

The secretary chant

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



In life there are things that can take over how to live life and how to be as a person. Take for instance the poem "The secretary chant" by Marge Piercy tells about the dehumanization of a woman in a business role. The secretary no longer sees herself as a woman but rather a collection of office supplies.

In the beginning she compares her hips to a desk, this indicates that not only does her life revolve around her job but also physically she is being taken over as well. Slowly losing herself and becoming her own office: "From my ears hang chains of paper clips" (1 and 2) and "Rubber bands form my hair" (4). She is losing her identity turning into all the objects in her environment and in some ways becoming a machine herself. Not only does her job have her hazed about how she views herself but she sees her new born child as a "Xerox machine" (20). Her dehumanization could be the result of a monotonous job which has trained her to not only discourage personal thoughts but rather simply develop mechanical thinking.

Even though there is a moment where she mentions that her navel is a reject button, which emphasizes that her identity and essence to develop and grow as a human are being denied; she is conforming to the objects around her there is a feeling that she is unwilling to completely lose all her essence. At the end she gives the notice that she has not given herself completely. The secretary mentions, "File me under W/ because I wonce/ was/ a woman." A crucial part of a secretary's job is to make sure everything is put in the right order and done correctly. The misspelling of the word once, suggest that even though the secretary is like a machine no ready to give up her identity.

The poem gives insight as to the dehumanization that some people face in the workplace where individuality and personal thinking are not well received. Some people may endure such circumstances in order to make a living, yet deep inside the desire to be a human still persist. The secretary is willing to keep the human part of her which wishes to be heard and be unique even in the most remote and subtle way.