



Becoming John Updike: Critical Reception, 1958-2010 (Literary Criticism in Perspective)

Laurence W. Mazzeno

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When John Updike died in 2009, tributes from the literary establishment were immediate and fulsome. However, no one reading reviews of Updike's work in the late 1960s would have predicted that kind of praise for a man who was known then as a brilliant stylist who had nothing to say. What changed? Why? And what is likely to be his legacy? These are the questions that *Becoming John Updike* pursues by examining the journalistic and academic response to his writings. Several things about Updike's career make a reception study appropriate. First, he was prolific: he began publishing fiction and essays in 1956, published his first book in 1958, and from then on, brought out at least one new book each year. Second, his books were reviewed widely - usually in major American newspapers and magazines, and often in foreign ones as well. Third, Updike quickly became a darling of academics; the first book about his work was published in 1967, less than a decade after his own firstbook. More than three dozen books and hundreds of articles of academic criticism have been devoted to Updike. The present volume will appeal to the continuing interest in Updike's writing among academics and general readers alike. Laurence W. Mazzeno is President Emeritus of Alvernia University. Among other books, he has written volumes on Austen, Dickens, Tennyson, and Matthew Arnold for Camden House's *Literary Criticism in Perspective* series.

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