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English Comp. I
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Arguments and Persuasion Essay
Summary of “Our Barbies, Ourselves”
Revision

In her interesting essay, Emily Pager talks about the Barbie Doll and its history. The author was surprised—and relieved at the same time—to find out that Barbie was designed by a man, Jack Ryan, who died not too long before she found out the news.

Before discovering who designed Barbie, she never understood why Barbie’s appearance was so sexual—especially when compared to Ken, her lifetime companion, or the other dolls around.

Although relieved, the author still doesn’t seem to get closure over the fact that Barbie may be the cause for the popularity of breast implant surgery and other negative influences on women’s lives—in their desire to hold on to an unconscious image or dream, formed in their childhood. Pager wonders, also, about the initial purpose that Barbie was designed for: weapon for a feminist movement, or dream date for a man and designer at the same time.

The author perceives Barbie as her own person, liberated woman, and gal on the move. Barbie revolutionized the world of dolls, which used to be plain and boring. Barbie brought fun colors, anti-class and sexuality. She also had a boyfriend, Ken.

Ken wasn't perfect either; and if Barbie was too sexual, then Ken was the total opposite. His appearance was plain, but somehow mysterious because of his concealed sexuality. The author feels that, because of the mysterious aura that surrounds Ken, "there was a loneliness about Barbie's situation that was always disturbing" (309).

The short story ends on a cheerful note, regarding the fact that a man designed Barbie. This is the author's redemption for all the times when she didn't relate to the way a woman would have designed Barbie. Barbie is still her favorite doll; but now she can relate to it, more than before, because she understands that the excessive sexuality that Barbie possesses is the result of a male designer.

Pager's interesting story is, also, a revelation about America's sweetheart, Barbie: she is a man's creation. Somehow, the author herself feels like a Barbie who can't grow up—despite all her sexuality.

Works Cited

Pager, Emily. "Our Barbies, Ourselves." *Connections: A Multicultural*

Reader for Writers. Editor Judith A. Stanford. California: Mayfield, 1997. 307-309.