

It is a common accessory in a house filled with young children. Many teenagers today can recall at some point in their childhood when they were obsessed with Barbie dolls. “I’m a Barbie Girl” has become a common phrase in both advertisements and with young children. Mattel, the creator of the Barbie Doll has caused a large impact on American culture.

Prior to 1959 when the Barbie Doll was created, dolls for young girls were often babies. What was different about Barbie was that she had a fully developed adult body. According to the principal creator, this is because girls were “using dolls to reflect the world around them” (*Barbie*). Thus, a doll with a full adult body that girls could dress to style was created (*Barbie*).

In addition to being the first doll that had a full developed adult body, she was the first one to strike complex, model like, poses that became more prevalent post WWII. The first Barbie doll had far more makeup than the one children are used to playing with today and she looked at the side. In the beginning of the 1970s, she looked straight at the person looking at it, with a wide smile (*Barbie*). This is a representation of American culture because we typically look people straight in the eye. If someone does not make eye contact with another person, we believe that that particular person is either rude or weaker than us.

Another way Barbie impacts culture is by the way she looks. Barbie herself has long blonde hair, blue eyes, a wide smile, large breasts, a tiny waist, defined hips, and long, thin legs. Feminists argue that this reinforces the idea that girls should strive for what is considered the perfect woman, rather than focus on natural beauty (*Barbie*).

Barbie has been much more than just a doll that young children can dress up. She has been anything from a teacher and a nurse (what would be considered proper female jobs) to an astronaut and a president (which would be considered male jobs) (*Barbie*). This represents the

overall trend in attitudes of women in the work force and how much the variety of jobs women can obtain has increased since WWII.

Overall, Barbie has had a great impact on American culture. While she may seem like a simple doll, she is much more than that.



*(Barbie Doll)*



*(fashion pop)*