

An on that later. the
marxist style



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An examination of critical styles represented in John Updikes A&P John Updikes A&P provides numerous perspectives for critical interpretation. His descriptive metaphors and underlying sexual tones are just the tip of the iceberg. A gender analysis could be drawn from the initial outline of the story and Sammys chauvinism towards the female.

Further reading opens up a formalist and biographical perspective to the critic. After several readings I began seeing the Marxist perspective on the surreal environment of A&P. The economic and social differences are evident through Sammys storytelling techniques and even further open up a biographical look at Updikes own views and opinions. According to the sample essay posted he was a womanizer in his own era and displayed boyish immaturity into his adulthood. A second analysis of this story roots more from a reader-response/formalist view. Although Sammy centered his dramatization around three young females, more specifically the Queen of the trio, it was a poignant detailed head to toe description of scene. Ill touch on that later. The Marxist style of criticism makes me a bit uncomfortable, because of the socialist and oppressive context it could be mistaken for.

There is a clear definition of class in this particular story; Sammy, a young man at the beginning of adulthood yet living in a moderately conservative town in New England. His mom still irons his shirts for him, and he has little respect for his elders. This is clearly outlined when a double rung up item brings a scolding from a 50-something, a look at his thought process, reveals him imagining her in Salem burning at the stake. At this time he notices three young females gracing their way through the store. He describes them with an elegant yet critical flair.

Their swimsuits were new with details down to the seams. The stand-out was the Queen, long white prima-Donna legs you got the idea that she talked the other two into coming in here with her, and now she was showing them how to do it, walk slow and hold yourself straight. He continues to give physical descriptions of her hair, chest, and the royal like gait in which she carried herself.

These socialites were defying the conservative middle class norms by wearing not only swimsuits with no shoes, but dropping their straps and inhibitions at the door. They were in a class by themselves. Sammy in his middle class environment was more street level with his knowledge and storytelling skills. This is further supported by the comment, Walking into the A&P with your straps down, I suppose its the only kind of face you can have prim. She held her head so high her neck, coming up out of those white shoulders, looked kind of stretched, but I didnt mind. The other two girls provide filler while Sammy is formulated the rest of his dramatization. Very little is said about them and the chunky one seems to have an eye for cookies. The girls continue their defiance social norms and walk into an aisle against other customers.

It is here that the rest of the store takes notice to the girls. But they are merely sheep in passing, they have no identity to Sam, nor does he waste his time including them to his creation. The homemakers are house slaves, an appropriate term for the time and era. The aisle of their emergence is marked by light bulbs and discount records and cellophane wrapped candy bars. Sammy is interrupted only enough to catch two bums buying large

amounts of pineapple juice. Again people but no names just derogatory juxtapositions. The kingfish marks a changing point for story.

He visualizes her high society parents sipping cocktails and conversating over crackers and various finger foods. Meanwhile he portrays his own parents to sip lemonade and if necessary Schlitz in tall glasses. The Socialistic manager admonishes the girls and demands them to be clothed next time. The customers were all bunched up on Stokesie like sheep, Engel explains that policy insists that shoulders must be covered. Policy is what the kingpins want. What others want is juvenile delinquency. Like a champ Sammy throws in the towel. He watched as 3 girls bucked