

In Lois Tyson's "Critical Theory Today" Tyson discusses the use of reader response theory towards the reader's role when creating meaning. Tyson expounds on the fact that reader response theory is a domain of overall literary studies in which one can learn about their own reading and how a text can relate to their overall life experiences. Essentially a text can be interpreted one way based on what the reader may be specifically looking for as well as their own personal connection with the text that may intern lead to either biases or frustration/insecurity. Tyson states that reader-response is "the role of the reader cannot be omitted from our understanding of literature, and that reader's do not passively consume the meaning they find in literature" (162) One example of this would be if an individual has insecurities regarding their weight. If a text discusses a problem in which the main character is dealing with issues regarding their weight the reader could easily become defensive towards the nature of the text and may choose to stop reading. In opposition, the reader may also view the text in a positive light in which they root for the character and hope for the best. In Jamaica Kincaid's "Girl" Kincaid's use of Tyson's reader response theory can be shown through the overall breakdown and decipherment of the text.

Throughout the entire text there is an overall sense of ambiguity. In addition to, the text itself can be viewed as a diary entry; the text discusses the narrator's thought process after all of her thoughts (and opinions from other people) have been formed. For example the text states "on sundays try to walk like a lady and not like the slut you are so bent on becoming." The narrator never states whether she is a female or a male. From the reader's perspective one can infer that the narrator is an adult, and that she is female. Furthermore, based on the thought itself one can also gather that she not only is she female but she is a female working on becoming the best version of herself based on the eyes of society. The narrator

discusses her thoughts in such a way that not only are we able to get a sense of what she is actually thinking but it is revealed what others are saying to her and how they must feel towards her seeing that she is focused on “becoming a lady” opposed to the “slut” others must see her slowly transforming into. Also, as a reader if an individual has experienced something such as this they will understand the pressure of trying to fit into the “norm” that has been set. In fact, the overall text consist of her thought process in which she is trying to fit into the mold that society has shaped for her. The message in which text reflects is the importance of the “intellectual woman” in society and what one must abide by in order to be considered so. In order to fulfill this standard her overall intelligence is shown through the duties she performs. The last line of the text states “but what if the baker won’t let me feel the bread?; you mean to say that after all you are really going to be the kind of woman who the baker won’t let near the bread?” From the reader’s perspective (assuming that they have experienced this pressure)one can interpret this last line as a sexual metaphor concerning a woman’s overall intelligence/womanhood. Essentially, If one is not good enough or clean enough then one “should not be part” of the community. The reader can infer that the authoritative character is repressing the sexuality of the narrator. Essentially, limiting the narrators ability to express how they feel/ even down to the thoughts of this character. Her thoughts are altered out of fear itself. There is a fear of society’s standards and norms, alongside the fear of not being able to properly align with the social structure in which a woman of esteem should walk high and carry themselves a certain way.