

audience a verbal handshake as a gesture of respect and cordiality. In the case of King's "Letter," the writer's intent is clear. However, other writers are not always as transparent in their purposes. Thus, as critical thinkers, we cannot always readily agree upon a speaker's or a writer's credibility. The following short fiction piece, "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid, offers a debatable perspective on *ethos*:

Girl (1983)

Jamaica Kincaid

Wash the white clothes on Monday and put them on the stone heap; wash the color clothes on Tuesday and put them on the clothesline to dry; don't walk barehead in the hot sun; cook pumpkin fritters in very hot sweet oil; soak your little clothes right after you take them off; when buying cotton to make yourself a nice blouse, be sure that it doesn't have gum on it, because that way it won't hold up well after a wash; soak salt fish overnight before you cook it; is it true that you sing benna in Sunday school?; always eat your food in such a way that it won't turn someone else's stomach; on Sundays try to walk like a lady and not like the slut you are so bent on becoming; don't sing benna in Sunday school; you mustn't speak to wharf-rat boys, not even to give directions; don't eat fruits on the street—flies will follow you; *but I don't sing benna on Sundays at all and never in Sunday school*; this is how to sew on a button; this is how to make a buttonhole for the button you have just sewed on; this is how to hem a dress when you see the hem coming down and so to prevent yourself from looking like the slut I know you are so bent on becoming; this is how you iron your father's khaki shirt so that it doesn't have a crease; this is how you iron your father's khaki pants so that they don't have a crease; this is how you grow okra—far from the house, because okra tree harbors red ants; when you are growing dasheen, make sure it gets plenty of water or else it makes your throat itch when you are eating it; this is how you sweep a corner; this is how you sweep a whole house; this is how you sweep a yard; this is how you smile to someone you don't like too much; this is how you smile to someone you don't like at all; this is how you smile to someone you like completely; this is how you set a table for tea; this is how you set a table for dinner; this is how you set a table for dinner with an important guest; this is how you set a table for lunch; this is how you set a table for breakfast; this is how to behave in the presence of men who don't know you very well, and this way they won't recognize immediately the slut I have warned you against becoming; be sure to wash every day, even if it is with your own spit; don't squat down to play marbles—you are not a boy, you know; don't pick people's flowers—you might catch something; don't throw stones at blackbirds, because it might not be a blackbird at all; this is how to make a bread pudding; this is how to make doukona; this is how to make pepper pot; this is how to make a good medicine for a cold; this is how to make a good medicine to throw away a child before it even becomes a child; this is how to catch a fish; this is how to throw back a fish you don't like, and that way something bad won't fall

on you; this is how to bully a man; this is how a man bullies you; this is how to love a man, and if this doesn't work there are other ways, and if they don't work don't feel too bad about giving up; this is how to spit up in the air if you feel like it, and this is how to move quickly so that it doesn't fall on you; this is how to make ends meet; always squeeze bread to make sure it's fresh; *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?

Kincaid's narrator would seem to be a mother lecturing her daughter, "girl." The mother's advice and admonitions are salt-of-the-earth, basic survival skills for a girl or woman: from how to cook, how to clean, and how to spit or smile, to how to take care of a man, or to administer her own birth control. Clearly, the mother is intent on her daughter's listening; the daughter manages only two brief rebuttals: "*but I don't sing benna on Sundays...but what if the baker won't let me feel the bread?*" Furthermore, the mother's tone is authoritative and domineering; her lecture is spiked with imperative clauses: Do this, do that, don't do that, never do this, etc. Yet it also is a catalogue of practical information: "this is how...; this is how..." The mother is passing on to her daughter all of her own hard-earned knowledge. As readers, what is our attitude toward this mother? Is she a "good" mother? Do we respect her? Trust her? Why or why not? Finally, would we describe the tone as simple yet elegant, a message of "tough love," or crude and haranguing, a belittling message of misguided love? Kincaid's short fiction piece can provoke an energetic discussion among readers and prompt us to explore our underlying assumptions about the role of a parent or an authority figure.

VISUAL ARGUMENT

So far in this chapter we have illustrated the principles of argument in written examples. These principles also apply to visuals, such as political cartoons, advertisements, or **propaganda** (usually information spread by a government to support a political cause).

Advertisers want their audience to buy a particular product, so they often include assumptions and audience appeals to convince the audience that its product is needed. When analyzing visuals, we must consider what assumptions are present. For example, most of us believe wrinkles are bad and wealth is good. Visuals, like written arguments, often rely on appeals to *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos* to persuade consumers to purchase these products. An appeal to *pathos* might include the use of adorable animals or small children in their ads; an appeal to *logos* in a car ad might include statistics such as low gas mileage or affordability; an appeal to *ethos* for medication might include a doctor's recommendation. Consider the following WWI poster: