

Analysis of how i learned to sweep

Literature



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One of the devices that are used in the poem is a metaphor. For example, the persona's mother refers to the floor that she wants to be swept as a table. In this respect, the poet writes, "... (she) put a broom before me, and said she'd like to be able to eat her dinner off that table" (4). The use of metaphor to create mental images is also evident when the poet refers to helicopters as dragonflies. The poet writes, "... into which these dragonflies filled with little men descended" (24).

The poet also successfully uses similes to create mental images of objects a couple of times. She, for example, likens the clean floor to a just-washed dinner plate when she writes " Her floor was immaculate as a just-washed dinner plate" (13). The persona uses a sincere tone when she reveals that she had never learned how to sweep before her current experience. Insincerely, she states that she swept all the harder as she watched a dozen little men (soldiers) die imagining that they were part of the dirt she had to sweep away. In this respect, the poet writes, " I watched a dozen of them die. . . as if their dust fell through the screen upon the floor I had just cleaned" (29).

Analysis of Jamaica Kincaid's " Girl"

Jamaica Kincaid's " Girl" brings into focus how parenting style has changed over time to be what it involves today. Apart from highlighting issues parenting, Kincaid possibly uses her art piece to tell the story of how women were subject to stringent control in her world. In " Girl", two characters prominently feature; a mother and her daughter (the girl). The girl in the <https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-how-i-learned-to-sweep/>

short story is given order after order by her mother and is subject to a lot of criticism and abuse. While it would seem impractical and even rude of a mother to issue a list of almost endless admonitions today, this seems to be the trend in Kincaid's world (or perhaps during her time as a young girl). Not once does the mother refer to the girl as "slut" implying what she would think of her daughter if she fails to follow her directions? From the series of long sentences that she uses in "Girl", Kincaid manages to create a tone of repressiveness and obedience.

Among other themes, the theme of generation gap features prominently in "Girl". The mother and her daughter belong to two different generations going by their relative ages. In the ensuing conversation, mainly dominated by the preaching of the older woman, it is evident that there is a conflict with the girl questioning some of the statements made by her mother. For example, when the mother instructs the girl to always squeeze bread to ensure that it is fresh, she (the girl) asks, "but what if the baker won't let me feel the bread?" (Kincaid par. 1). Together with the tone that the mother uses, the conflict between mother and daughter come to the fore.

Personal Reflection

"How I Learned to Sweep" by Julia Alvarez is a poem that talks about the things that happen ordinarily in life in a way that captures the mind of the audience. Written in simple language, the piece makes good use of literary devices such as metaphors, similes, consonance, and alliteration. The short story "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid is an equally interesting piece of literature. The girl is particularly interesting given the tone that the author uses.

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Essentially, the tone is brought about by the series of statements that one of the characters, the mother, weaves together in a manner of preaching to a daughter. Although the two literary works belong to two different genres, the two authors manage to apply the theme of the generational gap and bring to fore some element of parenting. In “ How I Learned to Sweep”, the mother seems to be appreciative of her daughter’s efforts in as much as she demands good results from her. This seems not to be the case in “ Girl”. In this case, the mother apart from appearing to be overly obsessed with giving commands to her daughter is keen on making scathing remarks about what her daughter may end up to be if she fails to follow her instructions.