those—?” (227). Symbolically, “right” refers to the truth, the section of the courthouse where people sit who support Tom, Atticus, and racial equity.

The term “left” also denotes what remains, what is “left” of something. Scout says that the dog “had made up what was left of his mind,” turned around and began to walk toward the Finch’s house (105). A few paragraphs later, Lee contrasts Atticus’s mind with the dog’s mind. After learning Atticus had once been called “Ol’ One-Shot [… ] the deadest shot in Maycomb County” (106), Jem asks Miss Maudie why he never brags about his marksmanship talents. She answers, “People in their right minds never take pride in their talents” (107). Here, the “right” mind literally refers to people who think straight, level-headed people—in this case, implying that Atticus is humble. Whereas the dog uses what is “left” of his mind to harm people, Atticus, in his “right” mind, exemplifies humility.

Atticus, Tom, and Jem represent moral virtue: Atticus uses his “right” mind and his “good, right” eye to defend Tom; Tom takes the oath with his “good, right” hand; and Jem, with his vigorous “right” arm, defends Tom. Contrarily, the rabid dog, Mayella, and Bob represent moral inequity. The dog’s “left” legs are healthy; Mayella’s “left” eye is healthy; and Bob is “left” handed. The rabid dog presents a physical threat to Maycomb County, but Mayella and Bob present a social threat—the perpetuation of racism. Atticus’s virtue only enables him to eliminate the physical threat. That the jury convicts Tom in the end signals that Atticus loses his battle against racism.

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Updike’s A&P

Explications and interpretations of John Updike’s often anthologized story “A&P” have proliferated over the years, but even as recently as Corey Evan Thompson’s entry in The Explicator (215), no one has observed a dominant strain of imagery in the story that bears on the interpretation of Sammy, the story’s focus. Thompson’s concern is Sammy as the narrator who shows that he merely uses the girls who visit the A&P where he works to precipitate his already made decision to resign. But this ignores Updike’s imagery, which casts the girls as temptresses who lead Sammy astray. Thus he is also not quite the hero Toni Saldivar makes him out to be in “The Art of John Updike’s Fic-
tion" (1997) nor the twin, now much wiser, to Joyce’s narrator in “Araby,” as Walter Wells (1993) claims.

Saldívar has Sammy standing up for aesthetics in an epiphany of the meaning of beauty created by Updike’s use of allusions to Botticelli’s “Birth of Venus.” Wells, who finds affinities not only with Joyce but with Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress, has Sammy impulsively asserting principles in a cultural climate that has put the supermarket in place of the church. These interpretations dignify Sammy. The suggestion here, instead, is that Updike pokes gentle fun at Sammy because he succumbs to the girls who are cast in the roles of the legendary Sirens—the mythological temptresses who lured unwary males to their destruction. Sammy plays a mythic role, too, seeing himself as the distressed damsels’ proverbial knight in shining armor. Updike’s Sirens are not the Homeric figures who tempted sailors with their songs. They are the more widely known creatures who had fish bodies and so came to be seen as mermaids and above all as symbols of seduction. Updike must have hoped that his readers would realize this because of all his ocean imagery, from the Atlantic and Pacific (Markets) setting to the jar of herring snacks that the girls have come for but that none of the critics pays attention to. These, sought out and secured by “Queenie,” who is identified by Sammy as the girls’ leader, are specifically “Kingfish Fancy Herring Snacks” (Updike 192) and perhaps anticipate another acquisition she will make at Sammy’s checkout stand. When she defies store manager Lengel, proclaiming her decency, “Fancy Herring Snacks flashed in her very blue eyes” (194) as aquatic royalty speaks. Of course the girls wear bathing dress and naturally they do not “even have shoes on” (188). Queenie, who has “hair that the sun and salt had bleached” (189), “came down a little hard on her heels, as if she didn’t walk in her bare feet that much, putting down her heels and then letting the weight move along to her toes as if she was testing the floor with every step” (188)—as one might do, wearing flippers. The impulse of critics to make Sammy a very serious figure subverts the playfulness of Updike’s originally New Yorker story, which does not presuppose academically learned readers but relies instead on popular associations to tell a tale of a young man who may realize belatedly that he should not have made the gesture he did but, captivated by female allure, at the time could not help doing it.

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