyclopedia*, Jack de Bellis reminds us that Updike's breakthrough 1968 novel *Couples* alerted Americans to our having become, as *Time* magazine's cover noted, "The Adulterous Society" in that the novel "proclaim[s] sex the modern religion" (122). De Bellis's having used the word *proclaim* matches the novel to David Foster Wallace's 2005 Kenyon College Commencement Address. From that bully Ohio pulpit, Wallace implicitly engages Updike's theology. When Freddy Thorne notes that the adulterous Tarbox couples "make a church of each other," he confirms part of Wallace's list regarding our focuses of worship: "J.C. or Allah or Yahweh or the Wiccan mother-goddess or the Four Noble Truths" or else "money and things," or perhaps "[our] own body and beauty and sexual allure" or "power" or "intellect." ("This Is Water").

Here the comparison between Updike's and Wallace's theologies gets tricky. If we "make a church of each other," we empathize with and sacrifice for one another as Wallace's creed suggests. But Updike's love has earmarks of idolatry. In his Kenyon address, Wallace names the good of a college education in its affording us choices about where our minds dwell, knowing that "where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also." (Matthew 6.21)

In "Certainly the End of *Something* or Other, One Would Sort of Have to Think" Wallace designates Roth and Mailer and Updike as the three Great American Narcissists and Updike as the GREATEST of these. A narcissist exhibits "an excessive need for admiration, disregard for others' feelings, an inability to handle any criticism, and a sense of entitlement." To Wallace narcissism is our "default mode" in navigating contemporary life, and his generation "got to watch all this brave new individualism and sexual freedom deteriorate into the joyless and anomic self-indulgence of the Me Generation" (54). Updike's 1959 *New Yorker piece*, "The Persistence of Desire," approaches life as Wallace suggests in "Something or Other," with Clyde Behn's acute need for his high school sweetheart Janet to admire him while he shows no regard for the difficulties he creates by looking down the front of her dress, inviting her to an illicit assignation, becoming hostile at her belittling of her high school entanglement with his "splendid, imperishable self," and feeling himself completely entitled to step out on his Massachusetts wife, which would offer only wide-scale hurt and pain to both their spouses and to his two babies. David Foster Wallace's "Good People" illuminates a quite different approach to love and commitment.

Jon HOULON
Philadelphia

(special program)

"The Ballad of Henry Bech"

"The Ballad of Henry Bech" is an original folk song that attempts to capture John Updike's Jewish alter-ego, the irascible Henry Bech, in twelve comical verses. The song draws on all three Bech books: *Bech: A Book, Bech is Back*, and *Bech at Bay*. Many of the words are direct quotations from Updike's text. The Ballad includes an interlude that strings together the song titles (mostly from the 1930s and 40s) which Updike weaves throughout "White on White" which is the final story of *Bech is Back*. Following this interlude, the song shifts from a major key (G) to a minor key (Em) to better reflect the dark, violent turn of "Bech Noir". "The Ballad of Henry Bech" was inspired by Woody Guthrie's Tom Joad which neatly encapsulated John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* into one long song. Woody Guthrie also inspired my earlier Updike song called "Talkin' Rabbit" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iE2Nvm2vN9c) which attempted to capture the Rabbit Tetralogy in one long talking blues.

Radojka JEVTIĆ, MA
University of Belgrade, Serbia

The Evil Eden: The Town of Eastwick as a Mimicry of America

The quotidian reality of Eastwick is disrupted by the arrival of the pre-nameless, post-hateful Daryl Van Horne. By giving him such a name, abundantly evocative, the author creates an overt evil and uses Van Horne to provide the reader with a necessary catalyst of ostensibly malevolent change in the townsfolk and the town itself. However, instead of being merely the backdrop, the entire town of Eastwick rises as the paragon, as well as the parody, of the small American town during the Vietnam War. Eastwick is the site of windowless plants, shopping malls and parking lots, as well as marshes with snowy egrets. It is a place where witches turn their husbands into objects and where hippy pastors elope with teenagers, leaving their wives and mistresses. A place where cleanliness is contrasted often with decay and disease, both concrete and metaphorical, it is precisely such a polychotomy that is needed for Updike's play with the temporal and spatial characteristics of America, expressed so vividly in the novel. Van Horne is, though, a catalyst of change; he displaces nature upon arriving in town and replaces it with – a mimicry. While Van Horne at first simply seems to be the apple of discord for Alexandra, Jane and Sukie, who all vie for his attention, he soon proves to be a much more wicked influence for the entire town. Even though the novel itself is quite humorous, it actually presents the small American town at the time as an infested battleground of mostly power, but also different worldviews; none of which seem to be able to find solid ground, but all standing their ground. This paper will examine the representation of the small town as a parodic device which offers insight into various realities and opinions present in the ether of 1960s America.

Olga KARASIK
Associate Professor
Kazan Federal University
Russia

John Updike in Russia: Translations and Receptions

John Updike is one of the most favorite contemporary American authors in Russia. We can confidently say that his works have a special destiny in comparison with the works of other authors. In the Soviet Union Western, and especially American literature was translated and published according to ideological principles only, and therefore common readers couldn't see a lot of prominent works, such as William Faulkner's or Philip Roth's. The Soviet ideology accepted only Realist literature (Socialist Realism was declared the only possible method of comprehension of the modern world in the 20th century), and Modernist authors or those who touched themes that seemed "strange" for Soviet ideologists, couldn't be read by people, although the scholars who could read in English made some researches. It led to the paradoxical situation: the reviews of the books appeared in the literary journals, but the books were not translated. In this context, Updike appeared to be a very suitable author: he showed the lives of common provincial Americans. On the one hand, it was beyond ideology. On the other, it gave grounds for presenting Updike's family and personal dramas as typical for the wicked capitalist society. Thus, Russian readers became familiar with Updike's novels quite soon after their first publications.

The Centaur was brilliantly translated by Victor Khinkis and published in Russian in 1965. The shock the Soviet readers experienced because of this novel was due to a misunderstanding. The Western readers understood at once, that Updike followed James Joyce in his idea of bringing Ancient Greek mythology and modern reality together, but Soviet readers didn't know *Ulysses* for that moment (the first translation of Joyce's masterpiece appeared only in 1988). Further, Updike's novels were translated and published first in literary journals popular with intellectuals. For the present moment, all Updike's novels are translated, some of them appeared in different editions, and they are still popular with the readers. In our presentation, we plan to give the review of Russian translations of Updike's novels, and the outline of academic works and criticism on them in Russia beginning from the 60s and till the present day.

Prof. Kazuko KASHIHARA
Kansai Gaidai University
Japan

Establishing a Self: Women's Productive Aging in *Seek My Face* and *The Widows of Eastwick*

In his late years, John Updike published two novels that have female protagonists in their seventies: *Seek My Face* (2002) and *The Widows of Eastwick* (2008). The two heroines, Hope Chafetz and Alexandra Farlander, have a number of points in common although they seem different on the surface. Among the similarities, the most intriguing is that both of them establish a self of their own and acquire a sense of peace in their later lives. They overcome a sense of estrangement resulted from aging by establishing a self in the end. The purpose of this paper is to clarify how Updike describes women's aging and to show establishing a self leads to successful aging.

Hope "is often seized by a dread that she has wasted her life up to now, a dread, at bottom, that she has displeased God" (*SMF* 41). On the whole, however, she is content with her life with children and grandchildren, and works on exhibitions at a number of major cities in the world. Interviewed by an ambitious young journalist Kathryn, she feels antipathy toward her at first since she provokes Hope's consciousness of being "old and frail" and left behind by the advancing times. As the interview goes on, she looks back at her life and discovers that "she never betrayed herself absolutely, ... she had time to wait it all out, to get to this present, to be herself in the end" (212). Hope's ill feeling toward Kathryn melts away into maternal affection and gives her a hug in the rain when she leaves Hope's place.

On the other hand, Alexandra suffers from a more severe predicament of old age. She has a sense of estrangement as follows: "she saw surrounded by more and more strangers, to whom you are a disposable apparition cluttering the view" (*Widows* 41). Younger generations than her own now dominate the world, where she feels she is a useless obstacle, an apparition. Thus at the beginning of the novel, Alexandra has completely lost her own self. In addition, she has an acute fear of death and her worst fear is of cancer. Nature, which used to be on her side when she was a witch in Eastwick about thirty years earlier, has turned to be her enemy that seeks her death. All of this depresses Alexandra and drives her into her plight. She tries to recover her sense of self by returning to Eastwick where she had her prime as a witch and finally discovers her significance of existence not by magic but through her relationship with her daughter's family: "Nature, behind her back, in spite of her, had been bringing to ripeness her true self-fulfillment, her offspring and their offspring, those who amid the globe's billions owed her their being, as she owed them her genetic perpetuation" (274). She again accepts Nature and chooses to live with Nature. After returning to Taos, New Mexico, she returns to pottery, a job with nature, and finds herself unafraid of death.

Both Hope and Alexandra establish their own selves as artists and discover their significance of existence. The final scenes of the two novels are full of calm and peace. Thus Updike, showing that establishing a self allows people to overcome estrangement of old age, describes an elderly life positively.

*The above quotations are from *Seek My Face* (NY: Ballantine Books, 2002) and *The Widows of Eastwick* (NY: Knopf, 2008).

Matthew KOCH
Associate Professor
Tarrant County College, USA

Revisiting John Updike in a Time of "Fake News"

This semester I have embarked upon a new theme to guide my Composition I classes: an intensive investigation into our sources of news and an exploration of the methods one can employ to correctly identify information that is unreliable, misleading, deceitful, predatory, or really anything else that could constitute "Fake News." This process necessitates combing through broad subjects like politics, culture, and the popular imagination. While working through these topics, I have been revisiting classic Updike characters such as Rabbit Angstrom and Piet Hanema – those men who revel in the daily news, trust in their governments, and endorse presidencies.

While I can credit my class on "Fake News" for the genesis of the above considerations, these quickly blossom into questions far beyond the scope of a Composition I course. My goal for this paper is to reexamine some of Updike's most ubiquitous protagonists within the context of the contemporary American sociopolitical climate. As a supplement, I also wish to incorporate a sampling of Updike's essays concerning contested political topics of his time, most notably the Vietnam War. In our present era in which the public is deeply divided concerning such fundamental democratic cornerstones as trust in the press and faith in the electoral process, key questions emerge in the field of Updike scholarship: Would an "everyman" type of character like Harry Angstrom be tempted by the fervor of the alt-right's populism? Would the author's generally affectionate attitude toward American presidents be imperiled by the current administration? Finally, how do we characterize (and teach to college students) the politics of Updike's protagonists in an era of "fake news"?

These and other germane questions will certainly emerge through this exploration, which will consider the "Rabbit" tetralogy, *Couples* and examples of Updike's more recent works. While I do not expect to exhaustively pursue the above research questions, I do hope to establish some links between prominent Updike characters and today's vexing sociopolitical issues in a way that is meaningful to contemporary scholars and students.

Natia KVACHAKIDZE
Teacher
Kutaisi Akaki Tsereteli State University Georgia

"'Words, words, words' or Some Peculiarities of the Georgian Translation of John Updike's 'Tomorrow and Tomorrow and So Forth'"

American writer John Updike has been known to Georgian readers for quite a long time mostly thanks to the 1972 edition of *The Centaur* in Georgian translation (translated by Dali Intskirveli). However, the 21st century has witnessed a significant growth of the author's popularity in my homeland resulting in multiple recent translations. Translating a literary work has always been a very complicated and demanding task and Georgian translations of Updike's works haven't been an exception. The aim of the given paper is to analyze some strong and weak points of the Georgian translation of John Updike's short story *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and So Forth*. This story translated by Nana Bukhradze was published in the 5th volume of *The World Literature: Selected Short Stories* (2007-2008).

The translator manages to get across the main idea of the story and definitely succeeds in choosing appropriate style and words in certain cases. But a number of arguable points (regarding word choice, some stylistic peculiarities or the way the themes and ideas suggested by the author are conveyed) still remain. My goal is to compare and contrast the original story and its Georgian translation both in respect of the style and conveying the authorial ideas, and to reveal its strengths and weaknesses, suggesting some possible solutions or improvements (which does not mean I claim any of my suggestions to be final or perfect alternatives).

The story proves to be a very fruitful source for such research not only as a translation of John Updike's work, but also taking into consideration the Georgian translation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (by famous Georgian translator Ivane Machabeli) which Nana Bukhradze used in her translation of Updike's "Tomorrow and Tomorrow and So Forth".

Lynn LEIBOWITZ-WHITEHEAD
Liberty, NY, USA

"The Religion of Sex: An Evaluation of Its Effects on the Family Unit in Updike's *Couples*"

"Sex is the foremost means, of conducting the moral and religious search", Updike once told a CBS interviewer. A self- proclaimed religious writer and also a serial adulterer, Updike was intimately familiar with this search. In *Couples*, Updike explores this moral and religious quest. Against the back drop of everyday life in America post World War II, Updike has his middle-class characters become soldiers in the war between flesh, family and spirit. Updike explained to Terry Goss, that when he wrote about couples of that era he was "Trying to describe this generation, for which the various faiths, patriotic and religious, had faded". Updike further explained to her that, "It was a world in which people tried, in the absence of another compelling religion, to make religion of each other, a kind of cult intermingling". Dialogue between Angela and Piet Hanema in Updike's *Couples*, illustrates this point. After a party, Angela discusses fellow guest Freddy Thorne with Piet. She tells him: "He thinks we're a circle. A magic circle of heads to keep the night out. He told me he gets frightened if he doesn't see us over the weekend. He thinks we've made a church of each other". Angela further reveals to Piet that Freddy thinks "That the children are suffering because of it". Angela shares with Piet that she shares Freddy's sentiments, stating "What we give them is neglect so subtle they don't even notice it. We aren't abusive, we're just evasive". This paper explores the validity of Freddy and Angela's concerns. What are the consequences for the family unit when sex is a substitute religion? Are those consequences only limited to the followers of this religion, or do non-followers suffer as well? As a mother, a wife who has dealt with infidelity, and a woman who has been in an "open" marriage, I am well positioned to examine and compare the casualties of sex as religion in *Couples*. Through the insights I have gained through motherhood, I explore the tension and changes that can occur between motherhood and sexual and romantic relationships. I ruminate in this paper, is sex truly the foremost means of conducting a moral search, and is it a religion worth following?

Prof. Robert M. LUSCHER
University of Nebraska, USA

The Chambered Art of Memory: John Updike's "More Stately Mansions"

Collected in *Trust Me* (1987) and written around the same time as that volume's title story, John Updike's "More Stately Mansions" is one among a large group of stories from this book that were rejected by the *New Yorker* and subsequently published elsewhere. After being returned for revisions and resubmitted over two years later, it was declined by the magazine in early 1982, but published later that year in *Esquire*, with a blurb inserted between the title and its author's name, reading "What was it about the Sixties that made us so devoted in the Seventies to our pasts?" This attention-grabbing editorial intrusion has its source in the magazine version's conclusion – one subsequently revised by Updike before the story is collected – in which the narrator-protagonist, aptly named Frank, retrospectively pronounces with confidence that "It has taken all of the Seventies to bury the Sixties." Yet to read against the grain, one might argue that "More Stately Mansions" is less a tale about burying the past than about resurrecting it from the tidy chambers to which it has been relegated – revealing to us for scrutiny the "sunless crypt unsealed" – an image referenced in the concluding words of the story's epigraph, the second stanza from Oliver Wendell Holmes's poem "The Chambered Nautilus."

No other piece of short fiction in Updike's oeuvre features a literary epigraph, and the inclusion of one in "More Stately Mansions" seems to signal Updike's ambition to craft a belletristic story, one centered upon the symbol of the chambered nautilus, a metafictive image whose deliberate construction connects not only with Updike's persistent examination of the working of memory but also with the architecture of fiction. Yet not until the final revision of the story for inclusion in *Trust Me* – which includes a significant overhaul of its closure – does Updike achieve an aesthetically successful structure, one whose more complete narrative frame ultimately spirals outward, like the shell itself, moving into the memories that object evokes when it surprisingly appears in Frank's classroom, then back to the present moment, closing the lesson with a teacherly pronouncement on the virtues and necessity of growth. Updike's new closure references the concluding stanza of Holmes's poem, inviting the reader to compare the movement of two works and, I argue, creating an ironic dimension when we read against the grain. While commentary on this story focuses on the similarity of the protagonist's views about the Vietnam War to Updike's own position of "not being a Dove," the story perhaps embodies less of an apologia or redaction of those views. Rather, given the first-person narration and implications that emerge from some of Updike's revisions, readers seem invited to critique the narrator's tidy reconstruction of his political and social evolution, to examine the implications of Frank's added comment about the shell as a "killer," and to realize the ambivalence of this flawed character in much the same way that Updike holds Rabbit Angstrom and Richard Maple up to scrutiny. Ultimately, rather than applying the autobiographical lens to this story, we should read "More Stately Mansions" as we do Sammy's retrospective narration in "A&P," questioning the artful interpretive rendering we receive.

Wei-lun LU
Researcher
Masaryk University, Czech Republic

Translating, Rendering and Re-constructing Updike's Stream of Consciousness: The Case of "A&P"'s Translations into Mandarin

The proposed paper presents a novel linguistic approach to the anatomy of John Updike's use of stream of consciousness and whether/how that gets across to a typologically different language, using the opening sentence of "A&P" and its Mandarin translations as illustration.

Updike has been considered a giant in the field of modern American Literature, with stream of consciousness (often as the so-called free indirect style) being one of the stylistic hallmarks in his various works, such as "A&P", *Rabbit, Run*, among numerous others. In particular, Updike's masterful combination of various lexico-grammatical strategies makes his style a vivid re-presentation of the protagonist's mind in the narration. One of the most striking examples is the opening sentences of "A&P":

> "In walks these three girls in nothing but bathing suits. I›m in the third check-out slot, with my back to the door, so I don›t see them until they›re over by the bread. The one that caught my eye first was the one in the plaid green two-piece."

In the first sentence, one may identify at least three linguistic means that Updike employs in representing the protagonist's consciousness: word order, subject-verb agreement and tense marking. First of all, the word order is inverted and that has the cognitive effect of putting the narrator deep in the story world (Dorgeloh 1997; Chen 2003), thus blurring the distinction between the narrator's consciousness and the protagonist's. Secondly, the subject and the verb do not agree the way they normally do, as the subject (*these three girls*) are plural, so the verb (*walk*) should not carry an inflection *–s*, according to standard English grammar. I argue that such use of subject-verb disagreement signal the low degree of formality, which is typical of a 19-year-old boy's casual speech. Thirdly,

Updike's shifting between present and past tense (as seen in the second and third sentence) creates a narrative straddle between the present and the story told (George 2005: 59-60) that is not seen in most other literary narratives that adopt only the past tense in the narration.

However, I argue that Updike's skillful use of a wide variety of stylistic strategies, typified by the above passage, has presented an immediate dilemma to translators into Mandarin Chinese – the above structural means are all specific to the English language and do not exist at all in the Mandarin system. In particular, Mandarin is notoriously a tenseless language and does not inflectionally mark subject-verb agreement; being a topic-comment language, Mandarin Chinese also has an information-packaging system that is very different from English, a subject-predicate language (Huang and Shi 2016).

The present paper will look into the ways how Mandarin translators, with no linguistic means comparable to the English original, (have to) adapt and render Updike's style in their reproductions of the same literary scene, considering corresponding passages in English and Mandarin from "A&P" and other works.

Sergej MACURA
Associate Professor
University of Belgrade
Serbia

An Ironic Animal Called Man: The Futile Self-Sacrifice in *The Centaur*

The paper draws on Northrop Frye's seminal essay "Myth, Fiction and Displacement" as the starting point of research into the overall framework of John Updike's 1962 novel *The Centaur*, and extends its interpretive reach into greater detail by additionally including the premises of Ronald Wesley Hoag's 1979 essay "A Second Controlling Myth in John Updike's *Centaur*," which lays emphasis on Albert Camus' philosophy of the absurd as the main (de)motivational force in protagonist George Caldwell's actions throughout the storyline. The research tries to establish the essential parallels between the paradigmatic characters of the Greek myth and their 20th century small-town American exponents displaced against a minutely modelled background of rural Pennsylvania, and goes on to contextualise the specific life-weariness, angst, disciplinary relationships and institutional dynamics typical of postwar Western society overburdened with a death wish and a loss of faith in individual subjective agency as opposed to the inexorable fate dictated by the superior entities/gods, or in accordance with Frye's last phase of irony, even beyond their control, since the novel also represents life as servitude without a way out. The text sheds light on the father-son relationship and the absence of primal impulses on George's part as a preclusion of Peter's hypothetical Oedipal trajectory, which motif fosters the son's development into an artist/Prometheus in the Künstlerroman subplot that serves as the retrospective linking of both the story's opening and closure with the timeless foundation of the myth. Various modes of narration and focalisation are analysed in order to get a fuller grasp of George's divorce with life through fruitless lethargy (the unsuccessful hill climbs in the detested car, his underdog position both at work and at home) as the Sisyphus myth, together with his self-deprecating remarks on "a father that was half a man" as the Chiron myth in the trivially wretched quotidian surroundings of mid-20th century provincial America.

Prof. Robert MORACE
Daemen College, USA

Vector and Variation: Cheever's 'O Youth and Beauty' and Updike's 'Friends from Philadelphia'

In an earlier paper entitled 'Remapping the Updike-Cheever Relationship Thirty-Five Years On,' presented at the 2016 Updike conference and subsequently published in *The John Updike Review*, I examine the relationship between the two writers over the course of their careers. In 'Vector and Variation' I will narrow the focus to the dialogic relationship between Cheever's 'O Youth and Beauty' and the story Updike wrote in response to it, 'Friends from Philadelphia.' The relationship between the two stories has already been very ably discussed by James Schiff in 'Updike, Cheever, and Short Fiction,' published in a 2012 collection of essays I edited on Cheever. Rather than radically depart from Schiff's excellent but necessarily brief analysis of these stories, I will tease out some of the implications of his analysis, particularly with regard to the crucial difference between the suburb and the small town as fictional settings and as social as well as authorial constructs. In discussing these differences and their ramifications for our understanding of these two often compared and sometimes conflated writers, I will also address another of the points Schiff makes, that 'It is, of course, patently unfair to compare Updike's first professional story to one of Cheever's most successful and mature stories.' Schiff addresses this inequality by turning to 'Perhaps a fairer and more meaningful comparison between the two writers … through a consideration of stories that are among their finest and that deal with similar themes of marital and familial discord, adultery, and confinement and escape: Cheever's "The Country Husband' and Updike's 'Separating.'" I will take a different tack by bringing Cheever's earliest published story, 'Expelled', into the mix for the light it sheds on these three areas: first, the dialogic relationship which Updike's reading of 'O Youth and Beauty' set in motion; second, the theme of confinement and escape which Schiff addresses; and third, the (dis) connection between suburb and small town as fictionally real places and integral components of the mythology of the American pastoral mode.

Damjana MRAOVIĆ-O'HARE
Assistant Professor
Carson-Newman University, USA

Terrorist: A New Dichotomy for a Post-Cold War World

I approach John Updike's novel *Terrorist* (2006) as an example of a unique 9/11 narrative and argue that the novel represents Updike's attempt to both intellectualize and analyze the American context that creates religious extremism. In that sense, I approach the novel as a *treatise* on terrorism and claim that Updike with *Terrorist* introduces a dichotomy that substitutes the Cold War West vs. East conflict present in his pre-2000s novels.

Commonly, 9/11 novels are focused on the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 and the ways in which the event distorted either New York City or its inhabitants' lives. The 9/11 novel, most often, is written as an attempt to cope with the horrifying event but without an ambition to explain the attack, its nature, or a context that prompted its formation. On the contrary, in *Terrorist*, Updike is invested in understanding the circumstances that might lead to a mass murder. For instance, the novel's main character, Ahmad, is a bi-racial, smart, and well-mannered high student from New Jersey, who under an influence of his imam becomes radicalized and ready to carry out a terrorist attack in New York City. Through a series of almost unrealistic plot twists, the terrorist attack is averted but disbelief, confusion, and absurdity associated with any terrorist attack do not cease. Updike's *treatise* reinforces ethical and philosophical problems of any extremism but also signals a clear dichotomy of the contemporary, post-Cold War word. Quentin Miller (2001) effectively demonstrates that Updike is invested in politics of the Cold War and forms his narratives in relationship with them, which provides a social commentary on the post-WWII U.S. and its middle class. *Terrorist*, written well after the fall of the Berlin war and in a world without seemingly a clear political division, establishes a new polarity: extremist vs. non-extremist.

Gideon NACHMAN
University of Harvard, USA

"Artificial in Essence": Reevaluating the Critical and Academic Reception of John Updike's Light Verse

On the 25th anniversary of the publication of his omnibus of verse, *Collected Poems*, I would like to propose a paper dedicated to the final, often-overlooked chapter of John Updike's 1993 book of poetry – his light verse. In the preface to *Collected Poems* Updike delineates between his light verse and his "poem[s] derived from the real." As he explained it, the distinction lay in the genesis of the poem's subject matter. He saw light verse as coming from "the man-made world of information – books, newspapers, words, signs;" and his other poems as essentially grounded in "something I actually saw or felt." Because this was not an ironclad cleaving, Updike acknowledged that "a number of entries wavered back and forth across the border; the distinction becomes a subjective one of tone." Nevertheless, there is no denying that he saw a stark difference in his two types of poetry, and that the difference was rooted in his belief that the light verse he penned was inherently "artificial in essence." This paper will seek to push back on the segregation that Updike enforced upon his poems and challenge the notion – especially within the framework of *Collected Poems* – that his 'real' verse and his light verse do not share the same edifying spark, the same thrill of creation. Furthermore, his light verse remains stubbornly human; it refuses to shrink into the world of materiality and symbology to which Updike castigated it. Light verse poems such as "Upon Shaving Off One's Beard" and "In Extremis", in their sharp, pained remembrances and keen focus on the physical body stand up to poems such as "Orthodontia" and "You Who Swim", with which they share a collection, although they are relegated to different sections. The purpose of this paper would not be to track each individual light verse poem and make an argument that it should, or at least could, be reconsidered as real verse. Such a method would be unproductive and intellectually shaky, relying more

on cataloging than any means of academic dialogue and discourse. Rather I hope to dig more into Updike's creative verve and construct an argument around the idea that the "excited sensation of being a maker, a poiētēs" that he felt when constructing poetry undergirds all the verse, light and heavy alike, in *Collected Poems*. I also believe that this paper could be a small, minor step in helping to start a conversation about how the academic and publishing communities regard and distribute Updike's poetic work. At the end of his preface to *Collected Poems*, Updike wrote that he felt compelled to gather all these far-flung works out of the fear that "if I did not perform the elementary bibliographical decencies for them no one would." In a sense, he was posthumously proved correct in 2015 when Knopf published *Selected Poems*. Christopher Carduff, the editor of this new collection, saw fit to elide all of the light verse poems from Collected Poems while retaining most of the 'real verse' ones. Such decisions, even when made conscientiously, call for academic enquiry and reckoning, so as to avoid the potential ghettoization of some parts of the Updike canon. So, finally, what then does one make of these poems, mostly orphaned by the academic community but still cherished by their author? Relative to the major novels and short stories, very little has been written about them. This is in one some way understandable—the poems can be a little wan, thin and brittle in the comic shell—but ultimately regrettable. It is my sincere hope that at the upcoming 5th Biennial John Updike Society Conference I will be able to bring forth a paper that makes a case for the greater inclusion of, as Updike himself so tenderly put it, "my oeuvre's beloved waifs."

Takashi NAKATANI
Associate Professor
Yokohama City University, Japan

Translations of John Updike in Japan under the U. S. Cold War Cultural Politics

This is the third attempt to discuss Updike's place in Japanese literary contexts: I will supplement my first paper presented at our last Conference in South Carolina and my second at the 2017 ALA Conference, in which I partly dealt with significances of things personal in Updike's works in comparison with Kenzaburō Ōe, a politically active Nobel laureate.

Most of Updike's translations in Japan were published after he published *Couples*, gained a scandalous fame, and came to be expected to "represent" American culture. At that time he started to refer to political situations of his own country in his fiction, in his essays, and in his public comments, as if he is realizing that an American writer unavoidably gets involved in his or her country's Cold War cultural policies. At the 2015 ALA Conference I have argued that *The Centaur* and *Rabbit, Run* contain critical references to contemporary American canons, implying that he had to be tactful in dealing with the U.S. cultural politics, both at home and abroad, which had "killed" Hemingway, whose death he lamented in his conversation with Ōe.

I will discuss how his Japanese translators and the author himself dealt with specific details not only of American but of the author's local culture including his experiences, which, along with the Updikean diction, often made his works almost untranslatable, to get them across the Pacific while avoiding being exploited in the U.S.-Japan cultural policies.

Prof. Shawn O'HARE
Carson-Newman University, USA

Updike's "Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu," Baseball, and America

Gerald Early, the American scholar and essayist, once famously said, "There are only three things that America will be known for two thousand years from now when they study this civilization: the Constitution, jazz music, and baseball. They›re the three most beautifully designed things this culture has ever produced." While baseball may no longer rank as "America's pastime" (overtaken by American gridiron football and basketball, most likely), for much of the twentieth century, baseball was the sport that connected the United States. Not surprisingly, then, baseball has played a prominent role in American writing, from Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* to August Wilson's *Fences* to Don DeLillo's *Underworld*. John Updike's essay about the last professional baseball game played by Boston Red Sox great Ted Williams – "Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu," published in the October 22, 1960 issue of the *The New Yorker* – certainly belongs in the pantheon of outstanding writing about America's one-time obsession.

Although the essay was reprinted as a stand-alone slim book in 2010 by The Library of America, this wonderful piece has not received the attention it deserves. "Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu" is Updike's prose at its finest – observant, insightful, detailed, and nuanced – and it captures why baseball was so important in American culture. Ostensibly, Updike is merely describing the last home game played by Williams – also known as The Kid, The Splendid Splinter, and Teddy Ballgame – who is arguably one of the greatest hitters to ever play the game. But the essay is more than a commentary about an athlete's farewell. Rather, it is a work that captures America broadly, and Boston and Fenway Park specifically, on September 28, 1960. Although he wrote "Hub Fans" when he was only twenty-eight (the essay was published a mere three-weeks before *Rabbit, Run* was released), Updike's treatise on the closing of an era in American culture remains a work that resonates today. This paper will examine the place of "Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu" in Updike's *oeuvre*, and make the argument that the piece is one of the author's finest insights into America.

Prof. Zoran PAUNOVIĆ
Ivana ĐURIĆ PAUNOVIĆ, Associate Professor
University of Novi Sad, Serbia

Translation as a Means of Literary Criticism: *Couples* in Serbian

Considering the manifold cultural aspects of importance of literary translation, comparative analyses of original work and its translation can sometimes reveal surprising layers of meaning of a text. Searching for the origins of certain solutions in translation one can realize which types of linguistic, social and cultural triggers have directed translator's choices and decisions. John Updike's *Couples* (1968) functioning as a source text for A. Petrović's highly acclaimed translation of the novel into Serbian, entitled *Parovi* (1977), provides a very good example of a work that reflects an influence of the translator's understanding of parameters for a high quality literature, based on his cultural and social norms, and the way they reflect upon the work in the target language. The paper offers an analysis of those aspects of the source text that present an opportunity for the kind of translator's interpretations that show the influence of "local" factors. Starting with a brief survey of Yugoslav cultural milieu of the 1970s, the publishing policies in the domain of fiction, as well as the status of translators and translated works, with a special interested in Updike's reception in Serbo-Croatian language, we will offer an analysis of a very successful translation of *Couples*, with a particular focus on those parts of the text which are important for understanding of the translator's approach. The aim of the paper is to show that a literary translator is at the same time a literary critic who, during the process of translation, sometimes even unintentionally, establishes a hierarchy of values contained in the original work that will require different approaches and skills in order to be successfully transferred into the target language and culture.

Prof. James PLATH
Illinois Wesleyan University, USA

John Updike's Centaur and the Artist Divided

The central character in John Updike's novels is often an unsuccessful or failed artist who experiences a conflict on three separate levels: imagination versus reality, art versus reality, and representational versus non-representational art, the latter involving a love of intricacy, solidity, and exactness, in opposition to an equal fascination with total blankness and the complete freedom it represents. Such conflicts are perhaps best represented by Peter Caldwell, the narrator of Updike's third novel, *The Centaur*. Despite being a successful representational artist, Peter thinks of himself as a failed abstract expressionist. Like Updike's other artist-heroes, Peter must imagine the world anew to create life and grapple with the Platonic question of real and ideal forms. In the process, Peter and the others must decide where abstract and non-representational art fit on the Platonic model. It's a frustrating task that's a bit like straining to say the unsayable.

Prof. James SCHIFF
University of Cincinnati, USA

Updike and the American Presidency

In contrast to such contemporaries as Norman Mailer, Don DeLillo, Philip Roth, Gore Vidal, and Robert Stone, John Updike is not generally perceived as a political writer. Rather, Updike's concerns and canvas are viewed in domestic terms, his interest focused on how characters experience the quotidian while wrestling with romantic and sexual entanglements. For an ostensibly nonpolitical writer, however, Updike had much to say about political events and people.

One of the most frequent political objects of his attention was the American presidency. From his first novel, *The Poorhouse Fair*, in which he imagines a Jewish president named Lowenstein, to a reference to President-Elect Obama in a line from a poem composed during the final weeks of his life, Updike made a point of integrating American presidents into his work. As he stated in 1968, "In each of my novels, ...a President reigns; The *Centaur* is distinctly a Truman book, and *Rabbit, Run* an Eisenhower one. *Couples* could have taken place only under Kennedy. ...My fiction about the daily doings of ordinary people has more history in it than history books." In *Memories of the Ford Administration*, which is more about America's 15th president, James Buchanan, than its 38th president, Gerald Ford, Updike alludes to each of America's first 42 presidents. In the Rabbit novels, presidents from Eisenhower through Clinton not only hover in the background, shaping policy that affects how characters live, but they literally inhabit the thoughts of those characters. They also become the focus of heated conversations. In presiding over historical periods, these presidents give, as Updike indicates, a flavor to his novels. In addition, each president serves as a kind of personalized synecdoche of America, an agent through which the protagonist can experience an intimate imagined relationship with his country.

The objective of this essay is to trace the significance and role of the American presidency in Updike's writings. Kings and queens, emperors and heads of state have figured prominently in literature, from the Bible and Shakespeare to, more recently, Michel Houellebecq, Hilary Mantel, and Junot Diaz. American presidents have also stirred the imagination, appearing in novels by Gore Vidal, Robert Coover and, most recently, George Saunders. This essay will work to understand how such political figures have historically operated in literature, more specifically the novel, and how they are employed differently in Updike's writings. Updike is not always interested in the presidency in terms of national or international affairs, but rather in regard to how the president turns up in the thoughts of individual Americans, like Harry Angstrom. Updike depicts American presidents more as human beings who shape and reflect the mood of a country and era, figures with whom their citizens are able to sustain personal relationships.

Pradipta SENGUPTA
Associate Professor, M.U.C.Women's College Burdwan, India

Psychic Sexuality: Memory and Dream in John Updike's *Villages*

Only a very few writers have explored the full gamut of middle-class suburb life, warts and all, as John Updike, and a fewer have run the whole gamut of sexual experience as him. With his avowed preoccupation with the "three secret things" of sex, religion, and art, Updike has examined the single aspect of sexuality through varied reference frames at varying stages of life: boyhood, adolescence, manhood, and old age. If A *Month of Sundays* and *S.* offer a ritualization of sexuality, *Roger's Version* offers a scopophilic examination of sexuality in terms of the sexual phantasizings of Roger Lambert. Updike's *Villages* (2004) reemploys the use of sexuality on different spatio-temporal parameters, chronicling the kaleidoscopic ken of the old Owen Mackenzie's sexual encounters, reminisced and replenished through his memories and dreams, and operating on his psychic planes. Lured and intrigued by the "monstrous miracle" of sex, Owen experiences a thrill analogous to a conquest in his erotic adventures with a battalion of mistresses, and his wives. And yet his is not a case of gerontophilia, for in his present dotage he is more interested in relishing those libidinal experiences in his memories than in having further erotic advances. Updike deals with Owen's psychic sexuality in an artistic way that dovetails into his present old age. At once a faint autobiographical projection of Updike, and a dim shadow of his early heroes turned old, Owen prefers contemplation of the carnal carnival to direct action. Applying the insights from Psychoanalysis, this paper would seek to analyse and justify the nature of these memories and dreams to suggest how Updike reckons with sexuality with greater panache evinced through the psychic lens of an aged hero who remains satisfied with erotic emotions recollected in tranquillity.

Jovana SREĆKOVIĆ, MA
University of Belgrade, Serbia

The Influence of John Updike on Ian McEwan's novel *Solar*

Both Updike and McEwan are said to have attracted readership, as well as critics from the publication of their first books in 1958 and 1975, respectively. While late John Updike earned himself a good reputation, remaining well known for his careful craftsmanship and realistic depiction of American, middle-class life, Ian McEwan has managed to sustain a reputation as one of the most exciting and controversial writers of his generation, whose works are generally represented as adventures in the art of unease. In some of his interviews, McEwan mentioned Updike as a writer whom he admired and read most, and this influence can be noticed in his novel *Solar* – where an individual is inspected (in several different ways) against the backdrop of the recent past – at the very beginning while reading the epigraph that comes directly from Updike's 1981 novel *Rabbit is Rich*. The purpose of this paper is to make parallels between the two authors from the postmodernist point of view and draw a conclusion about the extent of John Updike's influence on Ian McEwan and his work(s).

Aristi TRENDEL
Associate Professor
Le Mans Université, France

Master and Pupil in *Roger's Version* and *Terrorist*

John Updike's two main characters in *Roger's Version* (1986) and *Terrorist* (2006) are untypically cast into the archetypal figures of master-pupil against the background of a divided America. Updike pores over the phenomenology of master-pupil stressing the constructive mode in spite of the antagonistic nature – whether reciprocal or unilateral – of the bond in these two novels. While in *Roger's Version* theology and science underpin the master-pupil's exchange, the latter is immersed in politics in *Terrorist*. In both narratives, troublesome students are subdued by the teacher or counselor who seem to uncover the depressed, underprivileged facet of American society. Without neglecting his perennial topics, in these two novels, Updike is contributing to the master-pupil exploration in fiction and venturing into the "other America".

Prof. Radojka VUKČEVIĆ
University of Belgrade, Serbia

The Reception of John Updike's *Couples* in Serbia and Montenegro

The paper aims to provide an introduction to the study of the reception of John Updike's *Couples* in Serbia and Montenegro. It also aims to study the possible influence of this novel on some of Serbian and Montenegrin authors. We believe that this novel is still alive and continues to change into new works and shapes–therein lies much of its challenge and fascination.

The "afterlife" of Updike's *Couples* will be studied on the bases of the works of Hans-Georg Gadamer, and H. R. Jauss: Gadamer's (2004) theory that the meaning of a text is constructed by a fusion of horizons between the present and the past, and Jauss' (1982) esthetics of reception which explored the interaction of the creator of the new work and its audience.

An overview of the changing contexts for publishing John Updike's *Couples*, and reactions to it notes a strong response by the Serbian scholars and a rather modest reception of his works in Montenegro. This provides a vital contextual setting for discussing the textual reception not only of this novel but also of American literature of the period in Serbia and Montenegro.

Aleksandra VUKOTIĆ
Assistant Professor
University of Belgrade, Serbia

From a Clean-Scrubbed Assembly to Filthy Infidels: The Hygienic Discourse in John Updike's *Terrorist*

John Updike's 2006 novel *Terrorist* has come to be regarded as a piece of 9/11 fiction *par excellence*, notwithstanding that in many ways it crosses and extends the boundaries of the genre. While the novel includes a number of elements of 'literature of terror,' (as recognized by Gray, DeRosa, Versluys, Randall, Duvall, and Herman, among others), Updike deliberately bypasses the narrative of trauma and victimization, examining both the "enemy" without and within. What is more, overt sympathy for a terrorist wanna-be, the young Ahmad who cannot make himself kill a bug or rejoice in the deaths of the thousands killed in the World Trade Center, let alone blow up the Lincoln Tunnel, makes us look for terrorists and forms of terror elsewhere in the novel. Strangely enough, we find them everywhere – from Ahmad's superior, Shaikh Rashid, who instills ideas of terror into Ahmad's impressionable mind, to the Secretary of Homeland Security and US media, which terrorize the citizens with the ever-changing reports and security alerts of varying degree. However, what seems most striking is the terror of cleanliness, "a concern with purity almost religious," which largely shapes the novel's discourse. Updike's America seems as obsessed by the ideas of cleanliness and pollution as the young and inexperienced Ahmad, who is preoccupied with the thoughts of maintaining his personal and mental hygiene. The ubiquitous myth of purity gives rise to misogyny, racism and nationalism, and ultimately makes Ahmad join the terrorist plot in which he is to cleanse the world from "infidels" with the purgatory fire of a suicide bombing. What underlies this obsession with cleanliness and sanitation is the all too familiar fear of contamination of the Self with the Other, and *Terrorist* gives an insight into the very mechanisms which create the atmosphere of sterility and closedness in today's world.

Aleksandra ŽEŽELJ KOCIĆ
Language High School, Serbia

Marriage in Updike's Fiction

This paper chooses to shed light on the topic of marriage in John Updike's fiction – novels: *Couples* (1968), *Marry Me* (1976); collections of short stories: *Problems and Other Stories* (1979), *Licks of Love* (2000), *The Maples Stories* (2009) – for a variety of reasons. First, Updike's fictional works seem almost impossible to encompass in any single paper due to a wide range of issues Updike tackles in his long literary career. Second, since the idea of marriage reverberates across Updike's oeuvre, it only seems appropriate that it should be considered yet again. Supported by relevant criticism on the author's contribution to American literature, his own viewpoints on writing and art (interviews, conversations), his published essays (*Picked-up Pieces* – 1975), as well as Bertrand Russell's *Marriage and Morals* (1929), this essay strives to explain as to why this writer never ceases to revisit the paradoxical concept of marriage on multiple levels of investigation. Our research proves Updike to be a keen observer of American middle class values, a chronicler who constantly pays heed to an ambivalent intersection between an individual's moral/ sexual/ social selves and his society at large. Updike's, for the most part secular, fiction shows a profound investment in love, adultery, sexual longing, fidelity, family, filial affection and responsibility, relying on ample use of irony and metaphor. Furthermore, Updike's persistent effort to view commonplace incidents from new perspectives does not fail to demonstrate his subversion of conventional moral associations usually attached to marriage, one of the most patent societal mechanisms of power. Undermining the authority of many an interpretation by showing the self-contradictory nature of outer forces and inner motives, Updike creates variations of marriage, some of which fragmented and disjointed.

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