

Age nineteen at the "aandp" essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Throughout the story Sammy demonstrates his sexism through his various women bashing comments. At the beginning of "A&P" Sammy criticizes the intelligence of women saying, "You never know for sure how girls' minds work (do you really think it's a mind in there or just a little buzz like a bee in a glass jar?)" (73). According to Sammy, women may not even have minds of their own to think.

The simile he uses compares the minds of women to an insect; even if women do have thoughts of their own, they are still trapped inside the "glass jar." Another example of Sammy's sexism is when he describes housewives shopping for their families as "houseslaves in pin curlers" (74).

The imagery from this description allows the reader to envision carbon copy, brainless women in hair curlers, pushing around their carts, as if that is all they know how to do. Not only do these ideas contribute to Sammy's immature character in the story, they also may reflect how the author felt about the women's movement that was beginning to take place during the time this story was published.

In addition to his sexism, Sammy's shallowness also shows through with the thoughts he thinks while working at A&P. The first thing he notices when the girls walk into the store is what they are wearing, or not wearing. He calls one of the girls "chunky," and basically says that the only attractive part of her is her "sweet broad soft-looking can with those two crescents of white just under it" (73).

When describing the same girl later in the story, Sammy calls her "the fat one," when he sees her reaching for a package of cookies (74). The majority

of Sammy's time is spent looking at the leader of the three girls, "Queenie," as he calls her.

She is the most attractive, which is why Sammy notices her the most. Sammy is checking her out in a rather primal manner, and comments to himself about how appealing her chest is and that "it was more than pretty" (74).

Sammy never talks to the girls until they are in the checkout line. When "Queenie" finally does speak, her voice is not what Sammy is expecting it to be. He spends so much time looking at these girls and assessing their appearance that he never has a conversation with them.

This shows that Sammy is more concerned with appearance than personality. An addition, he thinks that prettier is better. Sammy talks about the typical women who come into his store; they usually have six children and veins on their legs, and no one cares about them, because they are not worth remembering or looking at (75).

Sammy's impulsiveness illustrates his immaturity. This can be seen by his non-stop stream of consciousness during the story. He has something to say about everyone, and he does not hold back. His self-centered inner dialogue shows his inability to relate, as a mature adult, with others. Another example of his impulsiveness is he quits his job for the three girls that visit his store.

He does not agree with what his manager tells them about dressing more decently the next time they come in. Then his impulsivity betrays his immaturity when he impulsively quits his job: "The girls, and who'd blame

them, are in a hurry to get out so I say ' I quit' to Lengel quick enough for them to hear, hoping they'll stop and watch me, their unsuspecting hero." (76) In his mind, his act is heroic, even though it perfectly illustrates his impulsiveness.

His false sense of right and wrong keeps justifies his immature actions. After he quits, he goes outside to look for what he calls " my girls." Sammy knows nothing about them and thinks they would wait for him, thinking that what he did was heroic. His delusions of grandeur and immaturity influence his view of how these girls will be perceived and react to his gesture.

Which to him was a grand gesture. And even though he somewhat realizes the impulsiveness of his actions, he is unable to stop himself: " But it seems to me that once you begin a gesture it's fatal not to go through with it." (77) Sammy felt that his actions had to be followed through with once started, illustrating the immaturity of his impulsiveness.

By stereotyping and categorizing women, Sammy shows his immaturity through shallowness, sexism and impulsiveness. His shallowness shows in the imagery created by his visions of women as well as his preconceived notions of what makes a woman pretty.

The immaturity and impulsivity are shown by his actions at the A&P. His continual critiquing of others throughout the story shows time and again his inability to see others as anything but the image he creates, thus showing his impulsiveness, shallowness and sexism.