[Name of the Writer]

[Name of Instructor]

[Subject]

[Date]

A&P Marxism, Imagery, and Coming of age

# Synopsis

The short story ‘A&P’ was authored by John Updike in 1961. It often considered by the literary scholars as the denominator of the middle class, which is conditioned by the consumer conditioned society. It is a story of how an individual rebels against the preconceived notions of society. The story revolves around the teenage clerk named Sammy who works at the A&P store. One day, while he is working three young women enter the store taking Sammy by awe. He indulges in imagining details about the girls regarding their voices, their appearance and impressions altogether. He is however taken by surprise when the leader of the group named Queenie speaks and her voice is not as he had imagined. The parallel side of the story depicts the old manager named Lengel who prudish in his manner. He admonishes the girls for not wearing proper clothes to a grocery store. In addition to this, he also advises the girls to cover their shoulders next time. This offends Sammy and he resigns in the name of customer regard and dignity regardless of the fact that this would affect his parents. Samy does this top impress the young women who have already left despite the store by then.

## **Critical Literary Analysis**

Themes

The story revolves around multiple themes of the middle class who is subjected to the consumerism and commericialism. The writer continuously makes refernces to the consumer demands and the luxurious which have meddled with the minds of the consumers leading them to think that they are but a necessity in their life. He demonstrates a clear link between the economic statuses of people and their emotions that are evident in the small town in America. The story is based on the cold war era. The inscrutinibilty of the women in the story hold misunderstanding of their intention to wear clothes to the grocery store and vividly depicts misogyny in the society. Hence glimpses of the ruin and flight in the economy are seen side by side through subtle references to situations and purchase patterns of the people. Moreover, charlatans in the position of authority are also observed in the story where Lengel’s behavior patterns change as he rose to power.

Marxism200

Many critics view A&P as a story delivering the subjects and reflections of Marxism.

Sammy in this story shows resentment and criticizes the influence of consumerism on the individuals. Regardless of his own classification and objectifying the perceptions abtout the girls in his imagination. This shows the contention between the lower and the higher class mirroring the inequities that persist within the society, exposing the lower class to the oppression of capitalist economic ideologies. The story intensely highlights the Marxist facets vivid in the consumerism, classism, and commodification of people and products in society. In the story, Sammy is an example of a lower class as he is simply a bag boy at the A&P store. When the boss asked the girl to leave, Sammy stood up for a girl against his boss. Girls were at wrong and the boss (Lengel) should have a higher say as compare to Sammy. Queenie walks in the store like she owns the store not caring for any rule and also disrespecting the store’s manager. This attitude of Queenie makes Sammy believe that she has a higher social standing class. According to Marxism reflection, typical portraying of a hot popular girl which is reflected in the story is not necessary. This image of popular girls is very common in classic American literature.

Sammy as a bag boy in a grocery store feels that it is his duty to please a person from a higher social class than his own and stood up against his manager even though the girls were at wrong. The story is completely reflecting lower class dissension on entertaining people of upper class.

Imagery200

A&P is a short story which shows the difference between different between people according to their social class. when Sammy (the main character of the story) notices three girls entering the store he is working, he couldn't get his eyes off one of the girls. When girls are done shopping, the manager stops the girl and tell them that they are not dressed appropriately. Sammy trying to impress the girls had an argument with the manager and quits his job. The story painted the girls so perfectly that the reader can easily know how the girls look like. Characters are so well explained that the reader thinks that he/she is witnessing the story with his/ her own eyes. Way John Updike explains what Sammy is watching and noticing makes the story natural and realistic. The great use of imagery is how the writer makes the reader in believing that anyone can quit his job for a girl like Quinnie. In the story, Sammy compares the grocery stores with a pinball machine which is a good example of imagery. Sammy explains his experience as if he was inside a pinball machine, he didn’t know from which tunnel the girl will come out of.

Coming of age 200

Sammy explains the story of three girls coming to the store as if it was a regular day and a life change event can take place at any time. Samy knew about the town, and he thinks he has a good perspective of the people living in the town. Story portraits negativity in Sammy’s thought. Living under the bad conditions and social level discrimination had an impact on Sammy’s thinking.

# Quotes

"Oh Daddy," Stokesie said beside me. "I feel so faint." (Updike) page 7

Even the stokes a married person couldn’t get his eyes of the girls in the bikinis. And stokes response shocked Sammy, this is an example of good imagery. This quote helps the reader further explains the appreance of the girls. and if it is viewed as marxism refection, is this is a respectful way to talk about women?

“All that was left for us to see was old McMahon patting his mouth and looking after them sizing up their joints. Poor kids, I began to feel sorry for them, they couldn't help it.” (Updike) page 11

Sammy notices McMahon staring at the girls and realized that the girls clothing are putting them in an uncomfortable situation.

“That makes no difference," Lengel tells her, and I could see from the way his eyes went that he hadn't noticed she was wearing a two-piece before. "We want you decently dressed when you come in here." (Updike) Page 17

The manager clearly is upset with the way the girls are dressed up and entered his store. No matter which class a person belongs to, one does not act like he owns everything and even the lower class people. This quote clearly reflects how Lengel is a person who stands by ethics and rules and does not please the people with higher social status.

“When my parents have somebody over they get lemonade and if it's a real racy affair Schlitz in tall glasses with "They'll Do It Every Time" cartoons stenciled on.” (Updike) Page 15

The writer explains that he belongs to a working-class family by comparing his lifestyle with the Queenie’s. Although they were at wrong, people from different class and stand together against a common issue.

# References

Updike, John. *A&P*. 1961.