

# Sammy character in the aandp by john updike



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There are certain rules in our society which people have to consider. Some people try to deny the regulations of the society, although, their rebellion is an illusion due to the fact that the system of norms is more powerful than they think. Sammy, the main character of A&P by John Updike is among those people whose way of live is standard.

He is not poor, but his opportunities do not allow him to reach a higher position in society. Sammy is a nineteen-year-old boy who works as a cashier at a grocery store in a small town. His values and convictions change after he meets higher-class girls who want to rebel and challenge the norms imposed by the society. This essay is aimed to analyze how the aspect of rebellion is demonstrated through the social background of the main character.

Sammy's protest against the class differences is depicted by John Updike using the literary means such as plot, style, imagery and language. The first-person narration is used by the writer in order to disclose the narrator's true character. Moreover, the narration flows in such a way which gives the reader some food for thought. There cannot be a common view on the flow of narration, because John Updike wants the readers to pose questions about the genuine reasons of Sammy's motivation and behavior.

The writer uses the language means that precisely identify Sammy's personality, his lifestyle and social status, however, the message that the writer wants to transmit is not apparent. In addition, the first person narration is significant in order limit Sammy's point of view. This makes him

accept wrong judgments and think positively about the girls who visit the store.

Sammy is delighted by the freedom which the girls have and wants to break public rules as they do. He thinks they have a sense of liberty which Sammy does not have and this makes him to rebel. When the owner of the store drives the girls away, Sammy openly takes their side because he wants to become one of them: " 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 unsuspected hero" (Updike 100)

Despite Sammy's efforts, his unexpected impulse to rebel is not successful, because freedom does not only depend on one's willingness to achieve it. The finale of the short story is ironic because Sammy never meets the girls again and his strive to join them is not appreciated. In addition, the author wants the readers to understand that Sammy cannot break the social norms and rules because he belongs to a lower class than the girls and his desire to rebel is not supported by the same stability and position. Moreover, the writer underlines that Sammy is influenced by the illusion of freedom. The one who is ready to break the norms is certain about what to do next, but Sammy is not: "...my stomach kind of fell as I felt how hard the world was going to be to me hereafter" (Updike 101). Thus, it is evident that his rebellion is doubtful.

The sense of the rebellion is also visible in the way Sammy treats the store visitors. He thinks they are like sheep which make a crowd in the shop. Sammy thinks he is different from them, although, his position in society and

the job he has indicate the opposite. Thus, the protagonist decides to quit the job in order to show that he is different and he can take control over his future.

There is an aspect which Sammy did not consider when showing his rebellion. He did not think about the consequences of his non conformity.

In case of upper-class girls who are treated badly in Sammy's view, there is no strong negative effect on their lives. They know that their status will not be affected, so they can afford being brave and break the social norms. Due to their high position, they have more opportunities, unlike Sammy whose rebellion will have negative consequences. The finale of the story is open, but it is evident that there is no solution to the problem in Sammy's mind. He realizes that his strive to freedom was illusionary and the outcome of his action cannot be predicted. Thus, the end of the story is a turning point where Sammy begins his own struggle against the societal norms and rules.

To conclude, the story A&P by John Updike shows an attempt of the main hero to deny the social norms and follow his own path. However, Sammy's age and outlook shapes his action of rebellion, his social background puts some limitation on his chances to survive. The writer states that society is quite rude with the people who try to rebel, especially when they do not belong to higher and more powerful classes. In fact, Sammy can achieve a victory in this struggle but he understands that the outcome can be unpredictable because Sammy is not sure which benefits and risks can the freedom bring.