

Forms of literature: barbie doll

Life



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American culture encompasses today's traditions, ideals, customs, beliefs, values, and innovations. In Marge Piercy's poem entitled " Barbie Doll", the title emphasizes the theme of the poem which is that girls are ultimately influenced by society's limited definitions of feminine behavior and beauty. In this poem Piercy conveys the cultural and societal expectations that American culture places on children these days, especially young girls.

The image that Piercy tries to portray in this poem is not supposed to be wrong in any way but in reality it is incorrect to what according to the American society is the " perfect women". As a child, the girl in the poem was presented dolls that did pee-pee, miniature GE stoves, irons, and wee lipsticks the color of cherry candy. By providing and using solid examples that many Americans would be familiar with, and even using the brand name of General Electric, Marge Piercy allows the story to relate to images of the reader's past.

In these examples, though, are the ultimate causes of the girl's lack of self-satisfaction: perfect bodies, perfect faces, and the perfect look. It is to no surprise that Piercy names the poem " Barbie Doll" the typical example of fake perfection. Further into the poem Piercy goes to greater extent to show the consequence of dissatisfaction with one's self. Despite the fact that she was healthy, tested intelligent, possessed strong arms and back, had an abundant sexual drive and manual dexterity, traits that would seem " perfect" to any human being, she was still unaccepted by society.

The girl attempts to please everyone at first, but soon " Her good nature wore out. " The people around her were the main cause. In the stanza that

immediately follows, Piercy shows the main idea of the poem. The young woman whom is now lying dead in a casket wearing a pretty dress and fake makeup now looks “ beautiful” to the people around her. The society is now happy. “ Doesn't she look pretty? Everyone said”. Her beauty is no longer significant now that she cannot live to express it. The society in which the young girl lived in drove her to her death.

Laced in irony, it is finally stated by the author that the girl has achieved acceptance, but not on the quality of her character or her being but through the unwilling compromise to culture. Piercy shows through her poem “ Barbie Doll” the dangers of false standards and the consequences of their application. It is not that we should all be held to a single, high standard, but rather that we should each be judged according to our own quality and values. When reading this poem I realized that wanting to fit in and be perfect isn't cool, it's a waste of a perfect life.