

Rhetorical Analysis of Kincaid's "Girl"

1. *Locate two or more passages that you find interesting. Incorporate the quote using MLA format and in paragraph form, briefly explain your reasoning for selecting the passage.*

Quote One: In Jamaica Kincaid's "Girl", she lists the domestic duties that females are responsible for in the household. The narrator in her short story explains "... this is how you iron your father's khaki shirt so that it doesn't have a crease [. . .] this is how you sweep a corner; this is how you sweep a whole house . . ." (Kincaid 1). It is evident that the narrator places great priority over even the most menial tasks and sees it as her responsibility to train the next generation. These teachings suggest that this is what her culture or society expect from women.

Quote Two: The narrator continues to list domestic chores but casually inserts other teachings that show she is not just teaching the girl how to keep a household. She suggests, "... this is how to make good medicine for a cold; this is how to make a good medicine to throw away a child before it even becomes a child . . ." (Kincaid 1). In this subtle message, she is suggesting that there are things that are equally important to hide from men. This veiled advice makes the reader question if the female narrator is a conformist or if she is challenging societal stereotypes. It is the subtle suggestions of resistance and rebellion that prove there is a gradual message of non-conformity that is as important as the teaching of the specific tasks.

2. *Main Point*

In Jamaica Kincaid's "Girl," the author suggests that there are important messages that are both veiled and obvious that one generation of women must teach the next. Although many may feel that the culture of the narrator plays a significant role in what is being taught, a closer reading will disclose that these domestic expectations, as well as, gender stereotypes affect women of all cultures. Kincaid's short story suggests that women are the subordinate culture to men. That the story takes place in a patriarchal society, and in order to challenge this society, it must be done covertly.

3. *Question/Comment*

The tone of the short story is harsh. It fails to reflect the motherly love one comes to expect between the mother and daughter, but does this lack of expected nurturing display that the mother does not love her daughter?