
Literary Devices In Discussing Women And Gender Roles In The Poem Barbie Doll By Marge Piercy And Short Story Girl By Jamaica Kincaid

People constantly think about whether they are attractive enough or not this ends up hurting people because they think that they are not good enough. People will take drastic measures in order to prove to people that they can be beautiful. However changing the way you look can cost you and not just money but also your life that is the lesson that Marge Piercy expresses in the poem "Barbie Doll". On the other, hand Jamaica Kincaid in "Girl" talks about how women should only worry about just sitting there and looking pretty. In the poem "Barbie Doll" by Marge Piercy, they use diction, imagery, and symbolism to show that the only thing that men look at is the physical appearance of women and how many women get plastic surgery in order to make them look pretty no matter the cost even if they end up dying. On the other hand, the short story "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid uses diction, symbolism and simile to express how many women suffered because of what society thinks that they can or cannot do. It discusses women and gender roles and how many people believe it should stay like that. Both authors use these literary devices to express how women suffer a lot because of society and gender roles.

In the Poem "Barbie Doll", the author uses symbolism by comparing the girl to a Barbie doll because she does everything to become beautiful and perfect and that is what Barbie dolls are known for to be the perfect girl. In Piercy's poem "Barbie Doll" she says "a turned-up putty nose, dressed in a pink and white nightie" (Lines 21-22). In this line, the author uses symbolism by comparing the putty nose to the perfect nose. Woman often do things to change their appearance so that they can be accepted by society and not pushed aside. He also uses the colors of her dress for symbolism white symbolizes purity and pink symbolizes femininity. Throughout the years society has been known to limit woman clothing style and colors. Woman are often judge by what they wear and how they wear it.

Not only does the poem "Barbie Doll" have symbolism but it also has imagery. Imagery is very dominant in this poem. Piercy uses very strong words and sentences that are very descriptive. For example, the words she uses in the first couple of lines. "And presented dolls that did pee-pee and miniature GE stoves and irons and wee lipsticks the color of cherry candy." (Lines 2-3). It is common how people start children to start thinking what their role is in society by giving them toys that will sculpt their future. Piercy also uses great imagery to show the girls experiences with detail. Her imagery is especially shines through in (Lines 17-25), throughout these lines, Piercy compares the young girl to a Barbie doll. However, in the end the girl couldn't handle all of the surgery's she had done so she dies. When she dies people start to admire her and say that she was pretty because she changed for them but in reality that's not even her natural self. "Doesn't she look pretty? Everyone said. Consummation at last to every woman a happy ending." (23-25). Piercy used imagery to show that woman often get influenced to do things that other people do just so that they could get accepted by society even if it cost, even if its death itself.

"By using similes, and a fairy tale-like tone, the author creates a cosmos starring a suicidal young lady instead of Barbie, the glamorous sex symbol the girl is compared to throughout the

poem.” Throughout the poem, Piercy compares a Barbie doll to a young girl through figurative language. An example would be lines 15-16. “Her good nature wore out/like a fan belt.” She is describing the girls nature is diminishing, just like a fan belt. This is an example of a simile in the poem. Piercy uses figurative language so that we can see how many woman are so worried that they wont be accepted by society that they start to change for everyone.

In the short story “Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid, she uses symbolism by referring to a slut as dirty clothes. She discusses how women who do not take care of their house is the same thing as not caring for themselves, according to her mother. In the story, the mother describes a “slut” as someone who does not follow the rules of Lady like behavior. Traditionally a slut is a woman who has had many sexual encounters however according to the mother a “slut” is women who does not fit in to a social setting. The mother describes how a “slut” is not just someone who has may sexual encounters with different men but someone who does not follow the rules on lady like behavior such as not wearing the proper clothes, not speaking correctly , not walking properly and not behaving properly in front of men. In (Lines 7-8), the mother tells her daughter that she should walk like a Lady and not like a “slut”. “On Sundays try to walk like a lady and not like the slut you are so bent on becoming”.

In the story the author also uses diction to express how woman had to do several things to be this ideal wife and for them to do the same thing over every day, that there should not be change for them. In the story the authors uses “This how you” at the beginning of most sentences this makes me think that according to society this is the proper way a Lady should act and it’s what a woman should do throughout their whole life. An example where they use the words “This how you” to express how woman should be able to do all of the chores would be in (Lines 11-14). “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”.

In both stories, the authors use the symbolism in order to address the fact women are constantly judge by society because of what they can and cannot do. In Piercy poem “Barbie Doll”, she compares the girl to a Barbie doll because of her wanting to become perfect so that society can accept her. In Kincaid’s short story “Girl”, they address the same issue they try to do everything they can so that they can be accepted by society and so everyone can like them. In “Girl”, the mother constantly tells her that she has to do everything she is told because if she does not follow the rules she would be labeled as a “Slut”. Both authors talk about women change everything about them like their appearance, their personality and their beliefs just so they can be accepted by society. However, in “Barbie doll” the authors discusses the appearance of a woman while in “Girl” they discuss the role a woman plays in the house. Both authors also share the same audience, which would be young girls and society. It shows that woman should no longer follow or believe anything that society has told them . For example woman should not be told how to sit , talk, or what they can or cant do because they should be treated equally no matter what.

Overall, both authors Marge Piercy and Jamaica Kincaid share the same ideas on how woman have tried so much to prove themselves and have tried to always be accepted by society. Although both authors use symbolism to express how woman are seen as just objects they also share their difference.