

# John Updike and Tripuraneni Gopichand: A Critique on the Treatment of 'Cultural Universals'

GRK Murty\*

---

*John Updike, the cartographer of American suburban life, has, in an enduringly eloquent prose that is "always fresh, nubile, and unwitherable," expounded extensively the 'cultural universals' and the dynamics thereof in his novels. This article attempts at analyzing one such cultural universal—'man and his relationship with his land'—that Updike articulated with élan in his novel *Of the Farm*, and compares it with the treatment given to the same by a noted Telugu novelist of repute, Tripuraneni Gopichand, in one of his short stories, "Mamakaram," for a better appreciation of how national traits ultimately influence the practice of 'cultural universals' and bring about subtle changes in their dynamics across nations.*

---

**Keywords:** *Of the Farm*, Tripuraneni Gopichand, *Mamakaram*, *Tapatrayamu*

John Updike (1932-2009), who died of cancer on January 27, 2009 at the age of 76 in Boston, US, often found the inspiration for his writings in his own living experience like quite a few illustrious writers of India. Like Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, the Immortal Wordsmith of India, who wrote 27 novels and numerous short stories and essays, presenting the commoner's life almost with pathological accuracy, based on his encounters with life as a country youth that provided him with the inspiration, ingredients and storylines for his lifelike characters in the uncomplicated rural family settings of the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century Bengali society, without indulging in value judgment, except for raising awareness about social malice, John Updike too, drawing from his suburban American living experience, authored 28 novels and published 14 collections of short stories, all centering around "the American small town, Protestant middle class," and nine volumes of poetry and countless reviews on the literary output during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As Philip Roth observed, Updike was "our times' greatest man of letters, as brilliant a literary critic and essayist as he was a novelist and short story writer." Equally important are the six massive collections of articles, reviews, and essays that Updike published—*Assorted Prose* (1965), *Picked-Up Pieces* (1975), *Hugging the Shore* (1983), *Odd Jobs* (1991), *More Matter* (1999), and *Due Considerations* (2007). This nonfiction leaves an indelible impression about the "author's vast range in time, space, and discipline as a reader, and his capacity to understand, appreciate, discriminate, explain, and guide," wrote Christopher Lehmann-

---

\* Managing Editor, The Icfai University Press, Hyderabad, India. E-mail: [grkmurty@icfaiuniversity.org](mailto:grkmurty@icfaiuniversity.org)

Haupt in the *Times*. For over half a century, Updike wrote an amazing number of book reviews stretching over 5,000 pages. His reviews were generous, which does not mean that he pampered mediocrity, for he assessed the books from the perspective of the terms they set for themselves, and then evaluated how well they managed on those terms, besides assessing the adequacy and usefulness of the very terms. Reviewing his *Picked-Up Pieces*, Martin Amis observed, "Updike's view of 20<sup>th</sup> century literature is a leveling one. Talent, like life, should be available to all."

Equally important are his short stories. Though his stories are often about a sense of loss, they cannot be dismissed. In today's world of crumbling 'trust' all around, it is refreshing to read Updike's short stories, particularly, the story, "The Happiest I've been" that he wrote in 1959, which recounts the last night of a young man at home, about to return to college after Christmas holidays. The young man is returning from a New Year's party during which a female friend falls asleep on his shoulder, while another friend sleeps on the other side of the seat. Now what constitutes the happiest moment for the young man is his expansive 'feel' for the landscape that he is in, the dawn, the safe drive over slick roads, and importantly, the two people sleeping at his side trusting their lives to him. The drive and all that is an ordinary event, yet Updike turns the trivial into a great story by rendering the details perfectly and sufficiently enough—the separation from the gnarled grandmother and aged parents, and the commencement of journey from home (dependence) to college and the girlfriend in Chicago (independence), which indeed is the beginning of journey into one's adult life—to make one feel that 'being trusted' is what constitutes life's stuff. And that is the maturity he creates in his characters as well as readers. Interestingly, Updike prefers to narrate the story in a retrospective style, perhaps to imbue the youthful past of the character with the wisdom of present, which incidentally reminds us of what Henri Bergson once said, "How many of our present pleasures, were we to examine them closely, would shrink into nothing more than memories of past ones!"

As a novelist, Updike, as he himself once said, focused on making "narratives out of ordinary life by obscure and average Americans," for "the writer must face that ordinary lives are what most people live most of the time, and that novel as a narration of the fantastic and the adventurous is usually an escapist plot, that aesthetically the ordinary, the banal, is what you must deal with." And that is what we see in his most popular novels: *Rabbit Run* (1960), *Rabbit Redux* (1971), *Rabbit Rich* (1981) and *Rabbit at Rest* (1990), which chronicled the seismic changes taking place in the life of an average suburban American in the second half of the twentieth century. These four novels are dubbed as "acts of preservation," for they charter the course of one man's life, Harry Angstrom, known as 'Rabbit' from his days as a fleet loose-jointed high school basketball star: his job—car salesman, layoffs, business woes, falling status, and

accompanying frustrations; his marriage—the quarrels, caresses, recoils, and bland and blind dances as of unwilling cell-mates; his affairs—love descending to a semi-prostitute followed by guilt, remorse, the pressure of a vague religion, morality, and running for cover, often not knowing from what and for what; his minor triumphs—perhaps, more in an unseen world as is reflected by his questioning about “the thing behind everything” that testifies to his urge to believe in something beyond the crowded field; and the miraculous horror of his own end—depression, dangerously overweight, yet not being able to stop nibbling corn chips and macadamia nuts, near-death after a heart attack, and finally death, all of which, in essence, are a reflection of the very changing soul of America, starting from 1950.

In his novels, Updike orchestrates the propensity of an average American of the 1960s for doubt, narcissism and self-immolation, and the opposing claims of self and society by characterizing Harry Angstrom in such a fashion that he tends to compare his own fall with that of the waning power of America in the global context and his business woes with that of the national deficits, perhaps, to anchor himself in comfort amidst the ‘entropic process’ set in motion—just as what Devdas of Sarat Chandra was confronted with: not being able to stand up to parental opposition to his marrying his childhood sweetheart, who incidentally asks him to marry her, rejects the proposition and runs away to Calcutta; but every waking hour of his is now filled with thoughts of Paro and his unfulfilled love for her, driven by which he runs back to Paro, who had by then given her consent to marry an old zamindar, and asks her to elope with him, but she refuses; heartbroken, he seeks solace in alcohol and the company of the courtesan Chandramukhi as a way of escaping from the consequences of complying with the parental decree or the societal dictates. In chronicling the four decades of middle-class American life in his Rabbit novels, Updike gives “the mundane its beautiful due” by simultaneously capturing the beauty of the “blue of the skies” and “the mud puddles underfoot,” while expatiating and re-expatiating the themes of adultery and family relations in suburban America—of “compromised environment” governed by “endless circumstantiality”—with extraordinary nuance and precision.

His novel, *Of the Farm*, that deals with a man’s nostalgia—his relationship to the family, his relationship with the land, and his longings for the future, and the conflict arising therefrom—is sure to strike a chord with every Indian, particularly, those hailing from the countryside, who would identify with the characters of the novel at once. It is all about the ‘past’ of a man threatening to imprison him in rigid definitions of his current relations with everything around: for instance, Joey’s aged mother, Robinson’s trying to thrust the care of the farm to him to ensure its continuity within the family even after her death (as is evidenced by Peggy’s statement, “She wants a man to be on this farm and thinks she’s lost you” [1965, p. 122]) and the son’s disinclination to honor his

mother's wish ("I never liked the farm" [1965, p. 122]), for he perceives it as a potential threat to his relations with his just acquired second wife in Manhattan, while at the same time finding it extremely difficult to simply brush off his bond with the earth, the farm, and the house in it, for it evokes in him past relationships which tend to influence his present ones. The inability to break away from the nostalgia of people, of past, and present, his emotional attachment with the land and its influence on his psyche—"the wilt-rimmed leaves of the geraniums standing potted on the sill ... that my mother must water and tend ... and I felt all around me, throughout the farm, a thousand such details of nurture about to sink into the earth with her" (Updike, 1965, p. 167)—and the resulting conflict among family members are as common to Indian families from which educated youth start migrating to cities and abroad as are to Updike's Joey, his mother Robinson, and his recently acquired second wife, Peggy, and her son Richard.

Any reader of the novel, *Of the Farm*, would at once identify with it, for it expounds certain 'cultural universals'—anything that is part of every culture, but varies from culture to culture—the most important of them being the 'longing for and the bond with the land' of a farmer, as it echoes in the reply of Robinson to Richard, when he questions if she believed in God:

I see and touch God all the time. If I couldn't see and touch Him here on the farm, if I lived in New York City, I don't know if I'd believe or not. You see, that's why it's so important that the farm be kept. People will forget that there could be anything except stones and glass and subways (1965, p. 70).

Many writers from across countries have expounded this 'Nature religion' as a fusion of the notion of God with one's devotion to the land. Take, for example, Telugu litterateur, Tripuraneni Gopichand's (1910-62) short story, "*Mamakaram*" (Attachment)<sup>1</sup>, which narrates with verve the bond that a farmer has with his land; the story is indeed a paean to the eternal relationship between a farmer and his soil.

Jogayya, the protagonist of the story, has three sons and two daughters. All his children love him dearly. He too loves them, but should the need arise, he can as well stay without seeing them for days together, but not his farm even for a day. His attachment to the farm is so strong that he harbors a belief that his sons are only meant for improving the farm and not to drift away from it. Event after event reveals Jogayya's undying attachment to his soil. At the beginning of the story, we witness a reflection of this in his quiet anger at his second son who migrated to the nearby town for running a retail cloth shop, for which he blames his daughter-in-law, typical of the 'in-law syndrome,' saying, "He is a good man, but listening to his wife, spoiled himself." Indeed, this is another 'cultural universal' that Updike expounds in his *Of the Farm*. In the course of a dialogue at the dining table while shelling peas, when Robinson

---

<sup>1</sup> The translations from Telugu are by the author.

expresses her grief at not being able to see her grandchildren again (Joey's three children from his previous marriage), Updike makes Peggy accuse her of trying to needle Joey and herself by declaring, "... please don't talk about the children as a way of getting at me. It's too hard on Joey" (1965, p. 104). This unpleasant scene is followed by another conversation at dinner centering on Richard and Peggy, which peeves Robinson so much that she declares, "She takes my grandchildren from me, she turns my son into a gray-haired namby-pamby, and now she won't let me show this poor child a little affection which he badly needs" (1965, p. 112). In yet another context, Robinson complains to her son Joey, "That woman [Peggy, second wife of Joey]. She's fierce. She'll have me dead within the year" (1965, p. 139); "... No, but her eyes are [transparent] and I see my son's ruin in them" (1965, p. 140). Using such occasions Updike not only brings out the embedded apprehension between a daughter-in-law and a mother-in-law but also delineates the 'in-law syndrome' in a universally comprehensible style.

Coming back to the Telugu story by Gopichand, there is yet another scene, which exhibits the prime slot that farm and farming occupies in Jogayya's priorities. Once his wife falls sick and remains bedridden for ten days. Worried about her deteriorating health, his elder son asks Jogayya to stay at home to look after his ailing mother, and leaves for the farm. That being the paddy transplanting season, Jogayya feels restless at home as the thought that his fields are to be irrigated bothers him. Knowing the docile nature of his elder son and the importance of irrigating the hitherto fallow fields right in time to transplant rice seedlings, Jogayya, finding it difficult to stay at home, makes his wife take a couple of tablets with water, tells her to "close your eyes, you will get sleep," and leaves for the farm. On the way, he encounters the messenger sent by his son to inform him that some villagers are resisting, with sticks and spears in hands, his son's attempts to irrigate their field blocking the free-flow of water towards others' fields. On hearing this, Jogayya becomes furious and rushes to his field. There he wades through the small mob and forcibly diverts water to his field, challenging the men around to stop him. Perhaps, intimidated by his audacity in diverting water to his fields or impressed by his love for his land, the villagers leave the matter to rest there and depart from the scene.

While the sound of gurgling water into his fields sweetens Jogayya's ears, his son enquires about his mother's condition. Jogayya nonchalantly says that she has to be all right. His son then says: "Let's go home." At this Jogayya is taken aback: "How can I leave the field without irrigating it?" But in an anxiety-ridden tone, his son mutters: "Nobody is around mother and ... ." Yet, Jogayya says: "You go home, I shall stay here." Knowing the nature of his father and his hatred to leave farm-work incomplete, his son starts, haplessly, for home. By evening a messenger comes from home summoning Jogayya to home at once. He realizes that his bond with his wife is about to get terminated, yet he

could not leave the farm, for a far-end corner of the field is still to be watered. That is the strength of his attachment to his land.

This strong bond between a farmer/landowner and his/her land knows no national boundaries, as revealed by the finely crafted dialogue in *Of the Farm*, between Robinson and her son Joey in the parting scene, when Joey takes leave of his mother, who just “had some kind of an attack”:

What did he say to you?

He said we should consider your going to a hospital.

For how long?

Until the likelihood of these attacks lessens.

Why would the likelihood lessen? Why doesn't he want me to die here where I belong? My parents died here, my husband died here, I want to die here. It seems little enough to ask from these medical buzzards. I'm not leaving my land (1965, p. 171).

The longing of a farmer to rejoin his own soil is brought out by Gopichand in the final scene of his short story very effectively—indeed, it clearly epitomizes the very essence of Jogayya's attachment to his land. A month after the death of his wife, one afternoon, Jogayya was at the farm overseeing the weeding in his rice-field. After the death of his wife, his mind has become less stable. As the laborers are working in the field, sitting under the tree, he ruminates over the past. He recalls his wife's anxiety-ridden words spoken from her deathbed, despite being conscious that her end was nearing—her elder daughter-in-law's not knowing how to skim butter without leaving much of it in the butter milk; washerwoman's not applying starch to clothes properly; Jogayya's not caring to fill the rat holes in grain silos made of bamboo; and so on; he wonders why she had such *tapatrayamu* (concern) for even trivialities and for that matter, why at all such *tapatrayamu* for anybody?

In the meanwhile, his granddaughter as usual brings lunch to the farm, much to the chagrin of his elder son who, particularly after becoming the village President, does not like his father getting food to the fields and eating it sitting on the farm bund. Jogayya slowly gets up and washes his hands in the running water and returns to the shade of the tree. As his granddaughter runs to the laborers working in the fields, he opens the lunch packet and tastes the *avakai* (mango pickle) with his finger but could not hear his habitual sound of smack. Yet he thinks he made it.

Returning from another field, his son, noticing his daughter in silk attire, enquires, “Why to field with silk skirt? (జెరీ పరికిణీ వేసుకొచ్చావే అమ్మా, చేలోకి?) Wouldn't it get soiled? (బురదకాదా?)” She replies, “Grandfather wanted to see me draped in it (తాత వేసుకు రమ్మన్నాడు నాన్నా. యీ పరికిణీ కట్టుకొస్తే చూడాలన్నాడు).” “Did he see? (చూశాడా?)” enquires the father. “No, he has forgotten (మరిచిపోయాడు).” Then both of them walk towards

the tree on the main bund. From a distance, Narasayya notices his father, Jogayya, leaning against the tree holding something to his nose, apparently, thinking. Wondering what it could be that his father is smelling, he calls: “*Ayya*,” “*Ayya*” (father). Jogayya responds feebly murmuring, “*Abba*” (my son). And as his grip on what he is holding in the fist loosens, the soil, the mere black-cotton soil, drops out of his hand joining ‘mother soil’. And, there is no more response to his son’s calling, “*Ayya*,” “*Ayya*.” The author highlights the intensity of Jogayya’s *mamakaram* for the land very emphatically: Jogayya, amidst his pondering over the *tapatrayam* that his wife exhibited on the deathbed, could forget appreciating his granddaughter adorned in *pattu parikini* although he wished to see her in such an attire, but not inhaling the smell of *nallaregadinannu* even on his way out of this world. That is the ode in prose that writer, Gopichand, composes to the fervent relationship that a farmer weaves in the journey of his life with his land.

Interestingly, although both the authors bring us the scents and murmurs of the infinite relationship between a man and his land, it is Gopichand, who, unlike Updike, rounds off his story well, for there is a sense of fulfillment even in the heart-rending scene of Jogayya’s death on the farm bund: he had enlarged his farm; is survived by his children and grandchildren who inherit his land, and a granddaughter who cared to satisfy his wish by coming to the field adorned in a *pattu parikini* (silk skirt), and more importantly, there is continuity of life even in his death—of farming by his heirs. Indeed, Jogayya’s death at the farm, that is, his shrine, amidst the laborers working in the field, his son, granddaughter, and the sweet-smelling *nallaregadinannu* (black cotton soil) is in itself a vindication of Jogayya’s *mamakaram* for the land and also *mokshamu* (salvation) from it. Whereas, in the case of Updike’s Robinson, everything remains a loss, as echoed in her matter-of-fact lamenting to Peggy:

I talk about them [grandchildren, from the first wife of Joey], Peggy, when I do, because I’m a garrulous old freak and because talk is the only way I can touch them now. I enjoy being a grandmother, it was a curious comfort, an accomplishment I had never considered possible for me, I don’t know why; and talking is the only way I can touch them now. Their father can visit them whenever he wants, but I don’t expect ever to see them on Grammy’s farm again. Or elsewhere (1965, pp. 104-105).

As Kenneth Hamilton observed, Robinson, having been deprived of grandchildren to inherit the farm—“the link that ties us to nature and to one another,” which we see in full bloom in Gopichand’s “*Mamakaram*”—that she loves so much, is left alone to die: “Who says I’m helpless? I’ll get up when I have to. The Schoelkopfs keep an eye on my chimney and when no smoke shows they’ll come over. The dogs will bark. Isn’t there a saying about lying in

the bed you've made?" (1965, p. 172) For that matter, even Joey, unlike Gopichand's Narasayya (Jogayya's son), loses his past, his right to say "our" of anything due largely to his own decision, and not being able to strike a balance between his farm and the newly acquired second wife, he gives off his farm and also his children by his first wife.

Intriguingly, the treatment meted out to farmers' attachment to land by Updike and Gopichand is quite different, perhaps, in tune with the culture of the respective countries they hail from. For instance, Updike's Joey deserts his mother who is nearing her death, while Gopichand's Narasayya and his daughter walk towards Jogayya who is nearing death. Jogayya has a close-knit family as is evidenced by the caring presence of his son and granddaughter around him till his last breath, while Robinson's family is more of a loosely held setup—she is left with none to be around her or inherit her legacy. Her son, Joey, in his anxiety to earn freedom, is eager to escape from her myths by rushing to New York—"the living memento of my childish dream of escape, called to me, urged me away, into the car, down the road, along the highway, up the Turnpike", (1965, p. 174)—leaving her alone in the farm to fend for herself. Jogayya engages himself positively in his interactions with his shrine, the farm, till his soul drops like a ripened melon on the very land he loved, whereas Ms. Robinson consciously awaits her fate: "The ghost in me wants to get out. I can feel it pushing" (1965, p. 171).

Interestingly, when Joey is leaving the farm, Ms. Robinson turning to him with "her eyes [that] were young with tears not quite free of pleading", says: "Joey, when you sell my farm, don't sell it cheap. Get a good price" (1965, p. 174). This anxiety of Ms. Robinson for a good price, even after the future had become so clear to her, reminds us of the *tapatrayamu* exhibited by Jogayya's wife lying on her death bed, and by Jogayya himself—holding the *nallaregadinannu* of his shrine, the farm, as he died. Are both these authors thus reinforcing the belief that *tapatrayamu* is the very essence of the existence of man? Or, are they both advocating that man must continue to do his best till his last breath, else life becomes his very death? In either case, we can safely infer that *tapatrayamu* is the very force that drives man towards progress, else life may become stagnant.

The treatment of the 'cultural universal'—the relationship between the farmer and his land—and the subtle difference thereof between Updike and Gopichand bring to one's mind another Telugu writer—Vasireddy Seethadevi (1932-2007). In her much acclaimed novel, *Mattimanishi* (Man of the Soil) 1972, she expounds the relationship between a farmer and his land from a different perspective. The writer, through Sambayya, the protagonist of the novel, mirrors "the aspirations, struggles and experiences of a farmer who trusts his land that turned him into a living, throbbing deathless individual." In a very moving fashion, the author makes Sambayya—who, by toiling day in and day out on his 2 ha farm inherited from his father developed it into a farm of 50 ha, which he once shows to his son standing on its bund, saying with immense pride: 'All

that is before our eyes stretching up to that distantly visible *palmaidra* tree is ours,' but lost every bit of it because of the wayward behavior of his son and daughter-in-law—reveal his attachment to the land to his grandson, who has just been sent to him by his failed-at-life son with a hope that he would get better care from his grandfather than what he could offer, thus: “*E nela na palaka. Nagale na balapam. Polame na badi. Bhummeda diddanu. Rojuku okkokka mata e bhumee naku nerpindi. Na thalli, daivam, guruvu e bhumee*” (This earth is my slate. Plough is my slate-pencil. Farm has been my school. I had practiced alphabet on earth. This earth taught me a word a day. This earth is everything to me my child: My mother, my god, my teacher). By putting those well-crafted words into the mouth of Sambayya to describe his love, yearning and reverence for land, Sitadevi succeeds in defining the intensity of relationship between a man and his land. Interestingly, Robinson’s views are similar to Sambayya’s, when she talks about her farm:

... in that air-conditioned city where the seasons are all the same. Here on my farm every week is different, every day is a surprise. New faces in the fields, the birds say different things, and nothing repeats. Nature never repeats; this August evening has never been before and it will never be again (1965, p. 110).

Besides the theme of the relationship between a human being and his/her land, another interesting theme of Updike’s *Of the Farm* is ‘theology.’ Indeed, in one of his essays, Updike remarked that Bath’s theology was the only thing that supported his life and that is what we witness even in the novel, which incidentally does not sound alien to readers from other countries. Updike uses Joey’s visit to the church, with his mother, to share his (Bath’s) theology with the reader:

A rib is rounded. Man, with woman’s creation, became confused as to where to run. With one half of his being he turns toward her, his rib, as if into himself, into the visceral and nostalgic warmth wherein his tensions find resolution in dissolution. With his other half he gazes outward, toward God, along the straight line of infinity. He seeks to solve the riddle of his death. Eve does not. In a sense she does not know death. Her very name, Hava, means ‘living’ ... ” (1965, p. 152)

—an abstraction that runs parallel to what *Brhadaranyakopanisad* proclaims: “*Purnamadah purnamidam purnat purnam udacyate/Purnasya purnam adaya purnameva avasisyate, Om Santih Santih Santih*” (The yon is fullness, fullness this/From fullness, fullness doth proceed/Withdrawing fulness’s fullness off,/ E’en fullness then itself remains).

“Her motherhood answers concretely what men would answer abstractly. But as Christians we know there is no abstract answer, there is no answer whatsoever apart from the concrete reality of Christ” (1965, p. 152). The minister goes on to sermonize: “And Adam said, ‘This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’” The minister thus highlights the necessity of partnership between man and

woman in performing God's work on earth and "She is less than Man, and superior to him"; "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh."

Updike's description of his theology runs parallel to the articulation of the Vedas: "In all creation there is the union of the male and the female. They are two aspects, copartners of the Supreme Being. The Supreme transcends all opposites but also includes them." According to S Radhakrishnan, the *Rig Veda* describes the "Supreme as an inconceivable wonder, a sublime unity, a totality from which light shoots forth to generate out of darkness and emptiness a living universe." Apparently, man and woman are opposed, but in reality they are one—complementary aspects of the Absolute. These two opposing but complementary principles are shown by Indian seers of yore as *Ardhanarisvara*—the male and female principles of a single embodiment. Indeed Kalidasa expresses the same concept more illustratively in his invocation to God, Parvathi and Parameswara, who are united with each other, as is the word with its meaning, for the commoner to comprehend the concept easily: "*Vagartha iva smaprukthau, Vagartha prathipathaye Jagaetah ppitharau vande, parvathee parameswarau*" (God Shiva and his mountain bride./Like word and meaning unified./The world's great parents, I beseech ...). Despite particularities, it is this core truth that ultimately makes Robinson realize that it would amount to sin if she tries to maintain hold on Joey. She finally concedes that Peggy suits him better than his first wife and bids them farewell, asking Peggy, "The next time you come, if you can stand it and I'm still alive, I'd like you go to have your picture taken for me" (probably to replace Joey's first wife Joan's photo).

In conclusion, no one can deny Updike's tremendous love for his vocation—condensing memories, fantasies, and discoveries into dark marks on paper—that reflects well in his producing roughly a book a year, an effort that fetched him two Pulitzer prizes, the National Book Award, and the National Medal of Arts from Barbara and (former US President) George Bush. The death of such a conscientious writer has created a great void in the world of letters, but his works, as he longed for, are sure to become "a kind of confetti shower," falling from bookstores and shelves of libraries across the globe upon the heads and shoulders of mankind for generations to come. And, his works do call for more comparative studies with Indian writers, such as Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, Premchand, Tripuraneni Gopichand, Vasireddy Sitadevi, for a better understanding of the universality of cultural experiences across different nations. ❀

## Bibliography

1. Hamilton Kenneth (1979), *John Updike: A Collection of Critical Essays*, David Thorburn and Howard Eiland (Ed.), Prentice Hall Inc., New Jersey.
2. Radhakrishnan S (1960), *The Brahma Sutra: The Philosophy of Spiritual Life*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London.
3. Ryder Arthur W (1912), *Kalidasa: Translations of Shakuntala and Other Works*, J M Dent & Sons Ltd., London.

4. Updike John (1965), *Of the Farm*, Alfred A Knopf, New York.
5. Vakati Panduranga Rao and Puranam Subramanyasarma (Eds.) (1973), *Kadha Bharati: Telugu Kadhanikalalu*, National Book Trust of India, New Delhi.
6. Vasireddy Seethadevi (2000), *Vasireddy Seethadevi Sahityam*, Vol. 1, *Mattimanishi* (Novel), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad.

Reference # 64J-2009-05-04-01