From Little Girl to Sex Goddess: The Negative Influence of Bratz Dolls

Young people of today look to society for influences in how they should look and act. Children are influenced daily by television, Internet and video games, friends, and even the toys they play with. Boys grow up wanting to be like the superheroes and G.I. Joe figures they play with; girls look to their Barbies and dolls to see how society mandates teens and young adults to be. Bratz dolls are also among those Barbie-type toys that girls are looking up to these days. Bratz dolls are similar to Barbie in form; however, Bratz are more fashionable and “hip” than the traditional blonde-haired, blue-eyed Barbie. In fact, the more fashionable and “hip” the dolls become, the more negative the image becomes that they exude. The outrageous clothing and makeup advertised on these dolls sends the wrong message to the children playing with them: the same children who are now wanting to grow up and be and look like these dolls. Because the Bratz dolls portray an image that is not age appropriate for the young girls who are playing with them, the dolls should be recalled.

At first glance, the basic look of the Bratz dolls portrays an image of seductiveness and sensuality; the dolls should be recalled because this is not a positive image for the children who are playing with them. At first glance, the doll looks like an alluring model for a high fashion clothing line. The eyes are slanted upward and are semi-closed, giving them a sultry look. The lips are pouty and full and glossed with lipstick. One critic agrees, describing the dolls saying, “their almond-shaped eyes are tilted upward at the edges and adorned with thick crescents of eyeshadow, and their lips are lush and pillowy, glossed to a candy-apple sheen and rimmed with dark lip liner. They look like pole dancers on their way to work at a gentlemen’s club” (Talbot). The overall look of the face of the doll portrays an image that no little girl should strive to achieve. The legs and waist of the doll is
also very seductive. The doll head and bust make up about one-fourth of the entire doll, whereas the legs constitute the other three-fourths; and the “stalklike” legs run into a thin skinny waist (Talbot). The hairstyles of all the varieties of the doll are also of concern. Even the everyday hairstyle of a Bratz doll portrays an unrealistic view of how a girl should look. Pictures on the official Bratz web site, show the dolls’ hairstyles as long and curvaceous, and slightly brushed over one of the eyes in a seductive fashion. Even the “Play Sportz” dolls like “Hip Hop Yasmin” or “Gymnastics Sasha” have their hair fixed in a very unsporty, yet fashionable and seductive way (Bratz). Overall, the look of the Bratz doll leads girls to get the wrong image of how they should begin looking at this age; for this reason, these dolls should be taken off the market.

Additionally, the accessories of the Bratz dolls give cause for recalling the toy due to the accessories’ mature nature. The Bratz dolls come with oodles of makeup accessories, which if just by themselves were considered, might be acceptable. However, these compacts, lipsticks, nail polishes, and hairspray accessories are paired with extremely outrageous clothing. One mother, on an Internet blog, describes her first experience with seeing a Bratz toy’s clothing as her four-year-old daughter opened the doll as a birthday present from her friend: “For a moment, I stared at it and wondered if there was a new doll on the block called ‘Hooker Barbie’…The doe-eyed, midriff-baring doll was dressed in cheap pink-and-black lingerie and looked as if she should be dancing round a pole…” It’s one of the BratzBabyz!” the little girl burst out. ‘She’s called Sugar and I want to be just like her!’” (“Over-Sexed and Over Here”). It is this type of “fashion” that the dolls are promoting that is sending the wrong message to the girls who are playing with these dolls. The “Sweet Hart” collection features the variety of dolls in right below the buttock white frilly dresses with either a pink, dark pink or red heart across the entirety of the bosom area (Bratz). The “Neon Pop Diva” collection features all the dolls in patent leather outfits (Bratz). Furthermore, the “SpringTime” Collection features two of the dolls in one-piece bunny catsuit pants with bunny ears; this is particularly similar to the image of a Playboy bunny (Bratz). One critic describes one of the newer doll’s outfits, saying, “A Bratz Princess -- one of the newer versions -- wears a tiara and, instead of a ball gown, a tight camouflage T-shirt and a short skirt” (Talbot). This image of short and skimpy is not the message today’s
young girls should be influenced by. Because of the sexual nature of the accessories – especially the clothing – the influence from these dolls to young girls is negative, and the dolls should be recalled immediately.

Most importantly, the advertising for the Bratz dolls displays a negative image that should not be portrayed to children of the toy’s target audience. One critic states that the company marketing Bratz dolls is holding on to the “six-to-twelve-year-old market” (Talbot). Children this age are subjected to marketing plugs like the games on the official Bratz web sites entitled “Love Meter,” or links to “What’s Hot” (Bratz). Children in this target age range should not be interested in things of that nature, or should not be taught to be interested in things of that nature. Even the bios of the different Bratz dolls advertise an attitude of sexuality. One doll, named Dana, has a nickname of “Sugar Shoes,” and another doll, Felicia, “is just as comfortable dancin’ at the hottest clubs as she is pitchin’ a tent in the woods” (Bratz). These nicknames and bios illustrate these dolls to be regular girls who live it up and party with their friends. Children with an age range of six to twelve years should not be concerned with living it up in a party lifestyle. However, one critic states that, “What Bratz dolls are both contributing to and feeding on is a culture in which girls play at being "sassy" -- the toy industry’s favored euphemism for sexy” (Talbot). This means that ultimately, it is the advertising of these dolls that is influencing the girls to want these dolls and to want to be like these dolls. Because of this fact, these dolls should not be on the market.

Things in society will always be around to influence the minds of young people: those “things” change from year to year and generation to generation. Once society gets rid of a negative influence, there are ten more negative influences around the corner. The Bratz dolls have become a craze among little girls. These dolls, however fun they are to play with, represent a negative image in the way that they are made to look, are dressed, and are advertised. The sultry, heavily made-up eyes and lips are unrealistic for any young girl to have. The style of clothing is completely inappropriate for girls of the target age to be wanting to wear. The advertising is playing on a young girl’s need to be “hot” in today’s society. All of these reasons illustrate exactly why these toys should be taken off the shelves. Take the dolls off the shelves today, so the daughters of today won’t start taking their clothes off just to look like the dolls!


