

Compare and contrast of barbie doll and phenomenal woman



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In Marge Piercy's poem, Barbie Doll, the "girl-child" is always looking to others or the outside world to tell her how to look and feel, "a classmate said: You have got a great big nose and fat legs" (323). The character is portrayed as a girl who has everything going in her life; good grades, very healthy/strong, and an abundant sexual drive – even though she has the big nose and legs. She works her whole life to be better and for people to realize that she is beautiful, until the day she cuts off her nose and legs and dies.

It is not until her funeral that the people finally call her beautiful. The girl basically kills herself trying to get others approval, when she should have lived her own life. Contrasting the context of Barbie Doll, in that a woman must meet societies standards of how women should look to be considered beautiful, Maya Angelou's Phenomenal Woman explains how a woman should be free and act as herself. The speaker of the poem is self-confident when walking into a room full of men, "I walk into a room just as cool as you please, and to a man, the fellows stand or fall down to their knees" (322).

At the end of each stanza, Angelou repeats the same lines, "I'm a woman, phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, that's me" (322), as a cry out to the world that she is who she is and does not care what people say. The two poems, written over 30 years ago are a testament to that time and our time today. Women are constantly going to plastic surgery clinics to look like models, but there are the few women that are being free and being themselves.