Barbie Doll

Introduction

The issue that lingers in our minds after hearing the word Barbie Doll is childhood toy. The poet used the poem to reflect on the role of the society in the lives of people. The main character is a girl who was born as a normal child, but has failed to be contend with herself and focus on pleasing others in the society. The poem reflects on the position of women in the society in terms of roles and how they are expected to present themselves (Phelan). To understand the Barbie Doll poem, reflecting on the literary devices to convey the central idea of the poem will be significant.

Barbie Doll has been used symbolically since it has been an icon in the society. Though it is a toy, in the poem it has been used to symbolize a woman with a perfect body exonerating beauty. After birth the child is presented with different gifts such as stoves, iron and lipsticks. The gifts symbolize feminism while defining the roles that are associated with a woman such as cooking. The “wee lipsticks the color of cherry candy” symbolizes the society defines the dressing code of women. The lipstick will enable the girl to look prettier when applied diverting the attention of the big nose.
The author upheld the use of different tones to emphasize on different issues in the poem. “You have a great big nose and fat legs” the confidence and self-esteem of the girl declined and never recovered to the extent of offering the nose and legs as a sacrifice. The tone also changes when the author describes the human side of the girl “she was healthy, tested intelligent/ abundant sexual drive and manual dexterity”. The tone changes again when the author reflects “she went to and fro apologizing for everyone”. “Everyone saw a fat nose on fat legs” has been used by the author to reflect a society that does not uphold the inner beauty of an individual but physical appearance (Phelan). Despite the positive characters described in the poem, the people were obsessed with the physical appearance of the girl.

In the poem, the girl is being advised on how playing coy and being exhorted to come hearty. On the issue of diet, exercise and smile. This advice reflects the society was not accepting the girl for who she was and wanted her to conform to their expectations. Moreover, the requirement of being hearty and smiling signifies the girl was not happy in the society. The society expected much from the girl to the extent she committed suicide due to the feeling of unacceptance in the society.

The author upheld irony in the poem by describing her nose and the satin casket. It symbolizes death and a big Barbie box. Rhetorical questions arise in this stanza “Doesn’t she look pretty? As much as the question is rhetorical, it also reflects sarcasm. “Everyone said consummation at last, to every woman happy ending”. The statement in the poem reflects how the society did not accept the girl for who she was but what it wanted her to be. The fact that she was intelligent and abundant sexual drive, the society had no any reason to treat her with the negativity they showed (Phelan).
Conclusion

The poem reflects the society playing a greater role in defining the life of an individual. There exist already set codes of ethics that a person is expected to fulfil in order to be appreciated and accepted in the society. The failure to conform subjects an individual to continuous ridicule as reflected by the girl's life due to issues with the physical appearance. The society has not upheld mechanisms that can boost the self-esteem of the young people to enable them maneuver in life. The suicide of the girl reflects a person who had been stressed in the society she was living into the extent of making the wrong decision.