

Title:

How the Bratz Have Changed the Doll Industry

Word Count:

533

Summary:

This article discusses how the Bratz dolls have (perhaps not single-handedly but certainly as a large part of an ongoing process) changed the fundamental role that a doll plays in a girl's life.

Keywords:

bratz doll, dolls

Article Body:

Young girls have played with dolls for hundreds, maybe even thousands of years. Children have always had the desire to pretend, it is part of the growth of their minds and how they learn to interact with the world. That is very likely the reason that dolls have had such a prominent part in society for such a long time. But dolls have not always been the same. In the past few years, the entire nature of dolls has begun to change, as can be seen with the Bratz. These Bratz dolls have (perhaps not single-handedly but certainly as a large part of an ongoing process) changed the fundamental role that a doll plays in a girl's life.

For many years, long before the Bratz were created, dolls existed largely as a way for a girl to pretend to be a mother. A doll was something that had to be cared for. This was their largest and often only role in the girl's life, a role that continues today in the form of baby dolls and such. These types of dolls are still very popular, particularly among the very young girls, but they have been joined by another breed of doll: the fashion doll.

Fashion dolls are not a new phenomenon by any means. In fact, they have been around for decades. The best-known truly successful entry in the early days of the fashion doll genre was Barbie. Barbie was a new kind of doll, an adult, with much more sophistication than could really be found with baby dolls. Suddenly, a doll was not necessarily something that had to be cared for. Rather than pretending the doll was a child to mother, girls everywhere found Barbie as a new outlet for imagination. She was a teacher, a doctor, an astronaut, a wife, whatever role a girl could dream up, Barbie could fill.

For decades, Barbie reigned as queen over the world of fashion dolls. Her place

of supremacy was largely unchallenged, as no one could touch her wholesome image and her sheer flexibility of role. But society began to change, and Barbie was losing her grip. As girls became more and more concerned with fashion and edgy culture at earlier ages, Barbie's appeal was reduced to younger girls, leaving a large gap open of preteen and early teen girls who were still young enough to like dolls, but considered themselves to be too old for Barbie. It is that gap that the Bratz dolls stepped into.

The Bratz fit the need perfectly. They are edgier, more stylish, and all around more grown up in focus than Barbie. They do not have Barbie's wholesome charm, but they make up for it by hitting a number of cultural chords within the girls of today. Unlike Barbie, who gives girls a limitless range of imagination, the Bratz dolls are more focused on being one thing: the representation of what every young, fashion-conscious girl wants to become. That is the great key to the success of these dolls. Barbie has tried to keep up, updating her image to appear more trendy and hip, but as yet, she continues to lose ground.

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