CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the short story that is taken to be analyzed is from John Updike, *A & P*. The analysis is divided into two sections, which is to answer two research questions. In the first section, the analysis is to explain about the characterization of the characters that is portrayed in the short story. Then, in the second section, the analysis is to talk about the human existence, which focuses on the characters' choice and the consequence that they have to receive as a responsibility.

1. The major characters' characterization

There are two characters that are analyzed. The two characters are major characters in A & P short story. They are Sammy and the "Queenie" as written in the first chapter that this analysis only focuses on two of them.

1.1. Sammy's characterization

a. Young

Sammy is known that he is in young age through direct and indirect characterizations that are presented by the author in A & P short story. The author tells the readers by direct characterization through his explanation about Sammy's age through Sammy explanation.

"Darling," I said. "Hold me tight." Stokesie's married, with two babies chalked up on his fuselage already, but

as far as I can tell that's the only difference. He's twenty-two, and I was nineteen this April (2).

Those sentences explain about the different age between Sammy and Stokesie. They are partners who work at A & P supermarket as cashiers. Stokesie is twenty-two years old who has already married and has two babies whereas Sammy is nineteen years old, which means that he is still included as adolescent. Adolescent is used to describe young people who are not children anymore but also not become adults yet, which also refers to their behavior (Collins Cobuild Dictionary).

Relating to the interpretation above, by indirect characterization, the author also tells readers about young-age of Sammy through same characterizations that can be used as a clue to predict Sammy's age. In which, in this case, those characterizations are explained through what Sammy thinks, what Sammy does, how Sammy reacts to other characters, etc. Those things are described below.

First, Sammy's attention is distracted by the opposite sex. He suddenly becomes nervous and clumsy at calculating customer's groceries when the three girls come to A & P market with nothing but only wearing bathing suits.

In walks these three girls in nothing but bathing suits. I'm in the third check out slot, with my back to the door, so I don't see them until they're over by the bread. The one that caught my eye first was the one in the plaid green two piece. She was chunky kid, with a good tan and a sweet broad soft-looking can with those two crescents of white just under it, where the sun never seems to hit, at the top of the backs of her legs. I stood there with my hand on a box of HiHo crackers trying to remember if I rang it up or not. I ring it up again and the customer starts giving me hell. She's one

of these cash register watchers, a witch about fifty rouge on her cheekbones and no eyebrows, and I know it made her day to trip me up. She'd been watching cash registers forty years and probably never seen a mistake before (1).

Some sentences above tell about Sammy, who is a cashier at A & P supermarket, is calculating a fifty years old female customer's groceries. Then, suddenly his attention is distracted when the three girls walk and go into A & P supermarket by only wearing bathing suits. The one wearing plaid green two-piece is the first girl, who attracts his attention. Because of that, he forgets whether he rings a box of HiHo crackers in his hand or not. Then, he decides to ring it up again, which actually, it has already been rung by him. It makes the female-customer has the pip.

The next clue is he puts his observation at the three girls accurately, from their physical appearance, the texture and pattern of their bathing suits until the different boundary of their tan lines.

There was this chunky one, with the two-piece – it was bright and green and the seams on the bra were still sharp and her belly was still pretty pale so I guessed she just got it (the suits) – there was this one, with one of those chubby berry-faces, the lips all bunched together under her nose, this one, and a tall one, with black hair that hadn't quite frizzed right, and one of these sunburns right across under the eyes, and a chin that was too long – (1).

The quotation above is about Sammy's description from his observation, which describes the two of the three girls. He calls the first girl who wears bright

and green two-piece as the chunky one. The delineation of her bra-texture and physical appearance is very detail, such as the seams of her bra that are still sharp, her belly is still pretty pale, her face is chubby, and the lips bunch together under her nose. Then, the second girl is described having black hair that has not quite tightly curled. Sammy calls her the tall one. According to him, she has too long chin and sunburn right across under her eyes.

The other clues, which show that he is in young age is the fact that he is a cynical person. The author conveys it through what Sammy thinks about people who he sees. He freely judges other people as he likes. He creates a perception that is running with his age. Mostly, his outlook towards every case is negative. Thus, he is suspicious about everyone around them. His observation of person and something around him reveals on his perception that explains his certain immaturity. It can be seen from how he underestimates and insults other people. With no consideration, he calls the female-customer about fifty as a witch, other people as sheep and also house-slaves. Those things are showed in the quotation below:

She's one of these cash-register-watchers, a witch about fifty with rouge on her cheekbones and no eyebrows, and I know it made her day to trip me up (1).

By the time I got her feathers smoothed and her goodies into a bag – she gives me little snort in passing, if she'd been born at the right time they would have burned her over in Salem (1).

The one who is said by Sammy is the female-customer in which her groceries are being calculated by Sammy. He rings again a box of HiHo, one of

her groceries because his attention is distracted by some girls who go into A & P supermarket. It annoys her and that gives him a cynical view. He calls the woman, whom is predicted by him fifty years old as a witch that put rouge on her cheekbones and does not have eyebrow. Moreover, he foresees that the woman should have been burned in Salem. He also gives labels to people, other customers as a sheep.

From the third slot I look straight up this aisle to the meat counter, and I watched them all the way. The fat one with the tan sort of fumbled with the cookies, but on second thought she put the packages back. The sheep pushing their carts down the aisle – the girls were walking against the usual traffic (not that we have one-way signs or anything) (2).

In the previous quotations, the "sheep" is a word that is given to other customers who are in A & P supermarket except the three girls. In the first quotation, that label is given to people, who pushing the carts at that time, whose way of their walks is in contrast with the three girls in aisle. In the second quotation, it is given to people, other customers who see a scene when Lengel, the manager of A & P supermarket talks to the three girls to not wearing bathing suits again in public places in front of Sammy when they will pay their groceries. The third quotation tells about the customers are served by Lengel, the manager of A & P supermarket who replaces Sammy' job after Sammy decides to quit from A & P because he wants to look heroic in front of the three girls. He looks on Lengel while thinking how his life will be (after deciding to quit from A & P supermarket).

Some other female-customers who are doing shopping in A & P supermarket also get his insult, in which Sammy calls them as house-slave. They are the women who need to look around again to ensure that what they have taken is correct.

A few house-slaves in pin curlers even looked around after pushing their carts past to make sure what they had seen was correct (2).

Even, two of the three girls also are given names by Sammy. Sammy gives names to the one that is chunky and in the plaid green two-piece as Plaid and another one, who has a tall body and a long chin as Big Tall Goony-Goony, which has very foolish meaning.

The girls, and who'd blame them, are in 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. They keep right on going, into the electric eye; the door flies open and they flicker across the lot to their car, Queenie and Plaid and Big Tall Gonny-Gonny (not that as raw material she was so bad), leaving me with Lengel and a kink in his eyebrow (4).

As previous explanation, the author presents Sammy as a young boy. Young age that exist in Sammy influences him in building his existence in his life, which automatically also brings effect on his choice. Considering his sex type is a boy, he wants to look like unsuspected hero in front of the girls, whom unconsciously have attracted his attention. Therefore, when the "Queenie" blushes because of a reprimand from Lengel that they should not get dress only in bathing suits in public place, Sammy thinks that he needs to defend them by deciding to quit as a

cashier in A & P supermarket. No one asks or forces him to do it but it is purely his own choice in creating his existence.

b. Principled

Sammy is described as a person that holds fast on his own principle. It is explained by the author through what he does. After deciding a decision, he feels as a boy he must hold on it. He does not want to recant what he has said.

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. They keep right on going, into the electric eye; the door flies open and they flicker across the lot to their car, Queenie and Plad and Big Tall Goony-Gonny (not that as raw material she was so bad), leaving me with Lengel and a kink in his eyebrow.

Sammy realizes that "Queenie's" face blushes because Lengel admonishes her about her cloth when she is going to pay her groceries in cashier, which must be heard by some people that are there at that time. He watches how she and her friends are in a hurry to get out from A & P supermarket after receiving a change of money from Sammy, who serves her. At that moment, he spontaneously says that he wants to quit from his job as a cashier in A & P supermarket to Lengel, a manager of the supermarket. He hopes that the girls will see him and call him as a hero. But the fact, none of the three girls look at him. Indeed, they keep right on going and leave Sammy with Lengel, who wonders about Sammy's decision.

"Did you say something, Sammy?" "I said I quit."

"I thought you did."

"You didn't have to embarrass them."

"It was they who were embarrassing them." I started to say something that came out 'Fiddle-de-doo." It's saying of my grand-mother's, and I know she would have been pleased.

"I don't think you know what you're saying," Lengel said.

"I know you don't," I said. "But I do." I pull the bow at the back of my apron and start shrugging off my shoulders. A couple customers that had been heading for my slot begin to knock against each other, like scared pigs in a chute.

Lengel tries to convince himself by asking to Sammy about what he has already said. And Sammy repeats his words that he indeed wants to quit from his job. He says that Lengel should not embarrass them by advising them in front of many people. Then, Lengel answers Sammy's statement that the girls are the ones that embarrass themselves by only wearing bathing suits in public area.

Legel sighs and begins to look very patient and old and gray. He's been a friend of my parents for years. "Sammy, you don't want to this to your Mom and Dad, "he tells me. It's true, I don't. But it seems to me that once you begin a gesture it's fatal not to go through with it. I fold the apron, "Sammy" stitched in red on the pocket, and put it on the counter, and drop the bow tie on top of it. The bow tie is theirs, if you've ever wondered. "You'll feel this for the rest of your life," Lengel says, and I know that's true, too, but remembering how he made that pretty girl blush makes me so scrunchy inside I punch the No Sale tab and the machine whirs "pee-pul" and the drawer splats out.(4)

Lengel reminds him to not disappoint his mom and dad because of it.

Sammy actually realizes that it will make them feel disappointed but he believes

that once you take a decision, it is fatal to not go through with it. He folds the apron and the bow tie that are worn by him and puts in on the counter. Sammy admits that what Lengel has said is true that he will feel this for the rest of his life. Yet, he keeps on his choice and goes out from A & P supermarket.

Therefore, it can be said that Sammy is a principled person. He has taken decision. Then, Lengel has reminded him about the consequences and his mom and dad who will feel disappointed because of his decision. He admits that what Lengel has said is true but he keeps on holding on his choice to quit from his job as a cashier in A & P supermarket. He holds on choice even he knows the consequence that he will be received after doing it. However, those characteristics have affected on Sammy's decision in creating his existence.

1.2. Queenie's characterization

a. Brave

Opened-dress is not common in public area. It is viewed as impolite action. It is a kind of manner in certain place that is generally known by people who dominate that place, where automatically the women put on closed-dress when they leave their home into the street. Thus, it is viewed as a brave action when there is someone who is not afraid to set at defiance because it is impossible to happen to anyone who does not have bravery. It exists in the story, which happens to Queenie. The quotation presents below:

What he meant was, our town is five miles from a beach, with a big summer colony out on the Point, but we're right in the middle of town, and the women generally put on a shirt or shorts or something before

they get out of the car into the street. And anyway these are usually women with six children and varicose veins mapping their legs and nobody, including them, could care less. As I say, we're right in the middle of town, and if you stand at our front doors you can see two banks and the Congregational church and the newspaper store and three real estate offices and about twenty seven old free loaders tearing up Central Street because the sewer broke again. It's not as if we're on the Cape; we're north of Boston and there's people in this town haven't seen the ocean for twenty years (2).

In those sentences above, Sammy explains that A & P supermarket is located right in the middle of town. Because it is in the central town, then there are many public places, such as Congregational church, two banks, newspaper store, and three real estate offices, which can be confirmed that there may be many people over there. Therefore, before the women get out to public places, they commonly wear covered-dress, at least shirt, shorts, or something. It is such a kind of culture in that town, in which nobody may ignore it, including the women with six children and varicose veins mapping their legs. Indeed, the town is five miles from beach, but it is right in North of Boston, in which it is possible that not all of citizens of that town ever come to the beach. Therefore, It can be said that she is brave enough to wear only bathing suit in A & P supermarket where is located in the middle of town. Another quotation shows that it is so uncommon over there:

You could see them, when Queenie's white shoulders dawned on them, kind of jerk, or hop, or hiccup, but their eyes snapped back to their own basket and on they pushed. I bet you could set off dynamite in an A & P and the people would by and large keep reaching and checking oatmeal off their lists and muttering "Let me

see, there was a third thing, began with A, asparagus, no, ah, yes, applesauce!" or whatever it is they do mutter. But there was no doubt, this jiggled them. A few house-slaves in pin curlers even looked around after pushing their carts past to make sure what they had seen was correct (2).

The quotation above explains that how people react when they see Queenie with her white shoulders that are exposed. They get a kind of shocked or hiccup. Even, their eyes return to their basket quickly but it can be denied that it bothers them, it even makes them need to convince what they have seen is correct.

b. Confident

The 'Queenie' is indicated as a confident girl through what another character thinks. In the story, it is known that she is wearing nothing only bathing suits in public location. Through Sammy's observation, he describes her confident through her action in which she steps her foot calmly, walks slowly in only bathing suit with her strap down, which seems that she believes that nothing is wrong about what she does in A & P supermarket. With her confident, it seems that she does not care with what she is wearing in the A & P supermarket.

Moreover, in fact, she does not feel uncomfortable and unabashed, and also she does not feel disturbed by people's view towards her. The quotations that show that confidence is here:

She had on a kind of dirty pink – beige maybe, I don't know – bathing suit with a little nubble all over it and, what got me, the straps were down. They were off her shoulders looped loose around the cool tops of her arms and I guess as a result the suit had slipped a little on her, so all around the top of the cloth there was this

shining rim. If it hadn't been there you wouldn't have known there could have been anything whiter than those shoulders. With the straps pushed off, there was nothing between the top of the suit and the top of her head except just her, this clean bare plane of the top of her chest down from the shoulder bones like a dented sheet of metal tilted in the light. I mean, it was more than pretty (1).

She had sort of oaky hair that the sun and the salt had bleached, done up in a bun that was unraveling, and a kind of prim face. Walking into the A & P with your straps down, I suppose it's the only kind of face you can have. She held her head so high her neck, coming up out of those white shoulders, looked kind of stretched, but I didn't mind. The longer her neck was, the more of her there was (1-2).

The first paragraph above is about Queenie's appearance. In A & P supermarket, she only wears a bathing suit in dirty pink or maybe beige. She lets her straps down of her shoulders and circle loose around her top arms. It makes all around of the top of her cloth can be seen by people freely. Then, Second paragraph explains about the way Queenie walks into A & P supermarket with her straps down. She walks with rising her head and neck so high. It looks like that she is so confident and so proud of herself.

Then, there is the second clue, which can be concluded from Sammy's description that may say that Queenie is a confident person. He describes that from those three girls, the Queenie looks more like a leader of them. She walks ride in front of them and her friends follow her. Sammy explains that the "Queenie" looks like she is the one who persuade her two friends to only wear bathing suit in A & P supermarket.

She was the queen. She kind of led them, the other two peeking around and making their shoulders round. She didn't look around, not this queen, she just walked straight on slowly, on these long white prima donna legs. She 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, putting a little deliberate extra action into it. You never know for sure how girls' mind work (do you really think it's a mind in there or just a little buzz like a bee in a glass jar?) but you got the idea she had 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 (1).

The descriptions are about "Queenie". Sammy gives her name "Queenie" because she looks like a queen of other two friends, who glance around whereas "Queenie" just walk slowly straight with her long white legs like prima donna. The way "Queenie" treads in the aisle and sets foot on the floor seems so confident. Sammy has a notion that she seems like showing them how to do it, walk slowly and keep straight confidently. Then, it can be said that the bravery and self-confidence belongs to Queenie in only wearing bathing suits in A & P supermarket, participate in building her existence.

2. The existentialism of the characters

2.1. Sammy's existence

As being a human, man shows their existence through the actions that they do. They need to choose a choice as a free creature, which also needs to be responsible for what he has already chosen.

a. Freedom

As Spinelli's statement, freedom is "the totality of human existence in one's environment, involving both choice and responsibilities" (Freedom & Existential Philosophy). As Jean Paul Sartre states, that a man is free, man is freedom. It shows that everyone has his or her own life. They are themselves that determine what they want to be in the future. In this story, Sammy has a freedom to establish how his life will be. He decides to quit from his job because of his own desire, in order to be a hero for the three girls, especially, for the Queenie. Even, his work position is only as a checkout clerk at A & P supermarket. Yet, he deserves to determine whether he will stay or will not stay. No one can force him to keep doing it or stop from that job, even his own boss at the place where he works.

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 stp and watch me, their unsuspected hero.

. . .

"Did you say something, Sammy?"

"I said I quit."

. . .

"I don't think you know what you're saying, "Lengel said.

"I know you don't," I said. "But I do." I pull the bow at the back of my apron and t shrugging it off my shoulders (4).

Thus, Sammy' decision as his own desire is as a form of freedom, which includes in an existence as a human.

b. Choice

Choice is something that must be taken by human (Sartre 44). As Nellickappily writes about Jean Paul Sartre's argument, that man is condemned to be free. It means that Sartre believes that through a choice and actions, human makes himself; he creates an essence for himself which portrayed by Sammy in the short story.

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. They keep right on going, into the electric eye; the door flies open and they flicker across the lot to their car, Queenie and Plaid and Big Tall Goony-Goony (not that as raw material she was so bad), leaving me with Lengel and a kink in his eyebrow.

"Did you say s<mark>omething, Samm</mark>y?"
"I said I quit (4)."

It can be shown from the previous quotation that Sammy's decision to quit from his job is his own choice. In addition, his decision to quit from his job is actually an action to attract the attention of the three girls' in bathing suits. No one orders or forces him, even only suggests him. He is too ashamed to recant what he has already said in front of Lengel and some customers. Although, Lengel is his manager, a boss at A & P supermarket where Sammy works, but he cannot refuse Sammy's choice. This is the quotation when Sammy takes a choice for his life.

c. Responsibility

Responsibility is a job or obligation that must be borne by someone as the consequence of choice that has been taken because it involves all mankind (Sartre 24). Therefore, the purpose of existentialism is to make every human aware of what he is, and make him responsible for his own existence (Sartre 23). Since, man chooses their own choice, they have to receive what the consequence is, although it possibly can create anguish, anxiety, and despair condition (Sartre 25). It means that consequence can be a good thing or a bad thing. It exists in the short story which is depicted by Sammy. It can be know from the quotation below.

Lengel sighs and begins to look very patient and old and gray. He's been a friend of my parents for years. "Sammy, you don't want to do this to your Mom and Dad," he tells me. It's true, I don't. But it seems to me that once you begin a gesture it's fatal not t go through with it. I fold the apron, "Sammy" stitched in red on the pocket, and put it on the counter, and drop the bow tie on top of it. The bow tie is theirs, if you've ever wondered. "You'll fee; this for the rest of your life," Lengel says, and I know that's true, too, but remembering how he made that pretty girl blush makes me so scrunchy inside I punch the Not Sale tab and the machine whirs "pee-pul" and the drawer splats out.

As quotation above, in this story, the responsibility must be received by Sammy as the result of his own choice. Sammy has decided to quit his job. He gets two things because of it. The first, he truly realizes that the decision will make him feel this for the rest of his life considering his family only rely on him. His mom and dad must feel so sad because of his decision. By seeing Lengel's statement, it can be known that Sammy needs the job to support his family's life.

The second is the passiveness of the three girls. At first, the purpose of his decision is actually to attract the three girls' attention. Yet, at last, they do not even care to Sammy. After being ashamed by Lengel, they are in hurry to their car without paying attention to Sammy who has decided to quit from his job because he want to help the three girls from being ashamed by Lengel. However, he also understands that after decision has been taken, he must be responsible for it.

2.2. Queenie's existence

a. Freedom

To show the existence of them in a certain place, human will take an action as they hope to be. It is told in the story that Queenie, the name that is given by Sammy does an action to show her freedom. She is one of those three girls who is wearing nothing but only bathing suit and bare feet in the A & P supermarket. It is known as a brave action considering the location of supermarket. A & P supermarket is located in right in the middle of town; north of Boston.

What he meant was, our town is five miles from a beach, with a big summer colony out on the Point, but we're right in the middle of town, and the women generally put on a shirt or shorts or something before they get out of car into the street. And anyway these are usually women with six children and varicose veins mapping their legs and nobody, including them, could care less. As is ay, we're right in the middle of town, and if you stand at our front doors you can see two banks and the Congregational church and the newspaper store and three real estate offices and about twenty-seven old free loaders tearing up Central Street because the sewer broke again. It's not as if we're the

Cape; we're north of Boston and there's people in this town haven's seen the ocean for twenty years (2).

b. Choice

The Queenie decides to wear only bathing suits with bare foot. It is her choice considering she is very innocent and confident. She does not look uncomfortable or feel ashamed with people's view towards her, even though it is not common for people who come in the public place. It can be seen from how she walks confidently in the A & P supermarket. It is portrayed in the quotations below:

She was the queen. She kind of led them, the other two peeking around and making their shoulders round. She didn't look around, not this queen, she just walked straight on slowly, on these long white prima donna legs. She 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, putting a little deliberate extra action into it.

Moreover, she is also described that even her straps of her bra were down, she does not feel ashamed. She does not fix it quickly, but she just let it without caring about some people's look around her, which is explained in the quotation below:

She had on a kind of dirty pink- - beige maybe, I don't know – bathing suit with a little nubble all over it and, what got me, the straps were down. They were off her shoulders looped loose around the cool tops of her arms, and I guess as a result the suit has slipped a little n her, so all around the top of the cloth there was this shining rim. (5).

c. Responsibility

As stated above, that every action has a consequence that must be received by them which has been chosen by themselves. Queenie has chosen a choice by wearing only bathing suits in a public place, which is uncommon there. As the result of the action, some people who intuitively rub up against her in the A & P supermarket steal a sight of her, including Sammy who always keeps a close watch on her from the moment they come until they go. Then, they also get a rap over the knuckles, which make them feel blushed from Lengel, the manager of A & P supermarket. He thinks that the action is not appropriate to be done in a public area.

Lengel, the manager of A & P supermarket who is also a Sunday school teacher sees Queenie and her two friends in only bathing suits when he is going to come back to his 'manager' room after haggling with a truck full of cabbages on the lot. He comes close to them and admonishes them that this place is not the beach. It makes Queenie blushes. She quibbles that her coming to the supermarket is just because her mother asks her to buy a jar of herring snacks. "That's all right, but this isn't beach," answered Lengel. Lengel is so serious. He thinks that it is not a funny thing.

"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." (3) "Girls, I don't want to argue with you. After this come in here with your shoulders covered. It's our policy." He turns his back. That's policy for you. Policy is what

the kingpins want. What the others want us juvenile delinquency (4).

Thus, two things above can be said as the consequences that they get because of the action that they have taken. It is a responsibility for making choice.

From the previous explanation, it is known that Sammy and Queenie realize their existence as a human. They show their existence through choice that they have taken as what they want without force of anybody. In which Sammy decides to quit from his job in order that his existence is known by Queenie and Queenie wears only bathing suits in the supermarket. Their actions can be said as a form of being-for-itself. Besides, Sammy's existence as a reaction of Queenie's appearance can be referred to being-for-others.