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### 80's Barbie: Mattel Changes Her Image

Since 1959 Barbie evoked a stream of both negative and positive attention since her debut in 1959 but it wasn't until the 1980's that Mattel made significant changes. Barbie isn't any plain ole' toy, surprisingly she has become a female representation in many ways. One may wonder why. It is a toy that influences children and society. The way she was built and created sends the message of what beauty looks like or should be.

Mattel, the creator of Barbie, received backlash in the 80s because "big hair and brightly colored eye shadow" Barbie "lacked ambition," this led to them creating and introducing "career-themed dolls, including McDonald's waitress, an astronaut, and a veterinarian" (Masunaga).

Decades of fighting for equal rights and more liberal economic policies more women had entered the workforce than before. During this decade, politics took to dramatic change under the presidency of Ronald Reagan. This "was the era of the 'yuppie' – the new young urban professional who lived in the city, worked a high-powered job and put consumption at the forefront of daily life" (Ford). Thus was born 'Day to Night' Barbie, a doll that had that had modern office equipment (a calculator) to an evening gown for a night out in the town.

Barbie was no longer restricted to the beach girl or fashion model look; she finally became a woman of the workforce. "We girls can do anything like Barbie" (Ford) was the main line in Barbie's jingles when introducing Doctor Barbie, astronaut Barbie, and pilot Barbie.\



(Day to Night Barbie - 1984)



(Astronaut Barbie - 1985)

By the new release of Mattel's new working Barbie, they were trying to send the message to all little girls that they can be who you want to be and dream big. This was particularly important in the wake of the strong Women's Movement in the 1970's where Barbie was sometimes viewed as a negative, objectified woman. In her article "Our Barbie's, Ourselves," for example, author Emily Prager Barbie was created out of a male fantasy with impossible proportions that she, for one, could never live up to.

*The rest of the essay discusses additional changes in Barbie design, in advertising Strategies that were designed to showcase Barbie's strength and independence (for example, Barbie's car of choice was a pink Corvette, but she also drove nearly every muscle car, from a souped-up '57 Chevy to a Dodge Charger; she even had a Jeep.*

*The paper ends with a look at several new Barbie lines that further remove Barbie from the blonde, skinny, busty stereotype; there are now Barbies representing diverse ethnic and body types. The complete paper is about six pages, not counting pictures and the Works Cited page.*

Works Cited

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