



A Study on the Expectations of Women in Marge Piercy's Barbie

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Abstract

The poem Barbie Doll was written and published during the second wave of Feminism, in the early 1970's. The speaker examines the sentiments that feminism was and is still battling against throughout the poem. She uses the narrative of a "girl child" to talk about gender and gender stereotypes. The poem narrates the tale of a young woman's life and death through a series of eerie and unsettling imagery. A melancholic Elegy on the passing of a woman's uniqueness, natural beauty, and freewill is found in Marge Piercy's poem Barbie Doll. Barbie is portrayed by Piercy as a sacrificed lamb and a manufactured idol. The Barbie Doll is a metaphor of society's view of beauty and how a girl's perceptions of beauty affect. The girl is portrayed as a passive character that is under constant scrutiny by a society that is fixated on achieving predetermined ideals of perfection throughout the poem. Each of the four stanzas represents a different period in the girl's life and how cultural stereotypes from outside affect and mould the girl's attitude and body image.

Keywords: Social norms, girl child, gender, Barbie doll, stereotypes

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Introduction:

Piercy tackles significant issues relating to women's rights and perception in "Barbie Doll." These two topics are discussed in the poem as a whole as Piercy explores society's expectations of what a woman should be. The poet takes the reader on a journey that starts with the birth of the "girl child" and her first gift, a Barbie doll, and ends with her passing away. The young woman is immediately met with expectations that neither she nor anyone else could possibly meet.

In "Barbie Doll," Piercy employs numerous literary techniques. Alliteration, imagery, and enjambment are only a few examples. Enjambment, the first of these, is a typical formal device in poetry that is concerned with how lines end.

One of the key literary devices that the poets employ is imagery. With their descriptions of people, places, experiences, and more, poets can evoke the reader's senses. For instance, the opening lines of the poem, "and presented dolls that did pee-pee, miniature GE stoves and irons, and wee lipsticks the colour of cherry candy."

Barbie Doll starts with a girl's life getting started. The speaker claims that this youngster, referred to as a "girl child," was born "as usual." The term "girl child" is used in this context, which is significant because it has frequently been used historically as a derogatory term, as if one child, a boy, is more valuable than another, a girl. A girl's life begins at the commencement of Barbie Doll. The speaker says that this baby, a "girl child," was born "as normal." The phrase "girl child" has frequently been used throughout history as a disparaging epithet, implying that one child, a male, is worth more than another, a girl. It is crucial to take note of such a usage in this context. In the final two sentences, the speaker claims that, by social norms, the woman has achieved her goals. She now gets the "happy ending" that each and every woman on the planet hopes for. The facetiously upbeat conclusion to this depressing story highlights the absurdity of what is expected of women even more.

Objectives:

- To find out the population's awareness on body shaming.
- To evaluate the population's view on the weightage between materialistic importance vs. holistic development.
- To analyse if the population is aware of the mental impact of these unrealistic standards on women.
- To develop methods to prevent body shaming and unrealistic standards set in society.

Review of Literature

Early in the decade of the second wave of feminism, in the early 1970s, "Barbie Doll" was written and released. The speaker examines the sentiments that feminism was and is still battling against throughout the poem. She uses the narrative of a "girl child" to talk about gender and gender stereotypes. The poem tells the tale of a young woman's life and death through a series of eerie and unsettling imagery. **Baldwin, Emma. "Barbie Doll by Marge Piercy".** The second wave of feminism exposed the horrible details and images of sexism patriarchy that were pervasive in society. By describing a young woman's life and death as a result of the burdens of this corrupt society, the author attempts to examine the numerous sentiments that feminism is still fighting for throughout the poem **March 24, 2021 by Laxmi.** The presents given to the girl child, which highlight the aspirations of the family and society at large, are openly disclosed by Piercy. The strong feminine traits and gendered versions that follow the infant straight after her birth into the world, where she should have a similar place and position with the baby male, are symbolised by the "dolls that did pee-pee/ and little GE stoves and irons." Giving girls stereotypical toys from the very beginning of their lives on is a fairly cunning and complex way for society to define the roles that women are to perform **Wow Essays. 2021. "Barbie Doll". "Lady Lazarus" Literature Review, December 07, 2022.** Quality Marge Piercy employs a range of literary devices, such as language, tone, and irony, in "Barbie Doll" to address how women are treated, or rather mistreated, in our society. The poem, which was written in 1973, encourages the reader reflect on how women are perceived and the serious implications these expectations may have for them. The girl in the poem ends up killing herself after being bullied for lacking feminine appeal **CRAM.** This feminist poetry criticises the cultural ideal of the ideal woman, claiming that the body image and societally idealised behaviour patterns drive young girls to commit suicide when they fall

short of an unattainable norm. **Linda sue grimes (2022)**This poem teaches the reader the horrible things that can exist in women who feel they need to be perfect to be accepted by society and what can happen to them. The poem is successful in showing the extremes that can happen from a plastic figure. Parents around the world have gone as far as arguing that the Barbie doll, a non-existent figure, has caused their children to develop an eating disorder from trying to maintain Barbie's figure. (**UKEssays. (November 2018). Analysis of Marge Piercy's 'The Barbie Doll' Poem.** The poem Barbie doll by Marge Piercy is about a little girl who grows up only to kill herself for not living up to society's standards. The speaker shows how she had a normal childhood and was happy playing with her baby dolls and toy stove. However, during puberty, her body changed and everyone noticed. She was criticised for her "fat nose and thick legs". She tried to change by dieting and exercising, but soon tired of doing so. She then cut off her nose and arms in order to please the rest of society.(**IPL**). Barbie Doll Marge Piercy Analysis: Marge Piercy's narrative poem "Barbie Doll" was published in 1971. This feminist poem brings light on the horrors of the sexism and patriarchy prevalent in society during the second wave of feminism through horrifying images and details. Throughout the poem, the author tries to explore the various sentiments that feminism is fighting for to this day by telling the story of a young woman's life and death due to the burdens of this corrupt society.(**March 24,by Laxmi**) Since its debut in 1959, an unconceivable moulded plastic statuette named Barbie has become an icon for little girls everywhere. The product line is one of the most successful in the history of the toy industry by selling over a Billion Barbie dolls worldwide throughout history in over 150 countries, with Mattel, Barbie's inventor claiming that at least three dolls are sold every second. Since its debut in 1959, an unconceivable moulded plastic statuette named Barbie has become an icon for little girls everywhere. The product line is one of the most successful in the history of the toy industry by selling over a Billion Barbie dolls worldwide throughout history in over 150 countries, with Mattel, Barbie's inventor claiming that at least three dolls are sold every second (**Analysis of Marge Piercy's 'The Barbie Doll' Poem**) Marge Piercy is an American poet, novelist, and social activist. She is best known for being a feminist poet, and her bitter verses against the ill-treat of women by society. Barbie Doll " first appeared in Piercy's collection of 1973 "To Be of Use". The very image that she uses in this poem is a bold rebuff to the social standards that American society maintains in forcing women to adopt stereotypical feminine behaviour. It is the symbol of a much propagated ideal feminine character and the role she is expected to play in the man-dominated society. (**Barbie Doll By Marge Piercy (Summary, Explanation & Analysis)**) Marge Piercy's poem "Barbie Doll" reveals a hazardous trend that rages in our society. It holds a mirror up to our own vanity and reveals the rampant destruction of self-worth that comes from comparing the normal to the unreal. "Barbie Doll" teaches the reader of the dangers that exist in forcing people, especially women, into restrictive roles and ideals. With the use of diction, simile, irony, and tone, Marge Piercy exposes the destructive nature of impossible ideals and contradictory social expectations. (**The Perfect Façade Thomas Sepe. This poem analysis by Mentor: Peggy Dunn Bailey, Ph.D.**) Marge Piercy was an American poet, social activist and a novelist. Piercy started the love for reading and books, when she was laid up with rheumatic fever during her childhood days, where she could not do anything other than reading. She has won the Hopwood Award for poetry and fiction in 1957. (**Summary of "Barbie Doll " by Marge**

Piercy) Barbie Doll Today, society plays a big role in our lives. Girls of all ages are expected to stop being themselves and try and please everyone else. There is a standard of how we should dress and act in order to be accepted by society, but even then it's hard to fit in. **(Poem Analysis: Marge Piercy's Barbie Doll)**. Barbie Doll" is a mock of social appearance and acceptance. The poem attacks the female's desire to look a certain way in order to fit in with the people around them. The entirety of Piercy's devices support her hilarious take on society's powerful impact on a person's life decisions and self-perceptions. **(Barbie Doll" by Marge Piercy Nov17 , Camden loeser)** Many poets and authors did a great job worldwide, but most of them leaned towards very few dimensions of society. Slighter personals in this category maintained balance among multiple societal dimensions through their creativity. Marge Piercy is one such progressive activist, poet, and novelist who magnificently demonstrated historical events, war episodes, heritage norms, social, political, and feminist ideas through her creative work (Richardson). **(Poetry Analysis on "Barbie Doll" by Marge Piercy)** Marge Piercy's "Barbie Doll" dramatizes a "girl child" and her predicament in four versa graphs. This feminist poem is taking to task the cultural stereotype of the perfect woman, suggesting that the patterns of behaviour and body image touted by society cause little girls to kill themselves when they are unable to measure up to an impossible standard. **(Marge Piercy's 'Barbie Doll')** rude and judge mental society can be. It evokes the thought that Barbies are perfect and ideal, and anyone that doesn't look similar to a barbie is nothing, even if they have a lot of things going for them. It also tells a story about how much peoples harsh words get to the individual that they are talking about, **(May 2, 2018 | Author: Anonymous | Category: Arts & Humanities, English, Literature)**

Methodology:

The study has been conducted using the Empirical Research method where the quantitative method of survey is used. The sample size of the population is 204. Every member of the population has an equal probability of being chosen when the samples are drawn using simple random sampling. Independent variables are: Age, gender, occupation, educational qualifications, area of settlement of the sample population. The dependant variables are: knowledge of the poem "Barbie doll" by Marge Piercy before, believe that while trying to achieve the body standards set by society ,a woman changes from the inside in a harmful way, can we break through these beauty standards set by society that affects not just our physical health but also our mental health agree or disagree with the fact that our society places a lot of pressure on materialistic things than the betterment of an individual. The statistical tool used: Graphical representation. [Using the SPSS software].

CHI SQUARE:

Chi square 1: Null hypothesis: There is no relationship between age and the statement that body shaming has an impact on the mental health of a girl.

Alternative hypothesis: There is a between age and the statement that body shaming has an impact on the mental health of a girl.

Chi square 2: Null hypothesis: There is no relationship between occupation and the statement that body shaming has an impact on the mental health of a girl.

Alternative hypothesis: There is a between occupation and the statement that body shaming has an impact on the mental health of a girl.

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
3. Kindly choose the option that best Suits your occupation * 6. Then in the magic of puberty, a classmate said: You have a great big nose and fat legs	203	100.0%	0	0.0%	203	100.0%

3. Kindly choose the option that best Suits your occupation * 6. Then in the magic of puberty, a classmate said: You have a great big nose and fat legs Crosstabulation

Count

		6. Then in the magic of puberty, a classmate said: You have a great big nose and fat legs			Total
		3	4	5	
3. Kindly choose the option that best Suits your occupation	Primary sector (Agriculture, mining, Animal husbandry)	0	10	0	10
	Secondary sector (Manufacturing units)	4	20	0	32
	Tertiary sector (Trade, banking, administration)	8	52	0	60
	Student	15	53	8	76
	Looking for opportunities	0	20	0	20
	Retired	0	5	0	5
Total		27	168	8	203

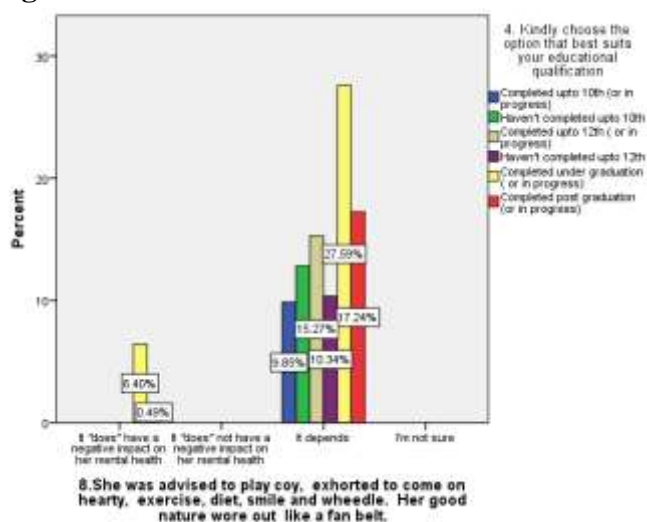
Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.418 ^a	10	.009
Likelihood Ratio	30.121	10	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	.485	1	.486
N of Valid Cases	203		

a. 11 cells (61.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .20.

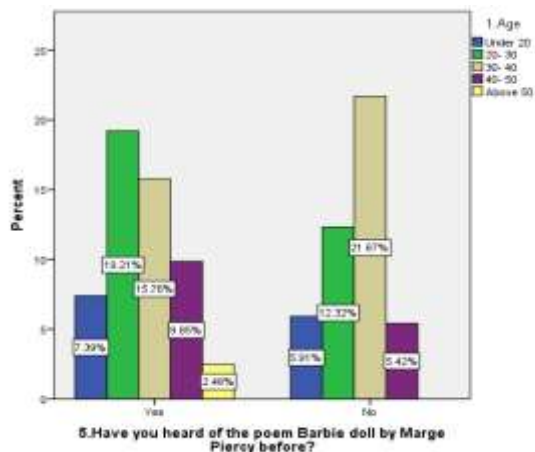
Graphical representation:

Fig 1:



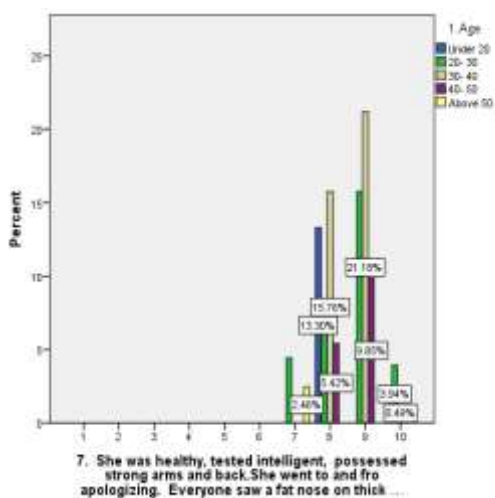
Legend: This represents the relation between the occupation of the individual and whether or not women change from within in a harmful manner .27.59% of those who haven't completed undergraduate feel like it does.

Fig 2:



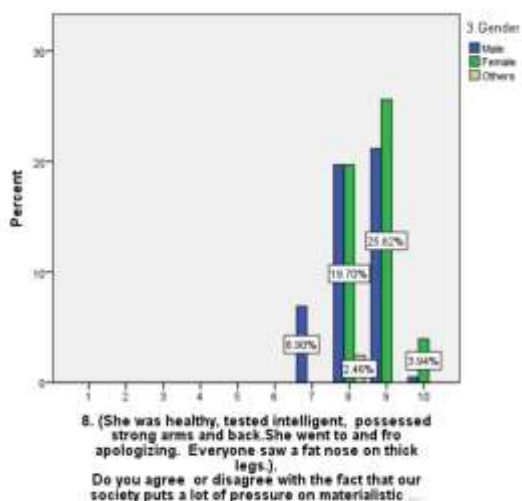
Legend: This represents the relation between the various age groups and whether they have heard of the poem Barbie Doll by Marge Piercy before.21.67 % of those in their 30-40s have heard it before.

Fig 3:



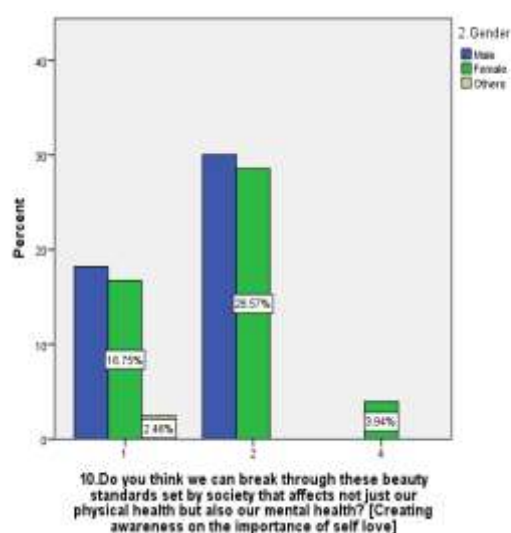
Legend: This shows the relation between age and whether they believe that society puts a lot of pressure on materialistic things.28.18% of those in their 30-40s believe it's true.

Fig 4:



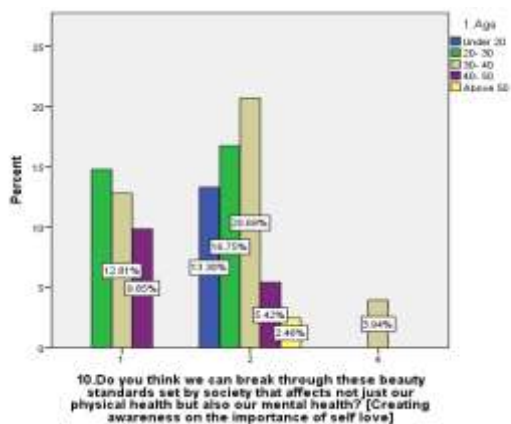
Legend: This shows the relation between the age and whether they believe that society puts a lot of pressure on materialistic things. 28.18% of those in their 30-40s believe its true

Fig 5:



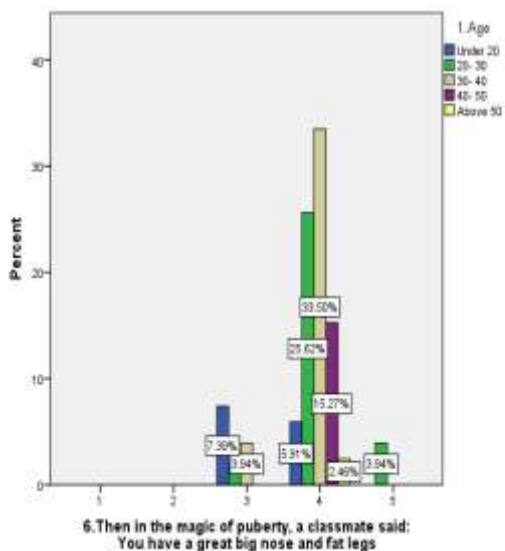
Legend: The relation between gender and whether the beauty standards also have an impact on our mental health. Majority of males agree that it does.

Fig 6:



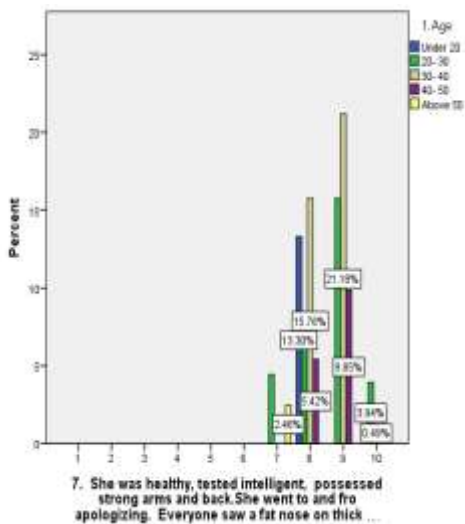
Legend: The relation between gender and whether the beauty standards also have an impact on our mental health. Majority of those in 30 - 40s agree that it does.

Fig 7:



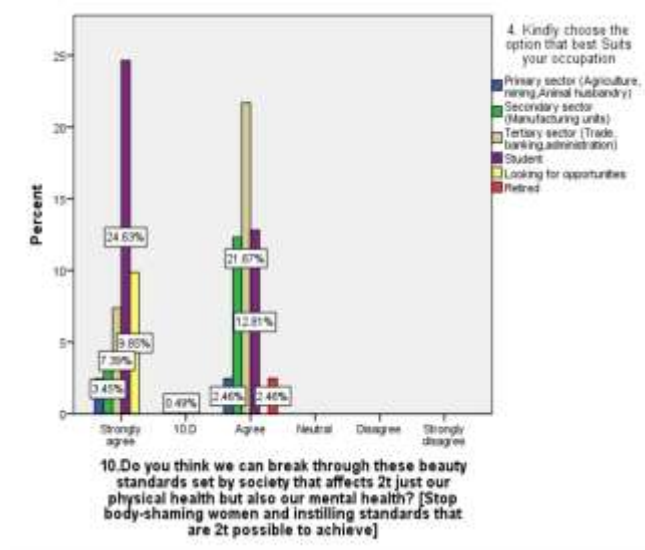
Legend: this shows the relation between age and the impact body shaming has on a girl during puberty. 33.50% of those in their 30-40 s agree it does a lot.

Fig 8:



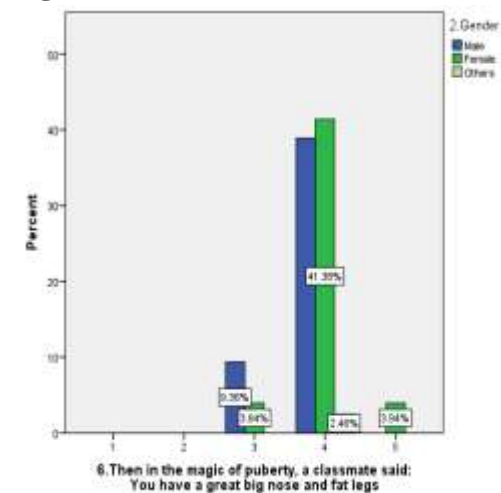
Legend. This shows whether age and the impact body shaming has on teens have some relation or no.21.18% of those in 30-40s agree that it does.

Fig 9:



Legend: this shows the relation between the occupations and whether we as a society can break through these Beauty standards or not.24.63% of students strongly agree.

Fig 10:



Legend: this represents the relation between gender and the effect body shaming has on a teenager.41.38% of females strongly agree.

Results:

Fig one This represents the relation among the career of the character and whether or not or now no longer girls alternate from inside in a damaging manner .27.59% of individuals who have not finished undergraduate experience love it. This can be due to the fact those are the preliminary years of publicity to greater than simply faculty life. **Fig two** This represents the

relation among the diverse age corporations and whether or not they have got heard of the poem Barbie doll through Marge Piercy earlier than. 21.67 % of these of their 30-40s have heard it earlier than this may be because the poem became perhaps taught to them of their faculty life. **Fig three** This suggests the relation among the age and whether or not they accept as true with that society places plenty of stress on materialistic things. 28.18% of these of their 30-40s accept as true with its real as they too might also additionally have a few private revel in. **Fig four** This suggests the relation among the age and whether or not they accept as true with that society places plenty of stress on materialistic things. 28. **Fig five** the relation among gender and whether or not the splendour requirements additionally have an effect on our intellectual health. Majority of men agree that it does. **Fig 6** The relation among gender and whether or not the splendour requirements additionally have an effect on our intellectual health. Majority of these in 30 - 40s agree that it does. All because of private revel in. **Fig 7** this suggests the relation among age and the effect frame shaming has on a woman at some stage in puberty. 33.50% of these of their 30-forty s agree it does lots. **Fig eight** This suggests whether or not age and the effect frame shaming has on young adults have a few relation or no. 21.18% of these in 30-40s agree that it does. **Fig nine** this suggests the relation among the occupations and whether or not we as a society can smash via those Beauty requirements or now no longer. 24.63% of college students strongly agree as they have got wish for a higher destiny for us. **Fig ten** this represents the relation among gender and the impact frame shaming has on a teenager. 41.38% of ladies strongly agree as they too might also additionally have a few private revel in.

Discussion:

The norms for girl's bodily our bodies and societal roles for girls offer masses of feminist criticism cloth, Young women can come to be misled through the conflicting messages that the tradition all too regularly sends, giving up on coming across their internal electricity and splendour in favour of conforming to an inconceivable norm that simplest ends in. The dwelling woman is a man or woman with a frame manufactured from flesh and bone and thoughts for thinking, even as the doll is an inanimate object, manufactured from inert cloth incapable of thought. Although lots has modified for the reason that poetess wrote this poem, it's miles regrettable that maximum of the world's girls keep revelling in those hardships. Media and the splendour enterprise are nevertheless engaged in needless and vain sports nowadays. Linda, girls have to face those modern-day beasts. A "girl child" and her plight are dramatised in Marge Piercy's "Barbie Doll. It is a feminist poetry that criticises society's idealised portrayal of the perfect lady and contends that those behaviours and frame beliefs force younger women to devote suicide once they fall brief of an inconceivable norm.

Conclusion:

A stereotype is an extensively standard judgement or bias about someone or group — despite the fact that it's overly simplified and now no longer constantly accurate. Stereotypes about gender can cause unequal and unfair remedy due to someone's gender. This is referred to as sexism. There are approaches to mission those stereotypes to assist everyone — regardless of their gender or gender identity — experience the same and valued as humans.

Point it out — Magazines; TV, film, and the Internet are complete of terrible gender stereotypes.

Sometimes those stereotypes are difficult for humans to peer into unless they're pointed out. Be that person! Talk with buddies and own circle of relatives participants approximately the stereotypes you notice and assist others recognize how sexism and gender stereotypes may be hurt

Be a dwelling example — Be a position version to your buddies and own circle of relatives. Respect humans no matter their gender identity. Create a secure area for humans to express themselves and their real characteristics no matter what society's gender stereotypes and expectancies are Speak up — if a person is making sexist jokes and comments, whether or not online or in person, mission them.

Give it a try — if you need to do something that's now no longer typically related to your gender; reflect on whether or not to be secure doing it. If one believes in studies, one succeeds, therefore give a try. People would study out of examples.

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