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### Sheepish Conformity

At the end of John Updike's "A & P," the reader is left wondering why Sammy finally quits his job at the store and why his life will be so difficult thereafter. Sammy is driven to quit by the change that the girls present to the store and is left facing the same hardships in the outside world as the girls faced within the A & P. However, how did the store change and why did this lead to Sammy quitting? The girls present Sammy with a new outlook on life, and the A & P is unable to provide a meaningful environment for Sammy's new, open-minded view of society. The A & P represents a society that functions by conformity and superficiality but deteriorates at the first glimpse of individualism and tolerance.

The A & P symbolizes the conformity and superficiality of the customers and their society. The A & P customers are not described individually but instead as a group of "sheep pushing their carts" (213). Sheep always act as a herd, preventing the individual from thinking or acting alone, and the customers mimic this synchronous and monotonous manner. In this particular store, customers follow "the usual traffic (not that we have one-way signs or anything)" (213) that is understood to be the norm behavior. Although