

Andy Warhol's
magnificent
painting of Barbie.





National College of Art and Design

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Barbie: Barometer of Popular Culture

by

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Introduction

Barbie celebrated her thirty-fifth anniversary in 1994. This proves her durability in a world that has become increasingly exposed to transient and fleeting images. When Barbie appeared in the late 1950's, many aspects of culture were changing and the education of children reflected these changes. It makes sense that a doll was created that captured completely and ideally the aesthetics, fashion and social values of that period. Barbie also mirrored broader political and cultural trends. She has continued to exist and increase in popularity because she has been able to repeat this feat through subsequent decades. Barbie's creation coincided with the emergence of a distinct and separate youth subculture. This was facilitated by television and youth-oriented literature. It was a period of affluence and hope and Barbie embodied both. An important part of this affluence was the advent of consumerism. It touched everyone, even the very young children became pre-occupied with possessing the desirable objects which advertising targeted towards them. Barbie was one of those objects and was heartily embraced by the eager audience. Chapter one of this treatise explores the 'setting' into which Barbie debuted. I shall also deal with the emergence of children's culture and consumption. Barbie moved into the 1960's with the greatest of ease. Her place was well secured in the limelight as her creators Mattel realised the significance cinema played in girl's lives. Hollywood provided suitable scenarios for female fantasies. Barbie occupied a similar world away from routine existence. Her outfits reflected glamour and excitement of Hollywood proportions. The 'silver screen' offered females a chance to make-believe, whilst Barbie did the same for little girls. Creating play situations with Barbie opened up a world of fantasy. In Chapter

Two, I explore the concept of 'stardom' and the mass appeal of Barbie's dream existence. Society made Barbie, literally and figuratively. She reflected women's roles. Real or unreal. The 1960's and 1970's saw real changes in women's position and attitude. Increased independence and emancipation was evident and Barbie responded to the challenge. Changes infiltrated all classes and fashion became as much the style of the working girl as the well-to-do dowager. Barbie adapted these young and trendy styles which originated on the street. In the 1970's women had to curb their day-dreaming and deal with life in a more realistic manner. The 1970's saw a recession in America, and Barbie reflects this with more practical easy-to-wear outfits. The 1970's, also marked twenty years of exposure to television advertisements. The audience was becoming increasingly sophisticated and aware. In Chapter Three, I deal with the methods employed by Mattel to capture this over-saturated audience. At this time, an increased emphasis was placed upon Barbie's personality. Personification of the product was a cunning tactic of children's advertising throughout the 1970's. Barbie came to signify the easy-going Californian lifestyle, with an emphasis on leisure. The 1980's saw the working woman come to the fore and Barbie's career also developed along unprecedented lines. She handled five careers simultaneously and embraced the fitness craze that gripped America. In Chapter Four, I will examine how 'the cult of the body beautiful' was encroached into society's mind-frame and how Barbie's physical beauty is perceived as an ideal for many.

Chapter 1

CHILDREN OF AFFLUENCE

"As icons go", Robert Plunkett wrote in the New York Times Book Review, "Barbie is right up there with Elvis". (Plunkett, 1994, p.2) She is the signifier of a million different opinions and as many more conceptions. Heralded as "A Woman for Our Times," in The Spectator (Wolff, 1993, p.24) but also as "anti-clone", in Symbolic Interaction, "for every woman who wishes to be more than surface deep". (Cunningham, 1993, p.79) Despite the feminist backlash, Barbie is still the world's best loved doll and one of the best barometers of female attitudes over the last thirty - five years. Children just can't get enough of this vinyl icon; each day, somewhere in the world, two Barbie dolls are sold every second. (Jacobs, 1994, p.1) Why has this miniature version of womanhood become a potent image for children of all ages, races and means? The launch of the Barbie doll was most definitely facilitated by the American post-war boom, and the revolutionary attitudes it introduced. At that time, the moralising tone of the educated middle-class was at serious odds with the voice of the public, which was continually expressing its need for a new style to symbolise the new values of the new age. Until then, American children's culture was determined by grown-ups and championed through church and school. Its intention was clearly to guide and counsel rather than humour or amuse.

Because psychic structure must always be passed from generation through the narrow funnel of childhood, a society's childrearing practices are not just one item in a list of cultural traits. They are the very condition for the transmission and development of all other cultural elements, and place definite limits on what can be achieved in all other spheres of history. (De Mause, 1974, p.3)

Society's fascination with children's culture and with psychological factors that shape children's maturation is possibly one of the most important inventions of the affluent 1950's. At that time, the popular view had seen children as innocent beings in need of protection from the harsh realities of life. It marks the birth of a more self-conscious conception of children's culture including play. This attitude is evident in the profusion of toys and designed objects which now fill a typical child's bedroom.

Andrea Bottoni, a cheerful eleven year old - out shopping at the Quaker Mall in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, thinks she and her two younger sisters have at least a hundred Barbie dolls. 'Its more like forty' her mother interjects. (Zeitlin, 1992, p.25)

The Factory Acts in Britain 1802, 1816 and 1833 confirmed that throughout the early industrial era, childhood was increasingly seen as a stage of growth that in the long-term interests of society, had to be guarded from an abusive world. This protection brought with it an equally important conception of the child as a separate social stratum. By the 1950s, play began not to be considered idleness or time wasting but the work of childhood, the moral equivalent of labour. Toys were now seen as the instruments of childhood enlightenment, delight and pleasure. Aware parents agonised over finding the perfect objects to stimulate their child's mind. The guardian who denied or indeed could not provide such tools was seen as inadequate. These revolutionary ideas were absorbed by toy manufacturers, such as Mattel (who responded with innovative playthings e.g. The Baby Grand Piano and The Uke-A-Doodle). Harold 'Matt' Matson and Elliot 'El' Handler had worked together in a costume jewellery factory called El Zac before joining together in 1944, to create Mattel. Initially, the company concentrated on the design and manufacture of plastic picture frames. However, due to the second



Here are three photos taken inside the Kyowa Kagaku doll assembly plant, all circa the early 1960's. At left you can see the length of the assembly line. The assembly process included attaching legs and arms to the torso in one operation. Then the ladies cleaned the dolls.

Next, see below, finished heads were placed on the bodies and Barbie or family dolls were dressed in their swimsuits. The



masses of dolls above are a collector's dream.

At left you can see the workers positioning the dolls in their boxes. You can see the care they took in this step of the process. You'll notice that most workers pictured were women. Most of these part time workers lived close to the assembly plant and were middle aged or older.

All photos courtesy of Frank Nakamura and Kitturah Westenhouser, author of *The Story of Barbie*.

World War , plastics were restricted to military use only, and so their production had to stop. Elliot Handler had just enough time to design a line of dollhouse furniture made of plastic scrap (which was not restricted) and flocked wood strips before being drafted into the U.S. army. In 1945, the first full year Mattel was in business; they shipped out \$100,000 worth of dollhouse furniture; from which a \$30,000 profit was made. When Handler returned, Mattel concentrated on designing toys, novelties and playthings which used new synthetic materials and new production methods. Plastic was an expensive material but whose production technology vastly reduced the costs of labour and materials. It could also be moulded with great precision and variety, giving it considerable flexibility. In the Concise Oxford Dictionary, the word "plastics" means "capable of being moulded or shaped." The advantages of plastic guaranteed Mattel the mobility of The Chuck Wagon in 1952, the durability of the Burp Gun in 1955 and the physiognomic detail of the Barbie doll in 1959. The use of plastics encouraged Mattel designers and manufacturers to move towards aesthetic beauty in the mass-produced artefact. In 1957, Mattel explored the feasibility of establishing production facilities in the Orient to save money in manufacturing the Barbie doll and other products. Kokusai Boeki Kaisha Ltd. co-ordinated the entire project and mass-production of Barbie products began in Japan in 1959. (fig.1)

A collaborative effort was required to make the first Barbie doll moulds. Vitalising master doll forms, Mr. Yamazaki President of Pony Ltd., K.B. Ltd., Kyowa Kagaku Ltd., and Mr. Kohei Suzuki, and electroplate mould maker, worked long, hard hours developing the first Barbie moulds. Frank Nakamura proudly remembers taking the very first parts for a Barbie doll out of the moulds and putting the doll together at Yamazaki's plant. (Shibano, 1994, p.10)

In a little more than a decade, Elliot Handler had become the most prolific, original and creative toy designer in the world and Mattel dominated the market internationally. Inspired with a new purpose for industrial productivity, the domestic environment, including attitudes towards family life and childrearing, underwent dramatic changes. Presumably, Dr. Benjamin Spock's Baby and Child Care of 1946 and other parental guides were directly related to the American baby boom of the post-war years. Starting in 1945, the birth rate rose 60 per cent; at the height of the boom in 1957, 4.3 million babies were born to 36 million women of child bearing age.

Another doll had been born into Barbie's world, increasing the family emphasis. He was a soft vinyl baby who came with 'Barbie Baby Sits.' Barbie was now shown as a trustworthy teen, capable of taking charge of a small child, and thus setting an important example for doll owners. The set would change, only slightly in 1965, eliminating Barbie's accessories and including more baby-sitting supplies.... and baby-sitter manual. (Boy, 1987, p.56)

In America, this period was heralded as a new age of affluence and prosperity, bringing hopes of personal happiness. War productivity was diverted to meeting consumers' needs by fulfilling their quests for easier and more leisurely lifestyles. At the same time Americans demanded more excitement, decoration and fun than they were being offered by current mass-produced objects. This connoted the gap that existed between the middle-class attitudes of the American art and design establishment and the desires and aspirations of the general public. The power of the design establishment was drastically minimised during the re-styling post-war years. Central to this new attitude was the belief that image, style and fashion were just as important to the product as any rational or moral justifications put up in its defence. American designers and manufacturers (e.g. Mattel) began to scrutinise

mass values as a means of redefining the parameters of good design and to rethink the relevance of that phenomenon, to a mass-consumer society. Along with this change, traditional patterns of socialisation were transformed, as people believed they could be different and better than their parents. In particular, wealth meant less restriction and more gratification.

... there is a primary need in man, which other creatures probably do not have, and which actuates all his apparently unzoological aims, his wistful fancies, his consciousness of value, his utterly impractical enthusiasms... This basic need which certainly is obvious only in man is the need of symbolisation. The symbol making function is one of man's primary activities, like hearing, looking or moving about. It is the fundamental process of his mind and goes on all the time. (Langer, 1951, p.45)

In 1950's America, the accumulation of material goods became more important in defining social relations and standing. There was constant pressure 'to keep up with the Joneses' and even children had to display their wealth. The new approaches to family (e.g. Play school or Summer Camp), increasingly exposed children to peer influence and demanded that they synchronise themselves with their friends. Sociologists spoke of a widening generation gap, as children reared under the new regime of freedom no longer responded to the discipline that had been urged upon their parents. The 1950's child became pre-occupied with consumption and material caring came to define both the purpose and responsibility of good parenting.

Consumerism gave all objects, but particularly toys, new meaning within the practices of socialisation. With their emphasis on self-expression, exploration and fun, toys represented a bond of love that fuelled their popularity as Christmas gifts. In the 1950's toys achieved 80 percent of their annual sales at Christmas time, when

establishing a child's happiness peaked on the family agenda.
(Kline, 1993, p.162)

COMICS, CULTURE AND CONSUMPTION

To open child's book nowadays is to discover some part of that unknown world which touches experience at so many points. The city beyond the clouds, the underground country, all the enchantments of woods and islands are open to the little traveller. From 'The Water Babies' to 'Peter Pan' there has been little... but the stuff of dreams. (Barry, 1992, p.9)

In the eighteenth century, children's fairy tales echoed with well known biblical themes and even pre-biblical motifs of sibling rivalry, magical transformations and struggles to gain consciousness - all the forms of thought and feeling that give shape to myths. Bruno Bettelheim states "the form and structure of fairy tales suggest images to the child by which he can structure his daydreams and with them give better direction to his life." (Bettelheim, 1977, p.46) As we can see, children's books were originally conceived as instruments of moral guidance or aids to enlightenment. However, by the nineteenth century children's literature had undergone a radical change. Books were now made to stimulate every child's imagination through fantasy or adventure. The rise of pleasure as the purpose of children's fiction is therefore a prime indication of the changing concept of childhood. Books were in fact, the first products of any kind to be designed with children's special status and needs in mind. John Newberry, was perhaps the first commercial publisher in England to realise that folklore, fantasy and adventure were an excellent basis for entertaining children. New books had a light, humorous tone, as can be seen from this advertisement in Penny Morning Post:

A little Pretty Pocket Book, intended for... Little Master Tommy and Pretty Miss Polly, with an agreeable letter to

read from Jack the Giant Killer, as also a Ball and Pincushion...
(Newberry. 1774 - 1802. p.104)

Folklore and fairy tales were a major inspiration for other types of children's books, including the Grimm brothers collection of 1823 and Hans Christian Anderson's Wonderful Stories for Children of 1846. Many of these tales included fantastical elements - animals that talked, fairies, sprites or magical goings-on. Books like J.M. Barrie's Peter Pan, expanded this genre to explore a more purely imaginary fictional style based on an interpretation of an enchanted world that lies just beyond the characters dreams. Like Peter Pan, children were generally thought to be more fascinated with that world beyond, than with the humdrum nature of everyday life. The enormous appeal of fairy tales, lay in their ability to transcend the bounds of the real world. The literary traditions and attitudes toward the child which had been cultivated by the book trade were adopted by comic book artists and animators of the twentieth century. Like fairy tales, the comic book offered children strange characters, ironic language, adventurous wanderings and amusing universes. The 1990s acceptance of the dream doll is impressive but it was the climate of 1950s America which made her inception possible. After the grave mood created by World War II adults noticed that the young wanted cultural products which would gratify without the usual tone of responsibility. The redefinition of a culture geared specifically for children was manifest in the comic books of this decade.

In the 20th century, the symbolic role of youth was central to business thought. The fact that childhood was increasingly a period of consuming goods and services made youth a powerful tool in the ideological framework of business. Beyond the transformation period of childhood and adolescence into a period of consumption, youth was also a broad cultural symbol of renewal, of honesty, and criticism against injustice - the young have always provided a recurrent rejection

of the ancient virtues of the 'establishment'.
(Stuart, 1976, p.139)

The significance of the comic book (e.g. Batman and Captain Marvel), lay in its ability to provide the child with a glimpse into another world. This realm was distinct from the mundane existence of their parents. Therefore the comic book is the distancing of the child from daily experience and the re-creation of self in an imaginary world. Superman's life history, for example, creates dramatic tension between the social interplay of the character's hidden identity and the fanciful world of Metropolis. Superman was an instant success and by 1952 it had a monthly circulation of over 1,400,000. The Comic book also differentiated itself from earlier books by its elaborate use of colour which made the adventure more dramatic and the fantasy ever more visibly exotic. They recapitulated children's love of the heroic and invincible and so established themselves as the most important medium of direct communication. As the comic became entrenched in mass culture it assumed potent formulas including literary motifs and comedy traditions.

The (toy) marketers didn't have to assume that children's daydreams, hero worship, absurdist humour and keen sense of group identity were meaningless distractions or artefacts of immaturity. Rather they recognised that these attributes were the deep roots of children's culture, which could be employed as effective tools for communicating with them
(Kline, 1993 , p.17)

Industries wanted a standardisation of children's culture to ensure their products would have diverse and wide appeal. The social critics of the 1950's saw the vision of millions of children reading the same stories, venerating the same imaginary heroes and wanting the same toys as highly menacing. However, the logic of the

mass market had moved into a healthy children's industry, capitalising on the young's fascination with dream worlds. It also highlighted the creation of a totally separate market where children themselves could become purchasers, using their own allowance, savings or earnings. The fact that comics were among the very few goods offered in the mass-market that children could afford was often overlooked. Parents who disapproved of this consumerism were in a way criticising their children's sense of choice, denying their tastes and their wants. In this respect the comic book signifies a cogent symbol of a cultural gap.

AS SEEN ON T.V.

We were shaping products to the needs of the television eye and ear .. what a successful plaything must be able to do to perform in the commercial to sell itself at its best... We strove to identify the single minded pre-emptive qualities which would distinguish our toys from our competitors. (Ladensohn Stern, 1990, p.56)

In 1950's America, no other technology was accommodated in the home so eagerly as the television set. It gave vivid and repeated expression to the new material aspirations of the cosy suburban family liberated from hardship. It provided an array of modern life images which enabled the learning of new social roles including the acceptance of peer influence. Even the family drama and situation comedy ('Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet' and 'I love Lucy') tackled altered post-war expectations. Television helped this generation to refocus its attention on domestic affairs and consumerism. It accomplished this, not only through homely advertisements but by the sponsorship of family-oriented programmes. At last, they had achieved the merchandiser's dream of a family gathered together to listen to their selling pitches. Comic books illustrated the possibility of a mass children's culture but exclusive children's television made it an actuality. Manufacturers of

children's goods including toy makers wanted to talk more directly to children and assert themselves in the matrix of socialisation. In the 1950's, networks offered an increasingly effective instrument through which marketers could expose their ideas. Children's programming and advertising was shown first after school, later on Saturday mornings or whenever children could be drawn to the set without the parent in the room. Children's television including variety shows ('Smilin' Ed's Gang', 'The Pinky Lee Show') and talent shows ('The Children's Hour'), which offered a separate world of peer culture, peer interests and expressions without real interaction or play. However, without advertisers who sold expressly to the children's market there was little money to produce programmes for an exclusively children's audience. In 1955, Carson/Roberts (advertising agency) and ABC (television network) requested Mattel to sponsor a fifteen minute segment of a new show, 'The Mickey Mouse Club'. Within one hour of receiving the proposal Mattel signed for a fifty-two week slot at the price of \$500,000. This figure was just about equal to their net worth at that time. By advertising on 'The Mickey Mouse Club', Mattel proved that both a toy and its brand name could be sold directly to the child. Before this, parents bought toys by asking a salesperson for suggestions, and the toy or the manufacturer were rarely mentioned by name. By advertising every week Mattel also created a year-round consumer demand for toys, forcing retailers and wholesalers to carry and display toys adequately all year long. Signing on as 'The Mickey Mouse Club' sponsor helped to level out both their production and shipping which added to profits immensely. In three years, thanks to television, Mattel went from a sales volume of \$5 million to \$14 million. Overall, their decision to advertise toys on national television fifty-two weeks a year so revolutionised the industry, that it is not an exaggeration to divide the history of the American toy business into two eras, before and after television. Mattel was to become the pacesetter for a generation of new toy manufacturers. From the first

children-oriented advertisements in the early 1950's to the explosion in commercial media in the 1980s (due to Reagan's deregulation of children's television), television has changed the consumption practices of children.

The secret of success lies inside the head of an eight year old child. Adults running multimillion dollar companies are always trying to climb back inside that eight year old heads. Creative people in the industry love to boast that they have not yet grown up, that they have retained enough youthful enthusiasm to know what children will consider fun. (Landensohn Stern, 1990, p. 23)

Today, American programming is able to attract most children's attention for an average of 4.2 hours per day (Kline, 1993, p.208). This popularity is due to the invention of narrative in a form that children love to watch (i.e. animated cartoons). In the 1950s, programmers were under constant pressure to keep production costs low. When a popular mode for children's fiction was discovered (e.g. 'Tom and Jerry'), the formula was repeated and experimentation stopped. Animated cartoons which combined visual humour and action-oriented plots were the proved guarantors of children's interest. These cartoons tended to be strong on action and long on stunts and gags; parents complained that their children watched whatever was offered in cartoon form.

The quality of continuity, even repetition is important to (television) viewers. They are people who readily become involved with a T.V. series to the point where a sense of familiarity develops and sustains their interest and involvement... Variation on a theme is desired, but too much change in themes is likely to disrupt their ability to identify with the program or series. (Mendelsohn, 1966, p.88)

The cartoon proved a highly dynamic and visually exciting way of experiencing a story; animals could talk, walls would fall, the body could contort and any imaginable situation could be created. The exaggeration of body movements and an emphasis on impossible events or actions became the conventional and repeated elements in humorous situations. Animation also gave enormous freedom in characterisation, expressed through the drawing of faces, the use of voices and the depiction of movement and gestures. Unlike the heroes of popular comic books, these anthropomorphic characters bridged the divide between everyday and the impossible. Cartoon land existed neither in the real world of strife nor in the fairyland of pure imagination but somewhere between the two. Children voted with their leisure hours and Walt Disney argued that he provided children with exactly what they wanted.

MICKEY AND MATTEL

Mickey (Mouse) was a changeling caught between reality and the imaginary universe of folklore representing both the every man and the innocent child. (Kline, 1993, p.113)

Mickey Mouse dressed and behaved like a human, wore shorts, had a recognisably American high squeaky voice and a cute rodent face. Disney and Mattel were legendary for another reason, they alone recognised the merchandising potential of these animated characters. Children were not content with the brief encounters offered through cinema and television, they wanted these characters as toys in books or to embellish their clothes and schoolbags. In the mid-fifties, Disney was convinced that the pre licensing of a character like Mickey would be a significant additional source of revenue for the studio. The crowds of children at the cinema door built Disney's fame and fortune but the innovative link was forged between producers, designers and the licensed goods market. Walt Disney began to realise

that the potential of television for merchandising was even greater than that of the movies. Through television, Disney imagery and Disney mythology found its way to many more children via 'The Mickey Mouse Club.' The club showed Disney's own cartoon shorts interspersed with slice-of-life children's dramas, nature tales and musicals, all forming a kind of children's variety show. The programme was hosted by a gang of talented and well-scrubbed children who spanned the targeted ages of four to sixteen. The mouseclubbers themselves, signing the Mouse Club song with their special mouse ears on, provided a sense of family and belonging, with Mickey as its totem animal. Mickey Mouse was simply the integrating personality for the mouse-club clan. Mattel had been producing a limited range of musical products and now found that its 'Mouse Guitar' (a wind-up music box in a ukelele with mouse ears) benefited enormously from the association with the club, which included a good deal of group singing and guitar strumming by the Mouseketeers. Marketers who were interested in communicating with and selling to children could no longer deny the potential power of television.

The Mickey Mouse Club was a fantastic success. Kids, it turned out flocked to the screens to see a more engaging programme tailored to their very own cultural inclinations. (It) also provided a first glimpse at an exclusive childrens' subculture formed by television. Advertisers could now direct their communication specifically at children. Television advertising to children rose quickly from about \$25 million a year in 1956 to about \$750 million by 1987. (Kline, 1993, p. 166)

The fact that, unlike reading comic books or going to the cinema, watching television is free, was extremely significant. Children no longer had to earn money (through paper rounds etc.), save up their allowance or beg from their parents to be entertained. By the close of the 1950s, television had fulfilled its commercial mission; it had cultivated an eager and loyal audience composed of children. Not

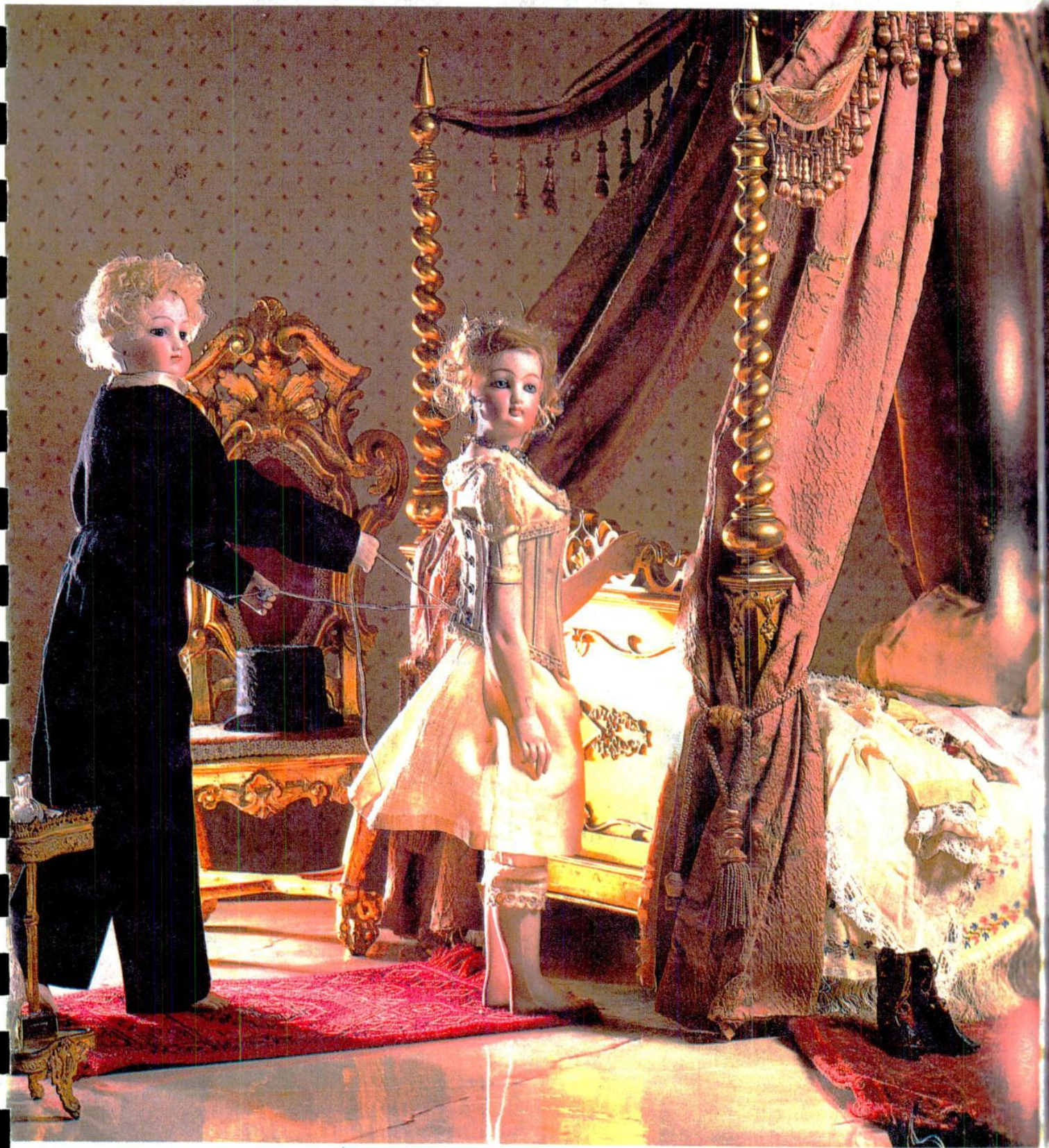
only that, it had invested a means of marketing personality by projecting the right cultural symbols. Televisions' emphasis on the sense of pleasure in a child's play was reflected in a new focus on toys as the tools of children's delight. Play was seen as a social activity in which the toy synchronised the behaviour of two or more children. Creating a toy fad through television was seen as one of the best ways of weaving a toy into a child's world. Parents do not always make the connection between the growing popularity of children's television and the growing drain on their pockets.

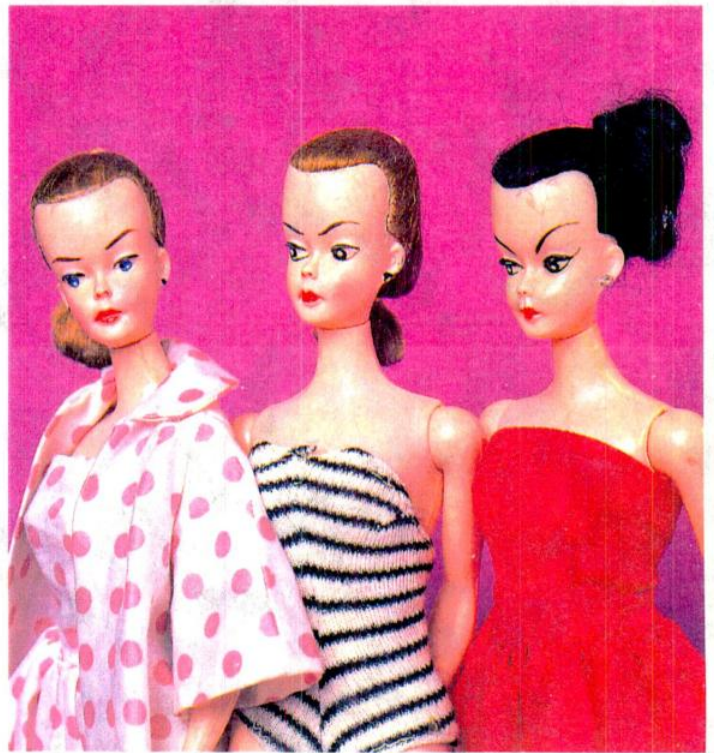
DOLL AS IDOL

Throughout history dolls have played a unique cultural role. In various societies dolls have acted as fetishes, as medicine, as religious devices and as artistic models of forces beyond humanity's ordinary experience.

There has been at times something strangely powerful tied to their symbolic force in people's lives - to their representations of the social world - a force not limited to childhood. The doll had this power because it was a miniaturised and abstracted representation, a condensation of the impulse towards drama, and a symbol that could be used in religious or mystical contexts. The doll was rarely a symbol of the ordinary and everyday life, it referred to something more" (Kline, 1993, p. 192)

Barbie and Bild Lilli were not the first fashion dolls. An example of a doll being used as means of conveying fashion may have occurred as early as 1301. A doll that was popular between 1860 and about 1890 was also given this title. These dolls had bisque heads, wigs and leather or cloth covered bodies. Their shapes suggested the figure of an adult women or girl. Sometimes these dolls came fully dressed but it was possible to buy unclothed dolls. any magazines published at this time were solely or partly devoted to conveying information about these dolls. Clothes could also be made at home from published patterns. The impetus toward





Barbie's presumed prototypes, the German *Bild* Lilli dolls: Hard, Harder, and Hardest.



FIG 3

The *Bild* Lilli doll was inspired by a popular cartoon from the German newspaper *Bild*.

Three Miss Seventeen dolls by MARX in their original clothes at right. This ad from the Sears 1962 Christmas catalog shows 8 extra outfits for Miss Seventeen: American a la mode, Rage of Paris, On the Town, Champagne Waltz, Turnabout, St. Moritz, Date at the Plaza and Wedding Belles. Three others Lovely Night, Beach Set and Wedding Belles Bridesmaid are not shown.



Above left: In 1966, the American doll company FAB-LU (Faber Luft Ltd.) came out with "BABS." Here she is in her original swimsuit with her purse and dog.

Above right: Two large Hong Kong Lillis. The one from MARX is wearing an orange striped suit. The other from an unknown Chinese factory wears a copy of the Lilli outfit No. 1119 from 1955 called "shorts and tied blouse."

Left: A few of the ORIGINAL Lilli dolls. Notice the very rare and mint black poodle.

Below: The outfits for the small size Hong Kong Lillis by Marx were detailed and well crafted. Here is a group with all three different hair colors.



Top left: One of Lillis most elusive items—a mint 1955 catalog showing outfits. Above: One of the ugliest Hong Kong Lillis from an unknown Chinese factory. Above right: Hong Kong Lilli or not? This "Miss England" doll without any markings was found by Marl Davidson. Right: "GINA" from Allison was produced in Hong Kong.



realize that more than four different companies made Lilli lookalike dolls in the mid 1960's. All of these dolls were produced in Hong Kong. The only way to know their real identity with certainty is to find them in their original packaging, which often times

is missing. That is why the dolls are often lumped together as Hong Kong Lillis.

This article is a short piece taken from my new book that will be released in spring, 1995 called "Lilli, Barbie and their friends."

Barbie Bazaar

the manufacture of fashion dolls came with the development of the process of manufacturing bisque c.1850. This porcelain, lent itself perfectly to the production of lady-like dolls heads. It is thought that the smaller bisque-head dolls were made as toy, which would have had the additional purpose of helping to educate girls and young women in domestic skills, required later in life. Larger examples, some over thirty inches however, are more likely to have been occasionally used to promote and advertise the latest fashion.

The number of women greatly exceeded that of men, at this period of time. Women had very limited options outside marriage. Therefore the aspiring bride had to outshine all her rivals in every possible way. She would need knowledge of fashion and the wearing of suitable gowns and accessories was a crucial element in her success of otherwise. Therefore it was hardly surprising that a daughters toy also served as a means to awaken her interest and educate her in the rules of style and fashion. These dolls usually reflected the current Parisian fashions, including the multiple under garments that were a feature of the period. (See Fig 2) Barbie also wore detailed reproduction of the undergarments worn by young women e.g. the bra. While Captain Marvel, Superman and Mickey Mouse were taking over America, a glamour puss with the proportions of a cartoon siren was thrilling Europeans. Barbie's predecessor and presumed prototype was originally conceived by the cartoonist Reinhard Beuthien and featured in the German newspaper Bild in 1952. Lilli was a fully-formed, pouting and pony-tailed teenager (Fig.3). Like the youthful Brigitte Bardot, the Bild Lilli cartoon strip was flagrantly sexual and openly naughty (Fig. 4). The liberal sexuality of the 'ye ye' years in France made Lilli an instant star with teenagers. The story of the very first eleven and half inch fashion mannequin doll began when a Heinz Frand came up with the idea of making Lilli three dimensional. In 1955 Bild newspaper and Frank located a factory in Coburg/Neustadt which employed the popular and well known toy designer Max

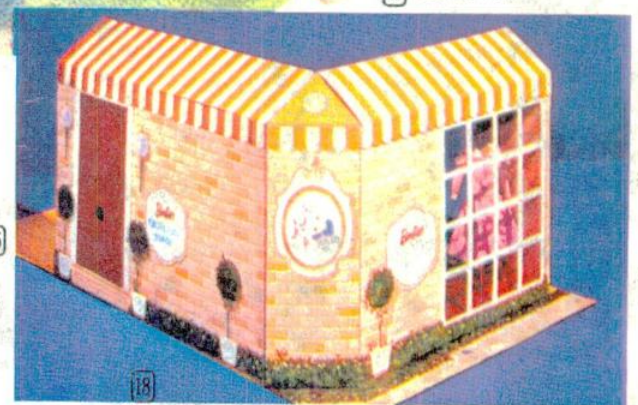


Grand

18
Inside View

Fashion Shop

18
Outside View



18



19



17



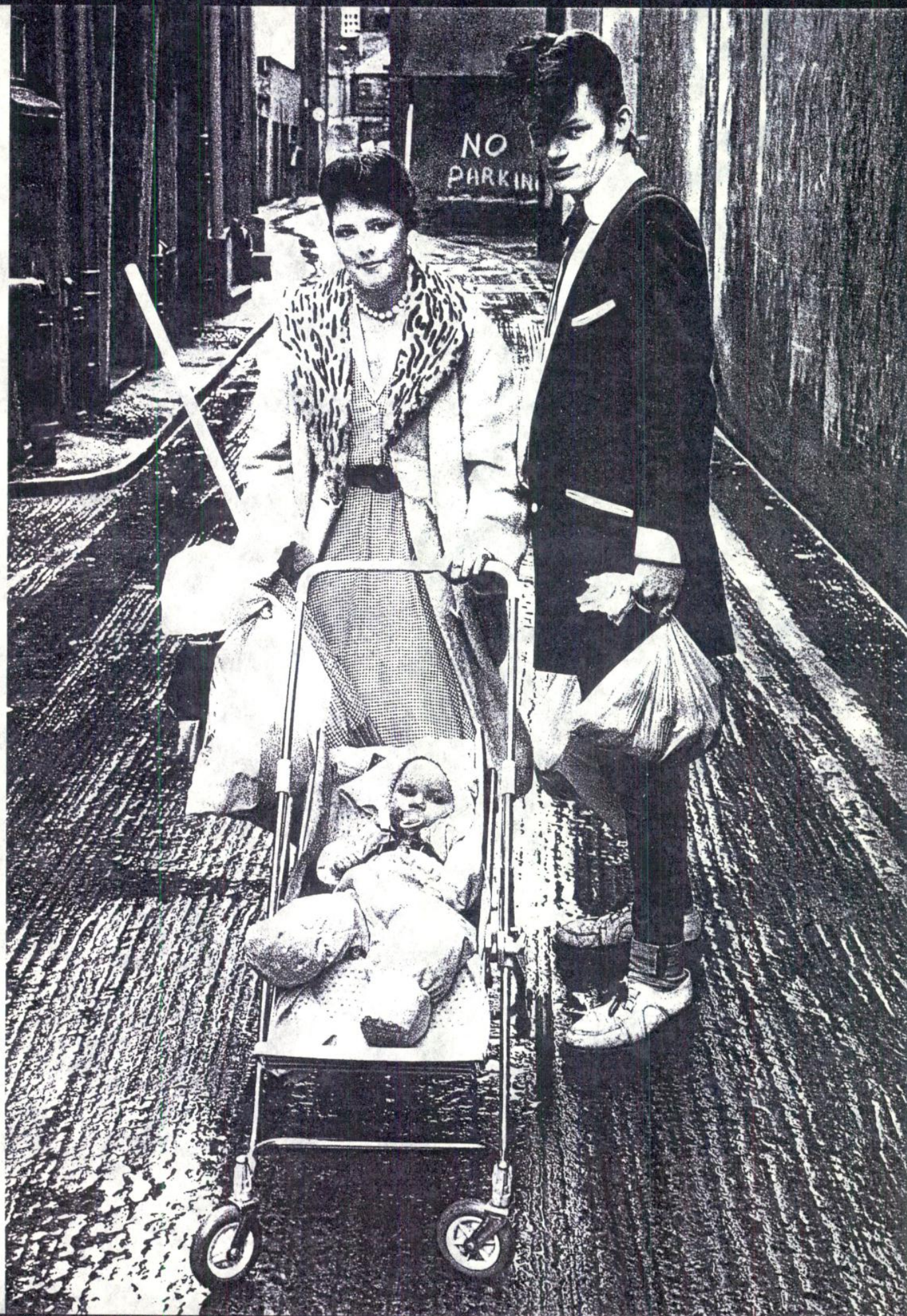


FIG. 7

Wei Bbrodt. It took him one month to come up with a doll which captured the upbeat spirit of Beuthien's cartoon strip. Lilli was available in two sizes (seven and half inches "and eleven and half inches") and came in a trendy clear plastic tube complete with doll stand. Her upswept ponytail came in three colours including blonde, reddish brown and jet black. By the end of her production in 1961, this self-confessed slave to fashion had over 100 outfits in her wardrobe. The success of this eleven and half inch coquette (between 1955 and 1958 over 100,000 dolls were sold across Europe) showed the opportunities for a plastic doll to become a celebrity.

Barbie Teenage Fashion Model. An exciting all-new kind of doll... She's shapely and grown up... with fashion apparel authentic in every detail! This is Barbie so curvy, flesh-toned and lifelike. She almost breathes, and stands alone. Girls of all ages will thrill to the fascination of her. Miniature wardrobe of fine-fabric fashions tiny zippers that really zip... coats with luxurious, carefully tailored linings.... jewelled earrings, necklaces and color-co-ordinated sun glasses. (Fig. 5)
(Bazaar, 1959, p. 20)

Barbie was not a baby doll but a fashion model, her identity was tied in with the imagery of the glamour world of teenage fashion and romance (Fig. 6). She emerged in 1959, at a time when the concept of 'teenager' was a new and rather sexy one. In the pre-war years there had been no such thing as a teenager-by 1959 it represented a new species. Teenagers had their own hairdos (Males had the D.A. or Duck's ass (Fig. 7) and females had swirl ponytail), clothes (flouncy dirndl skirts, nylon petticoats, sunglasses and toreador pants), language (hep, bobby-soxer, wax) and music (The 'Coasters' 'Young Blood') 'Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers' 'Why Do Fools Fall in Love? Dion and Belmonts' 'A Teenager In Love); in other words, their own style. The fascination with acting out teenage roles was more compelling than acting out the parental roles that traditional baby dolls

TONY UNDERGARMENTS
Stock #919. Retail: \$1.00



PICNIC CASUAL
Stock #912. Retail: \$1.00



FLORAL PETTICOAT
Stock #921. Retail: \$1.25



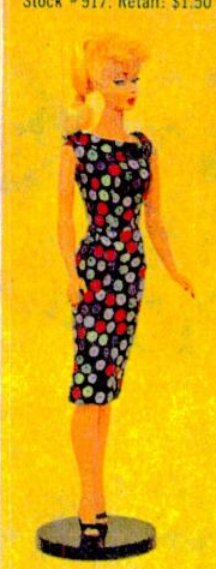
SWEET DREAMS
Stock #973. Retail: \$1.25



GRACE SIMPLES
Stock #918. Retail: \$1.50



APPLE PRINT SHEATH
Stock #917. Retail: \$1.50



BARBIE-Q OUTFIT
Stock #962. Retail: \$2.00



GOLDEN GIRL
Stock #911. Retail: \$2.00



PICNIC SET
Stock #967. Retail: \$2.50



RESORT SET
Stock #963. Retail: \$2.50



PEACHY FLEECY COAT
Stock #915. Retail: \$2.50



SUBURBAN SHOPPER
Stock #969. Retail: \$2.50



NIGHTY-NEGLIGEE SET
Stock #965. Retail: \$3.00



SWEATER GIRL
Stock #976. Retail: \$3.00



WINTER HOLIDAY
Stock #975. Retail: \$3.50



COMMUTER SET
Stock #916. Retail: \$3.50



EVENING SPLENDOUR
Stock #961. Retail: \$4.00



ROMAN HOLIDAY
Stock #968. Retail: \$4.00



EASTER PARADE
Stock #971. Retail: \$4.00



PLANTATION BELLE
Stock #966. Retail: \$4.00



GAY PARISIENNE
Stock #954. Retail: \$4.00



1959

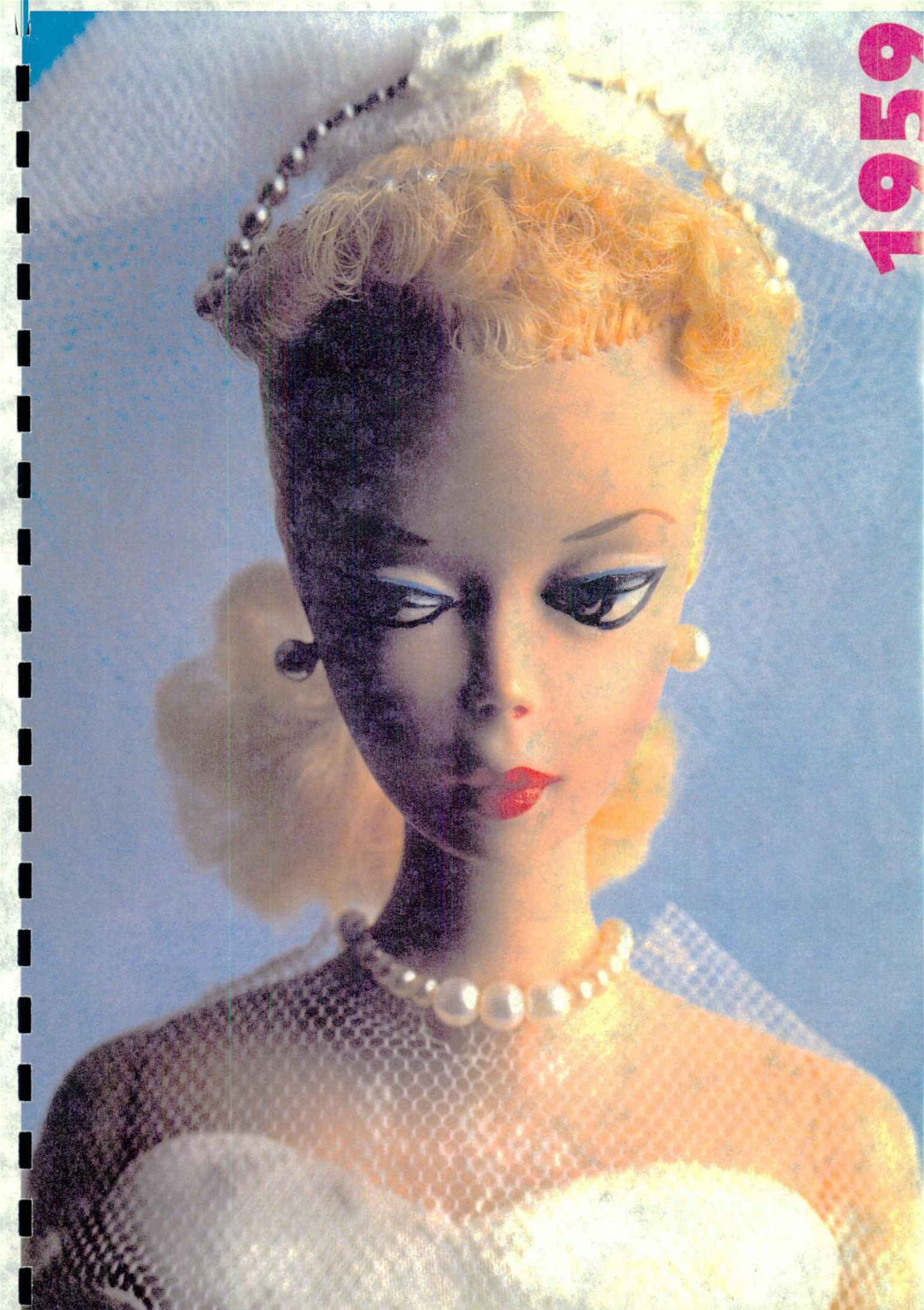


FIG.9

offered. Barbie epitomised the popular teenager, who was free from the constraints of money worries and appeared to have unlimited leisure hours. This was a doll who represented the values of young, newly affluent, female Americans of the first suburban television generation. The teenager's lifestyle was pleasure oriented; they filled their free time with activities such as 'hanging out' at the diner or lounging at the beach. Many of Barbie doll's earliest fashion were complementary to these activities (**Fig.8**). She made her debut at the Toy Fair in New York, wearing a black and white striped jersey swimsuit which employed new revolutionary man-made fabric, famous for optimum figure control.

My first modeled item was the simplest, but what a whirl of associations it had: that jazzy black-and-white striped swimsuit, worn with sunglasses and gold hoop earring, was chic beyond words-Coco Chanel in CapFerat, Gina Lollobrigida on the Riviera. (Comforting too-made of knit jersey that felt fuzzy cosy against my skin) (Jacobs, 1994, p.11)

Cool and sophisticated was the image that nearly every teenager yearned for. Barbie achieved this dream ideal with sculpted eyebrows, perfect eyeliner and saucy red lips. (**Fig. 9**) Her young slim hour glass appearance and long legs were all precariously supported in high springolator heels. The fact that Barbie was introduced in beachwear rather than a sensible frock indicates that Barbies world was centred around fun. The first two outfits shown in Barbie's booklet were undergarments/sets (Floral Petticoat and Fashion undergarments), clothes that symbolised adulthood to most young girls. They allowed young girls to anticipate the structured and difficult-to-wear undergarments to the era. Ninety per cent of their playtime was preoccupied with dressing and undressing Barbie; given this ritualistic and repetitious form of play, Mattel concluded that Barbie's appeal lay in her ability to evoke fantasy in the child Artists well known for their adverts in teen-

oriented magazines (like Charm and Seventeen) (Fig. 10) were utilised by Mattel also. These fashion illustrations highlighted the fun of getting 'dressed-up'.

In the March 1959 issue of Harper's Bazaar, an all-important couture issue entitled 'The Eyes On Paris and America', several pages devoted exclusively to undergarments claimed; "The new spring clothes rely increasingly on a lean, defined (as opposed to pinched) upper torso and waist. Nearly all of us will need a new kind of control to achieve this..... some clothes may well exact special measures of corsetry". Barbie's first underwear sets, like her graceful body, simply reflected current standards of feminine beauty. When children bought a Barbie they didn't rehearse motherhood instead they spent a lot of time dressing her and admiring her in her various outfits. Ruth Handler, Barbie's creator, claimed in her autobiography 'Dream Doll' that, "Barbie was originally created to project every little girl's dream of the future" and in 1959 that dream usually included a mature figure:

.... I had observed my daughter Barbara playing with paper dolls with her friends. While the toy counter in the early 1950's were heavy with paper dolls of every size, shape, and form, Barbara and her friends always insisted on buying only adult female paper dolls. They simply were not interested in baby paper dolls or even those representing ten-year olds, their own age. And I discovered something very important: They were using these dolls to project their dreams of their own futures as adult women. (Handler, 1994, p. 3)

The basis for Barbie's appeal lay in her ability to evoke fantasy in little girls during play. In the Concise Oxford Dictionary, the word 'model' means "A miniature representation of something", an example for imitation; and ideal. "Barbie combined all three characteristics. It could be said that Barbie is an eleven and half inch representation of ideal American womanhood, a role model and the epitome

of beauty. In 1959, on the Paris catwalks everything hinted at femininity, whether it was the sloping shoulder line, the tailored accentuation on the curve of the bust, ribcage, hip and pelvis, the heels emphasising the ankle and calf, or the little hat with face veil and feathers, gloves and small handbag. Barbie reflected pure glamour and style and her wardrobe was an American interpretation of French haute-couture. many of her early guises (Plantation Belle of 1959 and Gay Parisian of 1959) typified the romanticised image of the swan-necked, soft-shouldered female in rustling taffeta, shimmering silk, embroidered cotton or layers of pastel nylon net decorated with lace, ribbons and sequins. Christian Dior promoted his 'New Look', remarking that "fashion comes from a dream and the dream is an escape from reality" (Baker, 1991, p.40) Barbie swept the 1950's child's imagination with enchanting dreams of careers and grown up glamour.

They [Mattel Inc.] wanted to play up the glamorous aspects, I [Ruth Handler] the more ordinary teenage activities. Eventually I began to lose the battle because consumers seemed to prefer the glamorous side of, Barbie.... The designers made the doll prettier and prettier as the years went by because it became clear that little girls were not intimidated by Barbie's looks. (Handler, 1994, p. 8)

Barbie's background story positioned her as a fashion model, which justified the constant dressing and grooming play activities and explained the extensive wardrobe. Barbie evoked a specific kind of imaginary role play that went beyond the mothering and family scripts that had until then defined doll play. She placed concerns with fashion, self presentation and glamour into a fantasy of supposed sophistication and beauty. Barbie also acted as the releaser of little girls romantic fantasies. As Cy Schneider, the former advertising agency executive who worked on the early Barbie campaigns, stated; "The people at Mattel and the agency... began thinking of toys in an entirely new way". Barbie was carefully and

consciously designed not as just another plaything, but as a personality: "We didn't depict Barbie as a doll. We treated her as a real-life teenage fashion model". In the campaigns to market toys on television, the role of fantasy quickly emerged as an important dimension: "We didn't depict Barbie as a doll. We treated her as a real-life teenage fashion model". In the campaigns to market toys on television, the role of fantasy quickly emerged as an important dimension: "In showing our earliest television commercials to children, we also realised something more important that persists to this day. The play situation in which you place a toy becomes as important as the product". Toy marketers realised that they were not so much promoting a toy's use-value as marketing a particular imaginative relationship with the toy. Schneider also noted "Somehow Barbie filled a very special need for little girl's imaginations. She was the fulfilment of every little girl's dream of glamour, fame, wealth and stardom". Young girls identified with Barbie and became deeply involved with her. Watching girls playing with her the pre marketing researchers were impressed by the intensity and the vividness of fantasy that engaged the children. In the course of marketing toys through television, Mattel also discovered that the peer dimension of toys was the key to 'children's marketing'. Kids liked to watch other children on television or in the advertisements for toys, so that they could gauge their own reactions against those of other children. Children were also incredibly particular about the kinds of children they identified with. Children expected to see toys presented and used with others around. Play was after all, a form of social interaction. Adult presenters did not work well in toy advertisements. Marketing to children required its own unique methods of product design and testing. Companies had the problem of choosing a certain style and design; of demanding sensitivity to new values, which matched the values of the young consumer. Mattel's marketing regime was an overwhelming success, Barbie sold millions in the first few years after her introduction:

We turned production up-not only to the 20,000-a-week production rate I'd ordered before the 1959 Toy Show but double or triple that. As much as we could get. But it took us three years to even close to catching up with the demand a little bit. Never before had a demand that was greater after Christmas than before. (Handler, 1994, p. 88)

Chapter 2

STAR GAZING

Barbie has become a legend in her own playtime, you could say she's a star. Just like the silver screen goddesses of the 1960's, Barbie has grown accustomed to fans and their idolatrous reactions. However, unlike these status symbols, her fame has remained constant and as yet unrivalled. Like movie stars, Barbie seems superhuman, projecting idealised images of physical flawlessness and romantic bliss, features which many real people find hard to equal. Billy Boy (Couture historian and owner of 11,000 Barbies) believes she is a popular heroine: "Barbie is more than a doll, she can be seen in every elegant woman. Bianca Jagger, Eddie Sedgewick,, Diana Vreeland all have Barbie qualities. Elizabeth Taylor and Marilyn radiate Barbie's aura. Barbie is really just the personification of femininity, personality, beauty and style. (Boy, 1986, p. 20) I believe that screen stars and Barbie give expression to an assortment of basic inner feelings on the part of the spectator. "Stars... are the direct or indirect reflection of the needs, drives and dreams of American society". (Walker, 1974, p.xi) For the mass of people, stardom provides a glossy image of the way in which the star (Barbie, Kim Novak, Doris Day etc.) seems to be living. There is a list of symbolic accessories which complement this lifestyle, including, haute couture, parties, limousines, beautiful mansions, swimming pools etc. The way stars live is one element in the "out-of-this-world" style of Hollywood. Thorstein Veblen made the concept of conspicuous consumption (the ways by which the wealthy display the fact that they are wealthy) central to his 'Theory of the Leisure Class'. Fashion is one example of this obvious consumption, the wearing of clothes made of expensive materials in exclusive designs, many of which make work impossible. Barbie's wardrobe (like any





Vinyl Cases with brass-plated fittings

Plenty of room to hold doll, plus clothing and accessories. Made of electronically sealed washable vinyl and fitted with plastic hangers. Plastic handle. Shipping weight for all cases except (4) 1 lb. 8 oz.

- (1) 49 N 9301—Skipper...\$1.87
- (2) 49 N 9309—Barbie... 1.87
- (3) 49 N 9381—Midge... 1.87
- (4) Ken's Case. Wt. 2 lbs. 2 oz.
49 N 9328.....\$2.37



Trunks for your favorite 11½ and 12½-inch dolls

5 Barbie and Midge Trunk. Spaces for both dolls, plus all their clothing and accessories. Electronically sealed washable vinyl, brass-plated fittings, plastic hangers.

49 N 9330—Shipping weight 3 lbs. 13 oz.....\$3.97

6 Trunk for 3 dolls. Holds Barbie, Ken and Midge, plus their clothing and accessories. Electronically sealed washable vinyl with aluminum frame, brass-plated fittings, accessory drawers and plastic hangers.

Dolls and clothing not included.

49 N 9331—Shipping weight 3 lbs. 5 oz.....\$3.97



Trunk for all miniature dolls (including Skipper) \$5.97

This de luxe trunk holds 4 dolls
9¼, 11½ and 12½ inches tall
... plastic rack for Barbie wigs

Vacuum-formed plastic inserts will hold Barbie, Ken, Midge and Skipper. Vacuum-formed plastic trunk with aluminum bands around it for extra strength and durability. Brass-plated fittings, plastic hangers. Dolls and clothing not included.

49 N 9302—Shipping weight 4 lbs.....\$5.97

Extra Hangers

Set of 48 hangers of high impact styrene in assorted high fashion colors.

49 N 9382—Shpg. wt. 4 oz..Set 97c



7 \$2.94



8 \$6.67



9 \$1.99



10 \$2.84



11 \$4.93

12 \$5.47

13 \$2.57

7 Barbie's Wardrobe. 13 in. high. High-impact plastic. Full-door mirror, shoe rack, hat rack, 3 drawers, hangers. Clothing not incl.
49 N 9321—Shipping weight 2 pounds 2 ounces.....\$2.94

8 Barbie's Music-box Piano. 9 in. high. Lift-up lid. Jewel box area. Wind-up movement. Plastic. Piano bench, fabric seat. (No dolls.)
49 N 9383—Shipping weight 2 pounds 4 ounces.....\$6.67

9 Bedding for 4-poster below. Top sheet, fitted bottom sheet, pillow case, soft blanket. All of cotton; all to add to Barbie's comfort.
49 N 9358—Shipping weight 3 ounces.....Set \$1.99

10 Barbie's 4-poster Bed. White plastic; molded vinyl mattress, pillow. Under-bed chest. Pink plastic spread, canopy. Unassembled.
49 N 9248—Shipping weight 1 pound 6 ounces.....\$2.84

Barbie has her very own plastic furniture

Bed with secret drawer . . Chifferobe stores her clothes . . Vanity comes with padded stool, mirror, even a rug

11 Queen-size Bed. Spread, bolster match tufted head, footboard. 18x12x10 in. high.
49 N 9357—Shipping weight 2 pounds.....\$4.93

12 Chifferobe. Swing-out door one side; 4 drawers other side. Top drawer has "secret lock." 2 sliding pull-out clothes rods; hangers. 13½x5½x14 in. No clothing
49 N 9384—Shipping weight 4 pounds 10 oz.....\$5.47

13 French Provincial Vanity, 7x4x13 inches. Accessories.
49 N 9326—Shipping wt. 1 lb. 2 oz.....Set \$2.57

Barbie Bazaar

prominent star's) seems to supply an endless selection of silk, taffeta, velvet and brocade. Mattel staff would travel seasonally to the Paris collections, so her early ensembles paid homage to Coco Chanel, Cristobal Balenciaga and Christian Dior. The attention to detail was remarkable, the most obvious extravagance being the real silk or cotton linings and hand finished seams and hems. Buttons, zippers, snaps, hooks and eyes were all expertly set in by hand. Most importantly, labels were just like couture labels, woven with the Barbie logo signature and carefully sewn onto the back of her dresses. Outfits such as 'Saturday Matinee' (1965) 'Gold'n' Glamour' (1965) and 'Sophisticated Lady' (1963) (**Fig 11**) promoted the glamour and sex appeal of Hollywood's leading ladies. The movie stars 'dressing room' or 'castle in the air' accentuated the notion that they had a finer existence than the people in the street. Similarly Barbie's 'Dream House' and 'New Dream House' ("IT'S BIGGER AND MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN EVER BEFORE! WITH FOUR LIVING AREAS"), complete with elegant furnishings, were advertised as the answer to every little girl's dream (**Fig 12**) (Bazaar, 1994, p. 90) Bob Lucas wrote in his pulp novel:

Carla could not remember the precise moment she decided she would become a star. As she grew older it seemed that the dream was born in her. She had no illusions about developing into a great actress. It was the glamour, the make-believe, the beauty, the adulation that were the increments of stardom that bedazzled her... The heart-shaped swimming pools, the Rolls Royce's, the estates, the mink, the ermine,.... all this she knew as intimately as if she had created the Technicolor paradise where dwelt the screen gods and goddesses. (Lucas, 1962, p.16)



FIG.13

THE STUFF OF DREAMS

The significance of the cinema in women's lives in the 1960s cannot be overestimated. Hollywood stars of that era still provide female spectators with an abundance of 'treasured memories'. Hollywood like Barbie's world, offered its audience the possibility of being part of another world, far away from everyday life. (Fig13) It presented 'a land of milk and honey' and the pleasures of escaping to a more luxurious and glamorous place. This 'transportation' to another, realm suggested the delight in giving up one's own world for a fantasy one. Similar to the roles adopted by the child playing with Barbie, the female movie-goer participated in another existence for a short period of time. Hollywood stars and Barbie enabled their fans to dream:

The power of the doll as idol has been demonstrated by Mattel's early Barbie campaigns; the popularity of Barbie helped doll makers realise the enormous cultural force embodied in a doll - especially the doll's capacity to represent an imaginary world beyond the ordinary world of everyday roles and rituals. (Kline, 1993, p. 193)

The Hollywood star system epitomised the affluent American dream brought about by consumerism. Film stars were the main source of images of this American cultural abundance. For many reasons, watching a movie was compared with the process of dreaming: it projected desires of better things and offered the suggestion of inhabiting another world which offered those things lacking in everyday life. Hollywood femininity, like Barbie femininity, clearly signified excitement, magnetism and prestige. They were both envied and admired for their glamour and desirability. According to Richard Dyer (author of *Stars* 1979) pre-pubescent girls would have been among the most devoted to Hollywood stars (e.g. Jane Fonda) in the early 60's. There is an intensity of feeling often associated with young female

attachment to desirable images of a more complete confident and mature identity. This adoration of adults takes many forms, such as teenage crushes, hero worship and fixation on cultural idols. The age difference between the movie star (e.g. Elizabeth Taylor, Marilyn Monroe) or the fully developed teenage Barbie doll and these younger fans is important because both offer ideals of femininity for young women who are preoccupied with attaining adult femininity. Therefore, Barbie not only represents glamour and beauty, but a maturity (of mind and body) which is a source fascination to young girls. Children demonstrate not simply the desire to overcome the gap between the two identities but a fantasy of instant movement from one personality to another. Children identified Barbies's full figure with adulthood and through role-playing could explore inner dreams of growing-up. Ien Ang (Author of *Watching Dallas* 1985) argues that "a flight into a fictional fantasy world is not so much a denial of reality as playing with it. A game that enables one to place the limits of the fictional and the real under discussion and make them fluid". (Ang. 1985 p. 14) Thomas B. Hess has stressed that:

....the pin-up image was defined with canonical strictness. First of all, there was the 'pin-up girl' herself. She had to be healthy, American, cheerleader type - button nosed, wide-eyed, long legged, ample hips and breasts, and above all with the open friendly smile that discloses perfect, even, white teeth. Then there is her costume and pose. These must be inviting but not seducing; affectionate but not passionate, revealing by suggestion but concealing in fact. (Hess, 1972, p. 22)

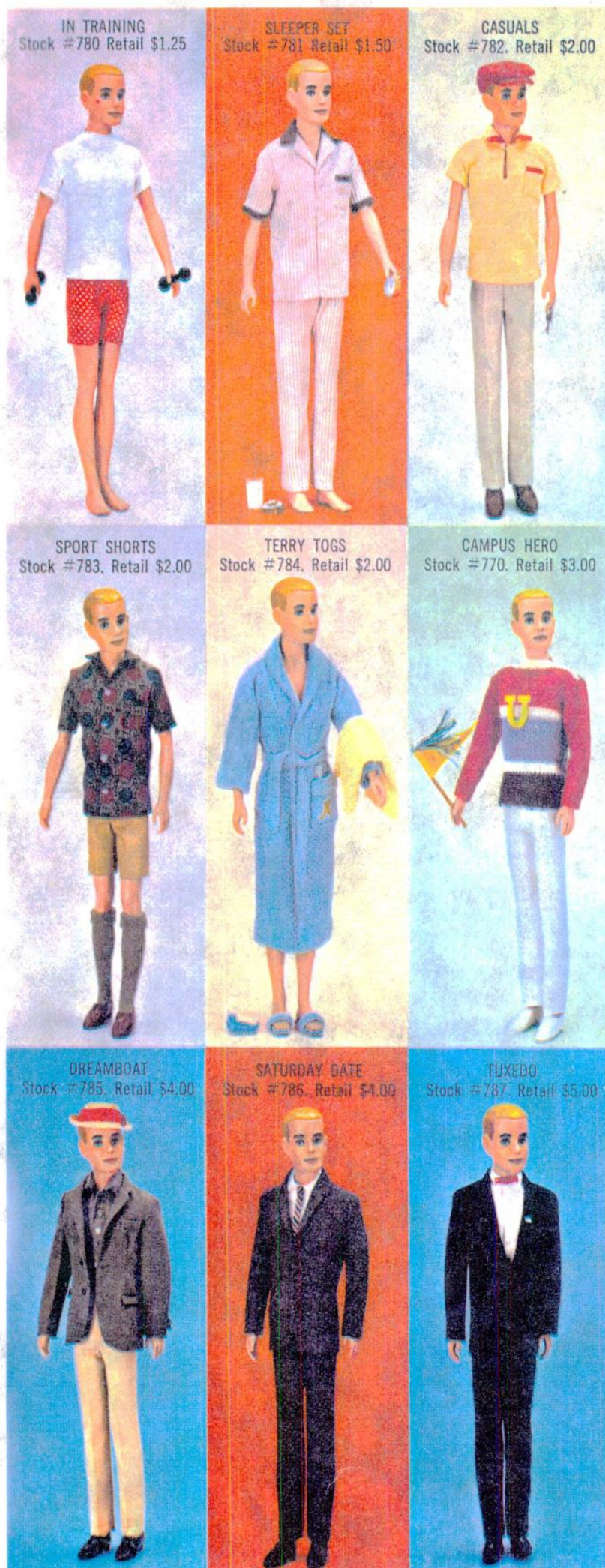
Marilyn Monroe and Barbie are two stars who promote the dual identities outlined above. Barbie's image is situated in a flux of ideas concerning morality (wholesome, all-American) on one hand and sexuality (voluptuous figure: life size, Barbie would be 39-18-32), on the other hand. Barbie's parted scarlet lips and ample proportions are signifiers of sexuality, yet the fact that she is a toy suggests

'innocence'. The dichotomy of virgin-whore is used repetitively by critics to analyse the ambiguous appeal of star (Marilyn Monroe) and doll (Barbie).

LOVE AND ROMANCE

In the 1960's, Hollywood through films like 'The Graduate (1968)', captivated audiences with pure romance and above all happiness-ever-after. In the case of movie stars, their personal love or romance was believed to be different in 'kind' from ordinary people's. Stars of the silver screen were treated as superlatives. The utopian liaison between Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor or the real-life fairy tale of Grace Kelly, for instance provided images of unsurpassable happiness. The faultless beauty, lavish wealth and presumed perfect relationships made their lifestyles appear irresistible. Violette Morin, who wrote an article ('Les Olympiens') suggests that stars are "always the most something-or-other in the world - the most sexy, the most expensive, the most beautiful". (Glendhill, 1991, p. 19) She also insinuates that in the case of Elizabeth Taylor "her love life, plus her sheer expensiveness are what make her interesting, not her similarity to you or me" For Hollywood stars, love ceases to be a question of physical and practical relations rather it becomes a metaphysical experience. This notion of 'elemental' love was accentuated in movies *La Dolce Vita* (1960), *Dr. Zhivago* (1965) and *Love Story* (1969). Teenagers of the early sixties reacted to these, and the dating game became a priority. Couples exchanged fraternity rings or pins, drive-ins and diner dates were essential to 'going steady' and the ultimate goal was to be crowned high school prom king and queen.

Beginning as early as September 1959, we received hundreds of letters from little girls begging us to make a boyfriend for Barbie..... I thought back to the days when my daughter had played with paper dolls, the play



Ken^{T.M.}

HE'S A DOLL!

Barbie's[®]

BOYFRIEND



Here he is... the Boyfriend for Barbie the Teen-Age Fashion Model. All Barbie fans will want Ken and his smartly-tailored wardrobe of finest quality materials for perfect fit and finish... with miniature accessories... plus a special arm tag identity for the only genuine Ken Doll.

KEN — HE'S A DOLL. Stock #750. Retail Price: \$3.50. Sturdy vinyl plastic. Movable arms, legs, and head for easy dressing. Crew-cut hair, bathing trunks, sandals, and wire stand to hold doll. Size: 12½" tall. Std. Pack: 1 doz. Wt.: 8½ lbs.

Costumes (without dolls) and accessories — individually packaged in clear plastic covered tray package.

IN TRAINING Stock #780 — Knit tee shirt, elastic-waist boxer shorts, briefs, dumbbell set and exercise manual. Std. Pack: 1 doz., Wt.: 2½ lbs.

SLEEPER SET Stock #781 — Two-piece tailored pajamas with midnight snack of sugar bun and glass of milk. Alarm clock. Std. Pack: 1 doz., Wt.: 2½ lbs.

CASUALS Stock #782 — Knit tee shirt, polished cotton slacks. Red sports cap, argyle socks and two-toned shoes. Sports car keys. Std. Pack: 1 doz., Wt.: 2½ lbs.

SPORT SHORTS Stock #783 — Bermuda-length walking shorts, contrasting short-sleeved sport shirt, khaki socks and brown oxford shoes. Std. Pack: 1 doz., Wt.: 2½ lbs.

TERRY TOGS Stock #784 — Thick terry robe, with "K" on pocket. Matching terry scuffs. Terry towel, soap, sponge, comb, electric razor plus briefs. Std. Pack: 1 doz., Wt.: 3½ lbs.

CAMPUS HERO Stock #770 — Handsome pull-over sweater with white-duck slacks, red socks and white oxfords. Accessorized with sports trophy, school banner, and letter "U" for sewing on sweater. Std. Pack: 1 doz., Wt.: 2½ lbs.

DREAMBOAT Stock #785 — Smart sport jacket, tailored slacks, short-sleeved sport shirt with matching socks, black oxfords and a snap-brim straw hat. Std. Pack: ½ doz., Wt.: 2½ lbs.

SATURDAY DATE Stock #786 — Natural-shoulder tailored suit, with long-sleeved white dress shirt. Fashionable slim tie, shoes and socks. Std. Pack: ½ doz., Wt.: 2½ lbs.

TUXEDO Stock #787 — Tuxedo with satin-faced lapels, white dress shirt, black socks and shoes. Maroon bowtie and cummerbund plus white corsage. Std. Pack: ½ doz., Wt.: 3 lbs.

pattern that had sparked the idea for Barbie in the first place. Yes, she had played with male paper dolls in fact, they'd been an integral part of that play - they were needed for love interests, dates, proms, and the like. (Handler 1994, p. 89)

Ken (**Fig 14**) was introduced into Barbie's life in 1961, and with him came the possibility of true romance. As in the movies, Mattel's leading man offered delectable looks, impeccable manners and the promise to always be true (they've been dating for 34 years). Ken's image leaned towards the conservative 'Ivy League' look, with outfits like 'Terry Togs', 'Saturday Date' and 'Tuxedo' (1961), recapitulating Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption. He characterised the popular 'all-round', 'all-American' sort of guy, and was a healthy blend of 'Campus hero' and 'Dream-boat'. Ken's first incarnation was the essence of good clean fun - he was dapper, tall (12"), slender and had perfect skin, neat hair and piercing blue eyes. His arrival in Barbie's life prompted children to explore new roles of identification.

KEN-HE'S A DOLL! BARBIE'S BOYFRIEND:

Here he is . . . the boyfriend for Barbie
the Teenage Fashion Model. (Bazaar, 1994, p. 39)

The first television commercial for Ken in 1961, borrowed heavily from current movie motifs, including the close-up. It was filmed in black and white, and set against a stylised ballroom in which the vague silhouettes of women in ball gowns evoked glamour and beauty. The music swelled and a sultry female narrator set the romantic scene, "It all started at the dance". (Boy, 1986, p.86) Using animation, the Barbie doll turned her head and glanced back as the camera panned to the side to discover a hazy silhouette in the distance, Ken in a tuxedo! "She met Ken Somehow Barbie knew that she and Ken would be going together". The heart-rendering commercial goes on to explain that Ken was Barbie's new boyfriend and that they had many co-ordinating outfits for beach, fraternity dances, after school



Pretty Dating Outfits

- 1 **Special Date.** Ken looks handsome in his well-tailored suit. Shirt, tie, shoes, socks included.
49 N 3738—Shipping weight 5 ounces.....\$2.97
- 2 **Gold 'n Glamour.** Gold-color lamé tweed ensemble. Stole and hat with fur trim. Accessories.
49 N 3370—Shipping weight 6 ounces.....\$2.99
- 3 **On the Avenue.** Chic knit suit with accessories.
49 N 3371—Shipping weight 5 ounces.....\$2.87
- 4 **Black Magic.** Sheath, tulle cape, gloves, purse.
49 N 3757—Shipping weight 5 ounces.....\$1.66
- 5 **Matinee Fashion.** Suit, hat, scarf... luxury trim.
49 N 3378—Shipping weight 5 ounces.....\$2.47
- 6 **Disc Date.** Evening skirt, blouse, record player.
49 N 3380—Shipping weight 5 ounces.....\$1.97
- 7 **Country Club Dance.** Bouffant dress, long gloves.
49 N 3381—Shipping weight 4 ounces.....\$1.67
- 8 **It's Cold Outside.** Coat, hat. Assorted colors.
49 N 3729—Shipping weight 5 ounces.....\$1.57



Barbie and her friends love to dress in Elegant Fashion



- 9 **Ken's Tuxedo.** satin-faced lapels. With tie, shirt, boutonniere.
49 N 3821—Shpg. wt. 7 oz..\$2.96
- 10 **Junior Prom.** Romantic gown, stole, necklace, gloves, shoes.
49 N 3391—Shpg. wt. 6 oz..\$2.43
- 11 **Midnight Blue.** Lamé-topped gown, cape, accessories.
49 N 3754—Shpg. wt. 8 oz..\$2.99
- 12 **Fraternity Dance.** Full-length skirt with lace bodice. Gloves, sash, necklace with pendant, shoes.
49 N 3396—Shpg. wt. 5 oz. \$2.33
- 13 **Golden Glory.** Brocade gown, evening coat, purse, shoe.
49 N 3393—Shpg. wt. 7 oz. \$2.99
- 14 **Natural Mink Jacket.** The treasure of Barbie's wardrobe. Tailored of natural mink sections.
49 N 3755—Shpg. wt. 4 oz..\$7.89
- 15 **Holiday Dance.** Gala striped gown with long chiffon sash. Evening bag, gloves and shoes.
49 N 3385—Shpg. wt. 5 oz..\$2.37
- 16 **Campus Queen.** Satin gown with bouffant net overskirt. Trophy, roses, long gloves, jewelry, shoes.
49 N 3728—Shpg. wt. 5 oz..\$2.66
- 17 **Magnificence.** Satin and chiffon gown with applique and glitter trim. Luxurious satin coat with fur collar. Slip, shoe.
49 N 3383—Shpg. wt. 8 oz. \$3.74

NOTE: Dolls on this page not included with outfits. Outfits made in Japan

Barbie Bazaar?

NEW!

Barbie®



KEYS TO FAME™ GAME

#5410

ANOTHER FASCINATING AND FAST-MOVING GAME...TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL THE SALES APPEAL OF THE MOST POPULAR DOLL IN THE WORLD! In this new game of luck and skill, girls can win an imaginary career as a movie star, a ballerina, a stewardess, a fashion designer, a nurse, a mother, a teacher, or even an astronaut! Two to six players build BARBIE Careers with the Career Cards, and spin the spinner to win their KEYS TO FAME. Game set includes 8 plastic KEYS TO FAME, brightly colored plastic playing tray, 48 Career Cards with 4-color pictures of BARBIE, 8 Key Cards, and scorepads! Box size: 12" x 10" x 1 3/4".

Std. Pack: 1 Doz.

Wt. 9 Lbs.



NEW!

Barbie®



QUEEN OF THE PROM™ GAME

#0450

This fantastically successful million-seller game is better than ever...now that MIDGET™, BARBIE'S BEST FRIEND™, and SKIPPER™, BARBIE'S Little Sister, are part of the excitement! There's a lot more that's new, too: the colorful game board, revised (and faster-moving) rules, adjustable plastic friendship rings the kids can really wear, and school club pins in bright metallic colors. Of course, there's still all the fun of shopping sprees, school clubs, and parties! For two to four players, ages six to twelve. Box size: 21" x 9" x 1 1/2".

Std. Pack: 1 Doz.

Wt. 21 Lbs.



Barbie Bazaar

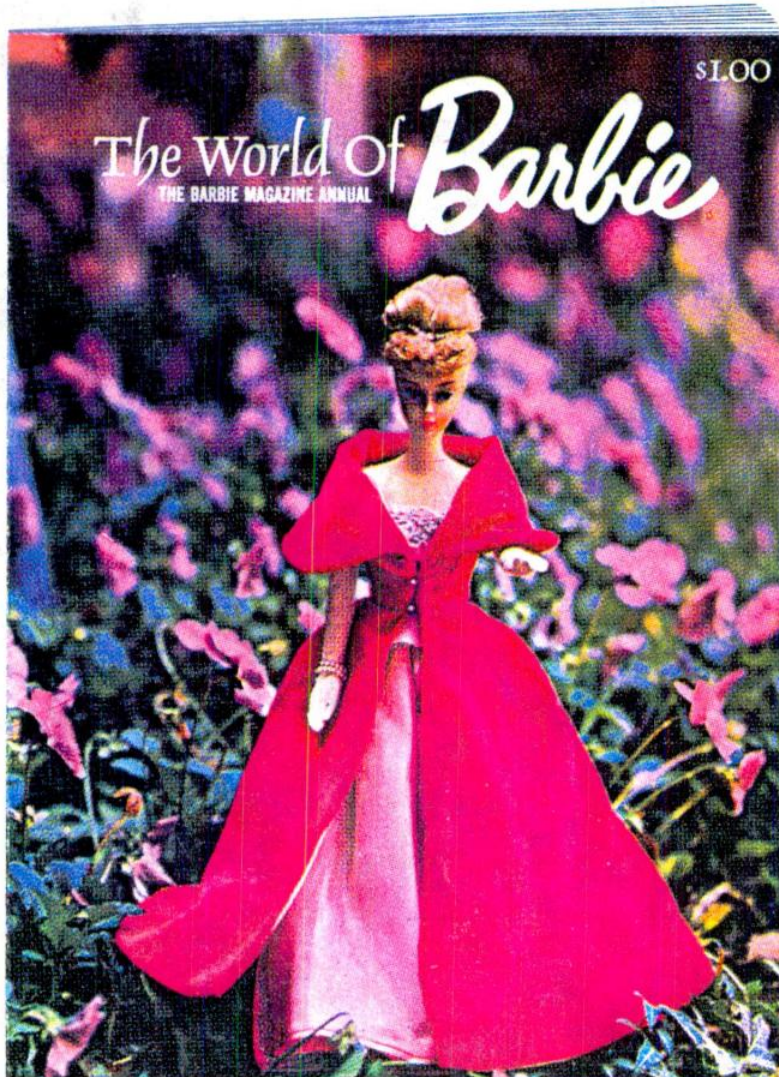
sodas, and all the other things young couples enjoyed in the early 60's. (Fig. 15) The commercial's last sequence urged the viewer to "get Barbie and Ken and see where the romance may lead...." The camera, in close-up, created an elaborate wedding-day album portrait of the teenage couple in the 'Wedding Day Set' and "Tuxedo". Barbie with Ken, gave children a channel through which they could emulate the relationships of siblings, popular television stars (Sally Field as 'Gidget' was the quintessential teenager) or movie icons (like Sandra Dee in 'The Reluctant Debutante'). Enhancing the idea of escapism, Mattel created a number of American teenage sets which were geared to children's fantasies. Ensembles like "Friday Nite Date" (1960), "Let's Dance" (1961) "Saturday Date (for Ken)" (1962), 'Campus Queen" (1964) and "Senior Prom" (1963), were sumptuous and sophisticated - all had connotations of the ultimate teenage dream-life. Children were smitten with the "fabulousness" of it all.

IMAGES OF A STAR

The Barbie Game... Queen of the Prom....
Here's Mattel's famous Barbie in a brand-new, exciting game!
There's never been anything like it ! Perfect for girls of all ages,
The Barbie Game is centred around teenage girl activities...
shopping sprees, dates, school clubs, and parties. Object of
the game is to be elected 'Queen of the Prom'.... and what
young girl doesn't want that. (Fig. 16) (Bazaar, 1994. p. 35)

Mattel had long believed that 'personalising' their products helped to promote consumer loyalty, so throughout the 60's they divulged more and more about Barbie's personal dimension. Her last name was Roberts and her mother's first name Margaret; she had a close friend Midge and a younger sister Skipper. Probably the most impressive trivia informed us that Barbie was Queen of the Prom, immediately affiliating her with status and distinction. These snippets

NEW! THE WORLD OF *Barbie*[®] **MAGAZINE!**



#9904

THE EXCITING MAGAZINE ANNUAL ALL ABOUT BARBIE AND HER FRIENDS! The first issue of this wonderful new annual contains 80 pages...filled with fabulous pictures of BARBIE, KEN[®], MIDGET[™], ALLAN[™], and SKIPPER[™]! There are BARBIE fashions, exciting stories, plays to act out, recipes, poems, and things-to-do! It's the most colorful book ever...and no BARBIE fan will want to miss it. Shipping carton contains a sturdy and colorful counter display.

Std. Pack: 2 Doz.

Wt. 11½ Lbs.

Shipped F.O.B. Chicago, Ill.



NEW! *Barbie*[®] **GE-TAR[™].**

#0524

It's a sensational musical toy...and it's got the magic name of BARBIE! When you turn the crank, this new BARBIE GE-TAR plays a happy tune...with Mattel's patented musical unit. (And special words to this happy BARBIE tune are included, so the kids can sing along!) The GE-TAR is made of hi-impact plastic, with nylon strings and adjustable carrying cord. Individually boxed in eye-catching new package.

Std. Pack: 2 Doz.

Wt. 15½ Lbs.



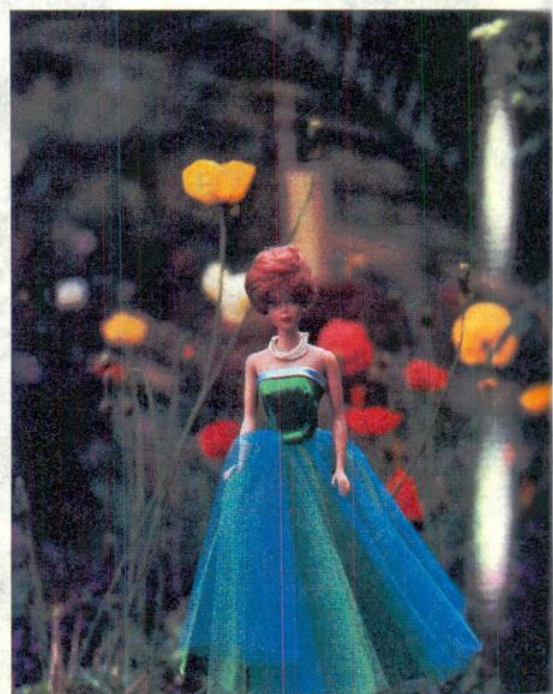
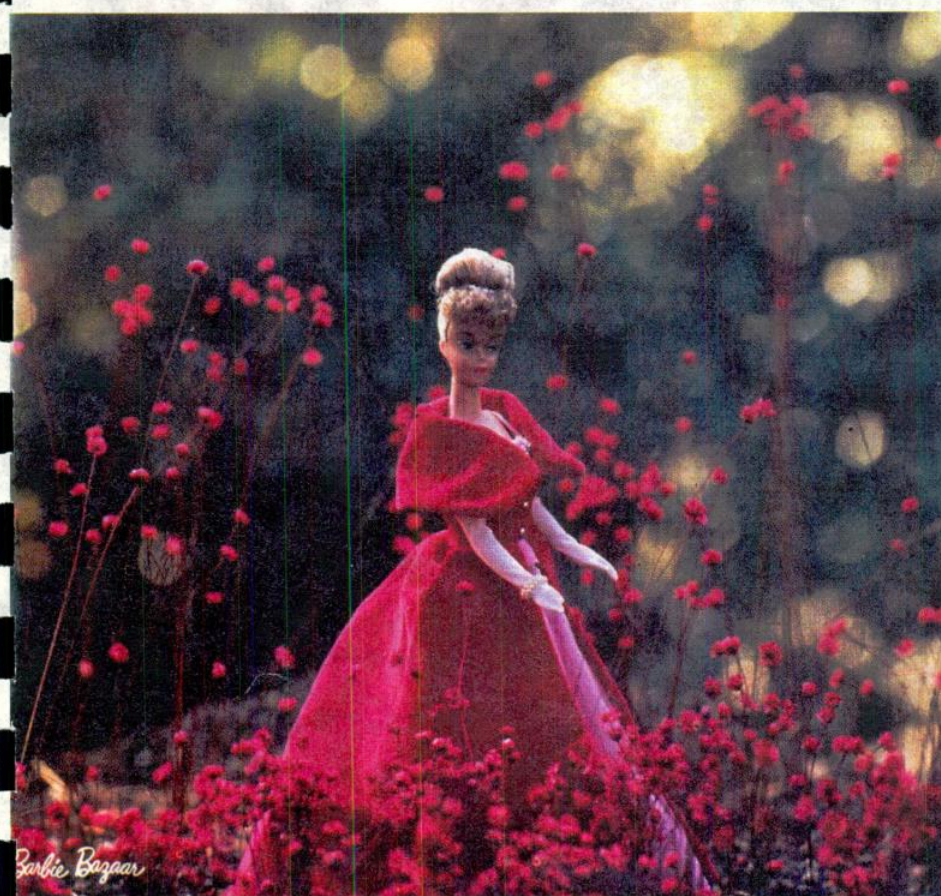
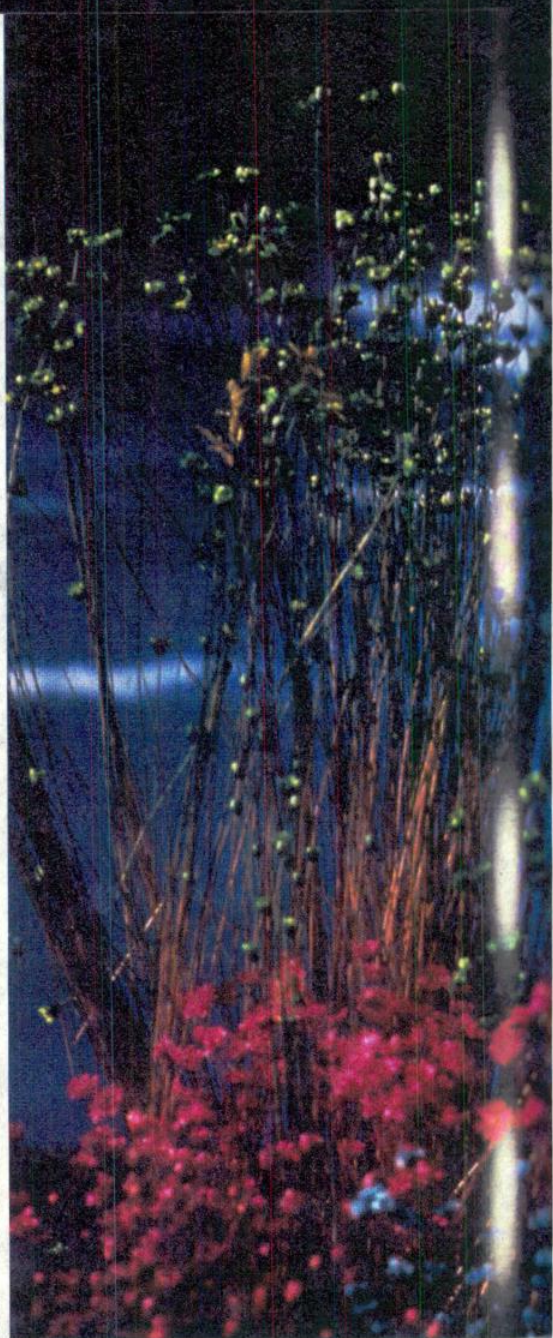


FIG.18

appealed to the child's need for identification and were not unlike the 'star profiles' issued by Hollywood.

Rita, Eva, Liz and Marilyn; Rock, Tab, Rip and Frankie
- their real names, their broken romances and artistic triumphs,
even their pet peeves and favourite foods were part of the movie
land lore Carla had crammed into her brain. Books, fan magazines
and newspaper columns were the source of her knowledge.
(Lucas, 1962, p. 40)

The stunning image of Barbie on the printed page was first reflected through miniature sketches encircling the doll's packaging and again in the pink fashion booklets found inside. Little girls adored these representations because they mimicked the illustrations found in glossy magazines. But in 1963, America's premier magazine Life brought the Barbie phenomenon to romantic heights with a lavish photography spread (Bazaar, 1994). Allen Grant's striking Hasselblad images of the dolls in lifelike poses and realistic settings rivalled his other work (with superstars like Marilyn Monroe and the Kennedy's) for sheer charisma. Grant's ambient photographs were also featured in the 82 paged 'World of Barbie- The Barbie Magazine Annual' in the same year (Fig.17) Here Grant used a process made popular by the motion picture industry called 'rear screen projection'. First the background scenes are shot and projected onto a screen, then you place the actors -or dolls- in front, for epic effect. The stunning creation of a miniature dimension illustrated the possibilities in Barbie's World. (Fig. 18)

MORTAL VERSUS GOD

Once it was power that created high style, but now high style comes from low places... from people who are marginal.. who crave out worlds for themselves... out of the other world of modern teenage life, out of what was for years the marginal outcast corner of the world

populated by poor boys and girls. (Delvin, 1979, p. 140)

In the late 60's, instead of larger-than-life heroes and heroine's paving the way, it was the mentality and attitudes of lower class teenagers which spread upwards and outwards. Popular culture meant street culture and for the first time the young had something to teach the old. The lessons combined cheerful hedonism with anarchic vitality, so that all walks of life underwent a fundamental change. Early sixties culture (including star gazing and worship) was all about making you desire something you couldn't or didn't have, the latter years were dedicated to realising your aspirations. For teenagers (like Barbie) the present was all important ; they were thrilled by the knowledge that everything was possible and words like 'no or 'wait' became obsolete! The dominant styles and habits came from the confident, relaxed attitudes of teenagers who were happy to 'do their own thing' and didn't really care about what others thought of them. The people who had created trends in the 50's and early 60's (including music and movie makers) now wished to emulate the carefree spontaneity of working class youth. Since her introduction in 1959, Barbie had reflected the motifs from popular culture, now in the late 60's, like other teenagers she was busy creating a style of her own. The cultures of class no longer clashed, they coalesced. Contemporary movie stars like Goldie Hawn and Mia Farrow dressed just like the 'Kids' on the street and the top model, Twiggy, was an innocent cockney lass.

If the new thing is a girl; working class, young, untutored, beautiful, there is no limit to the amount of attention she can command.... assets include a cockney accent, a lack of sophistication, and of conceit...
Finally, she's seventeen and half. (Drake, 1988, p. 148)

The late 60's introduced a generation of teenagers who were fed up with the pretensions of the previous era. Barbie's rejection of 'primness' was not only



FIG.19

T

wist 'N Turn
Barbie wears a subtle
multi color print dress
with lace and a ruffle.
There were other fabric
sheaths made in this
same pattern.



Gorgeous blonde Barbie wears a multi color
dress with white ruffle panel on bodice and
drop waist skirt. The cloche hat is adorable.
Hair Fair Barbie, above, wears #2616.

reflected in her wardrobe. Her face was much less sultry, the angular eyebrows and scarlet lips of 1959 giving way to a more youthful and wide-eyed look. Mattel successfully fully exchanged Barbie's established personality, complete with strong visual image, for a thoroughly modern version. 'Mod Barbie' (Fig. 19) was the opposite of square - she was a 'swinger', because she knew 'where it was at.' By the mid 60's dowagers, socialites and teenagers alike were flocking to 'ready-to-wear' boutiques such as Biba, Bazaar and Countdown.

ANYTHING GOES

'Dress at my house and I will make you into an elegant woman', Chanel reportedly promised Brigitte Bardot.
'Elegance? I couldn't care less. It's old fashioned.....
Couture is for grannies', Bardot protested.
(Lobenthal, 1990, p. 55)

Haute couture's appeal lay in its sheer exclusivity. 'Mod' boutiques turned no-one away. Barbara Hulanicki, Biba's founder declared that "couture was for kept women, unlike her clothes which could be bought by the poorest student" (Lobenthal, 1990, p. 55). The late 60's elevated the unmarried woman to a new platform of existence; young women had never been so independent. Women demanded equal opportunities and equal pay, so they could do what they wanted to. Extra cash meant extra freedom-freedom for the imagination and freedom to explore creative and provocative ideas. Barbie's style reflected this in mood-young, free and single! (Ken disappeared for 2 years in 1967). Coincidentally, 1967 marked another departure for Barbie when she got a new body that could accommodate all the new swinging dances that required pivoting at the waist (The Twist'n'Turn era) (Fig. 20). In the atmosphere of the 1960's, the young, fun fashions of Mary Quant began to take off. To Quant and her generation, the



NEW! FASHION QUEEN™

Barbie®
TEEN-AGE FASHION MODEL

America's favorite doll ...now with 3 high fashion wigs in gorgeous colors!



HIGH-FASHION
WIGS—
3 DIFFERENT
COLORS—
3 DIFFERENT
STYLES
COMPLETE
WITH
WIG STAND



#870 Retail: \$6.00

Girls of all ages will want super-sophisticated Fashion Queen Barbie! She comes with a new sculptured head and three high-fashion saran wigs in gorgeous colors, so her coiffure can change to go with different ensembles. Wigs are in three different styles—bubble-on-bubble, page boy and side-part flip. Wig stand holding all 3 included. Fashion Queen Barbie is dressed in her exclusive gold striped lamé swim suit, with matching beach hat, "pearl" earrings, white high-heeled shoes. Special wire stand included. All of the Barbie clothes fit her, too. Self-display see-through package. You can tell the genuine Fashion Queen Barbie by her identifying arm tag and her *unique* gold striped lamé swim suit.

Std. Pack: 1 Doz.

Wt. 9½ Lbs.

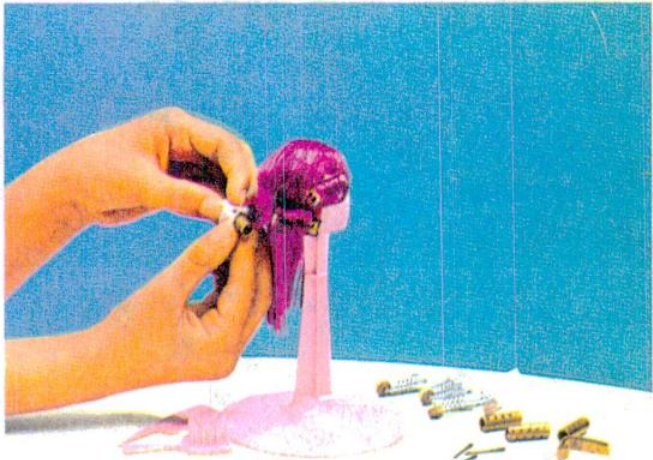
Barbie Bazaar

overblown femininity of earlier fashions was oppressive both decoratively and symbolically. Her pinnacle of achievement was undoubtedly the launch of the mini-skirt. It expressed the jubilation resulting from women's new free-spirited status. Barbie has dozens of mini-skirted outfits as well as a host of op, pop and shockingly printed ensembles. Trendy names like 'Fur Out', 'Go Granny Go', 'Drizzle Dash', 'Disco Dater' and 'Style Setters' were used to describe her revolutionary wardrobe. Little girls loved the patterns of hot yellows dazzling greens, florescent blues and essential blacks and whites. Op art geometrics mixed with neon colours was worn by Penelope Tree, Anita Pallenburg and other experimental icons. The prominence of silver in Warhol's spectrum could have inspired Barbie's blue and silver Mylar ensemble called 'Zokko!' (1966). Silver evoked the tinsel glitter of night-clubs as well as the popular 60's image of the futuristic sheen of vehicles from outer space. In the late 60's Barbie was also turned onto Mary Quant's range of tights and more comfortable underwear. Barbie epitomised the 'anything goes' approach, and nowhere was this more obvious than in her hairstyles. The 60's gave birth to modern society's obsession with hair....and its possibilities. Grow it long ! Cut it short! Colour it ! Bleach it! It also revolutionised the wig, and many teenagers discovered that it was easy and fun to completely change their looks with hair pieces.

'Penelope (Tree)', Richard Avedon once said, 'is never only of today; to each gesture she brings a sense of all the things that have ever interested her, out of this she invents new little role for herself... She doesn't use cosmetics to enhance her beauty, she uses it to change herself.' (Drake, 1988 p. 188)

If you didn't like the change all you had to do was whip it off. 'Fashion Queen Barbie' (**Fig. 21**) was introduced in the mid 60's because little girls also enjoyed 'hair play.' Packaged in a deluxe open-faced box, Fashion Queen Barbie came with

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2. Set BARBIE'S hair in the rollers and curlers. COLOR 'N CURL wigs will actually set in any style, so girls can match BARBIE'S hair to her costume . . . and change one as easily as the other.



4. Beautiful self-display package comes complete with hairdryer, four wigs, rollers and curlers, comb, brush, BARBIE pins, clear activator solutions, wig stand, hair spray, instruction book, plus two doll heads (one for BARBIE, one for MIDGE®) that girls can easily put on their dolls.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐



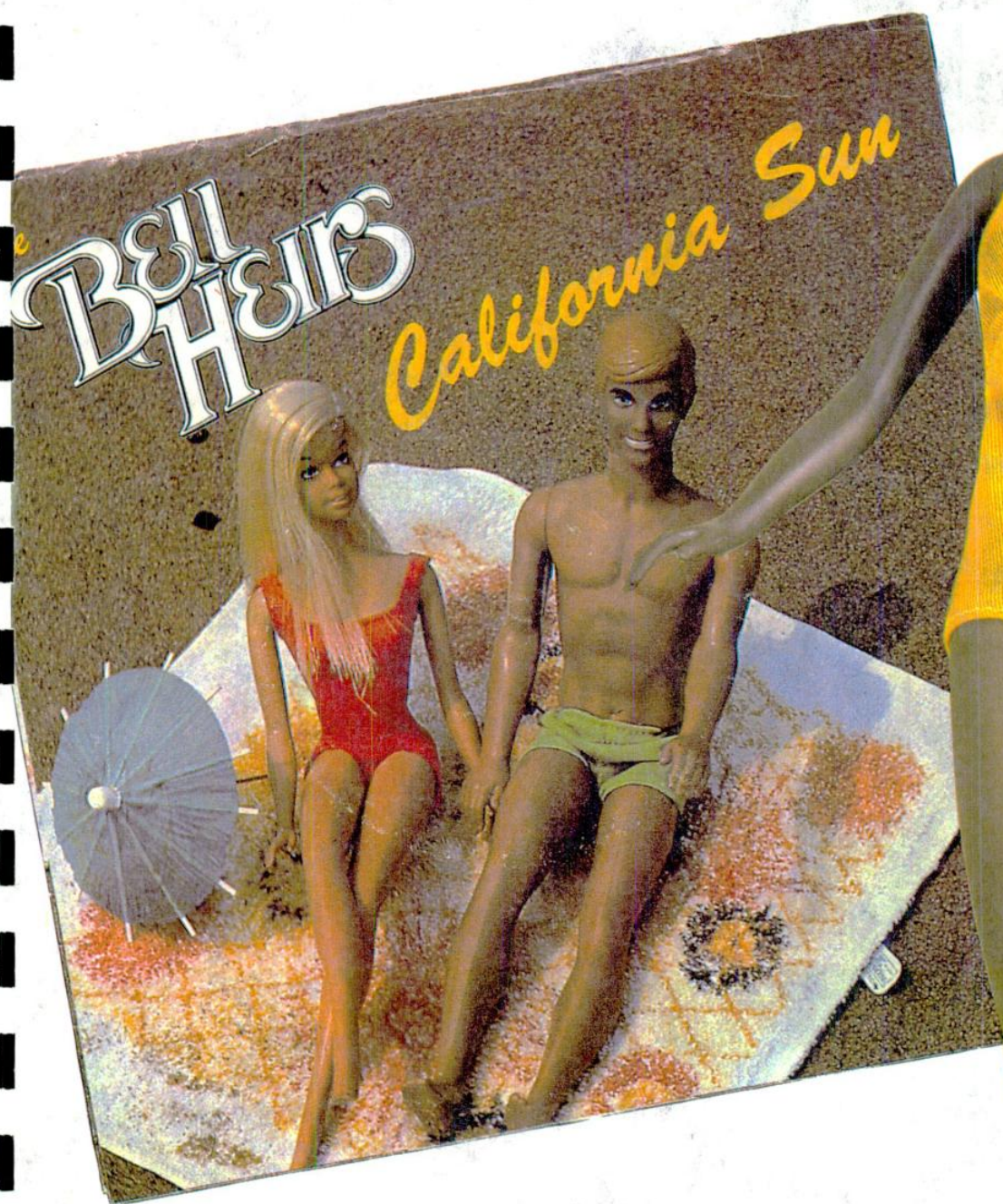
Flame changes to Carrot Top,
and back again.

a wrist tag, pearl earrings, white open toe pumps, a zippered gold and white striped brocade swimsuit, a matching ultra-chic turban and of course three high fashion wigs: a brunette page boy, a redhead side part flip and blonde bubble 'do'. Mattel also introduced 'Barbie's wig wardrobe' which was basically a disembodied head sold with three new wig's: 'Swirl'n'Curl' was a medium blonde American Girl style without bangs, 'Topknot Pouf' was a wonderfully sophisticated brunette upsweep with bangs and 'Double Ponytail' was a little girls titian pigtail style with pale blue satin bows.

Hottest Barbie Product of All! This is what every Barbie fan has been waiting for: Color 'n' Curl comes with.... hairdryer and four beautiful wigs, in four different high-fashion color's. Each one changes to another colour, then back again... whenever girls want! (Bazaar, 1994, p. 218)

'Color 'n' Curl' (**Fig. 22**) (1965) was the ultimate in 'wiggling out' and above all, it allowed little girls the opportunity of tasting some of the freedom to come.

Chapter 3



In 1971, the Malibu dolls arrived on the scene—easygoing, tan, very California. Sensational Malibu Barbie had long, straight blonde hair, while Malibu Ken had molded golden locks. Barbie as sun-worshiper also came as Funtime Barbie, Sun Lovin' Malibu Barbie (with tan lines), Trinidad Barbie (1982, Italy), California Barbie (also 1982, Italy), and Sun Gold Malibu Barbie (1984). All their friends come in Malibu-style, too, including Malibu Christie (*right*) and Malibu Francie (*opposite*).

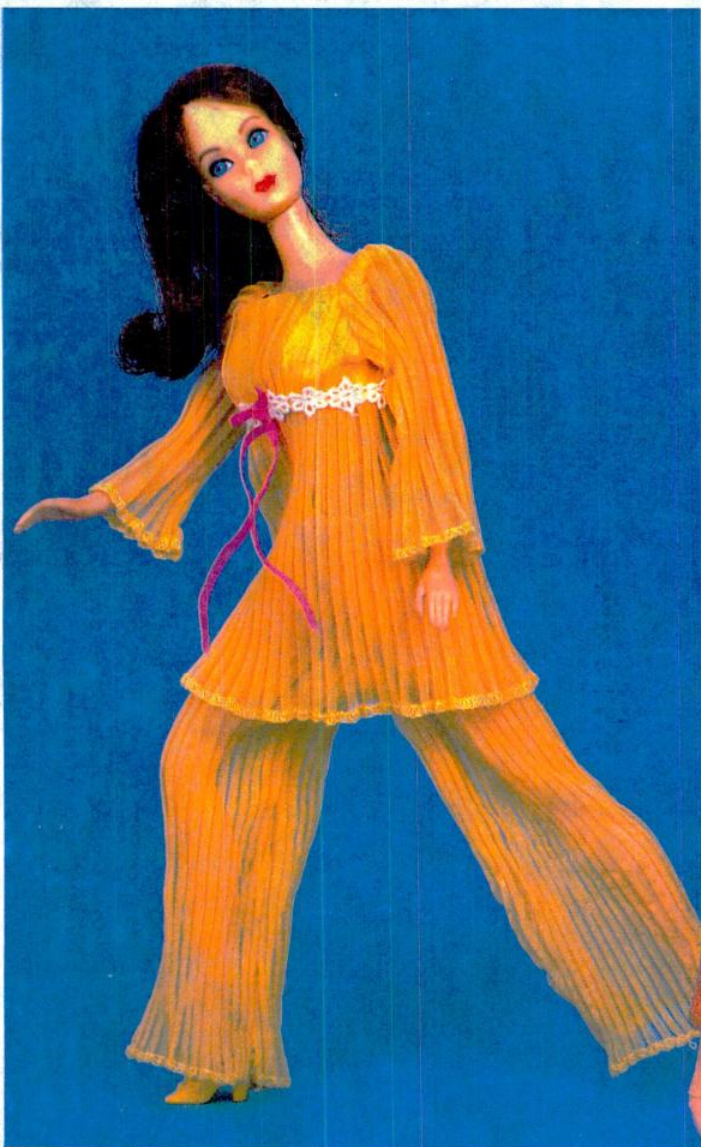


Now Look Ken (1976; near right) looking like a cross between Warren Beatty and Neil Diamond, wears "Rally Gear" (1970), a very California casual outfit, which included a short brown leather jacket and cowboy boots. A recent Black Ken (far right), looks very *Mod Squad* in a bell-bottomed denim outfit from 1970.

RELAX

'These girls have the looks', wrote Vogue in 1978 of the top American models, 'that are changing the whole meaning of beauty today. The glorious charge of health and vitality and fitness each of them has. The clear clean skin. The thick shiny hair. The strong wonderful bodies. The extraordinary sense of well-being. The 'high' of health. It's what American good looks are all about. (Devon. 1979. p. 145)

Indeed, it was this sense of 'well being' which made the healthy Californian lifestyle of the 1970's 'Malibu Barbie' (**Fig. 23**) series so attractive. The 1970's brought a more realistic influence and the mood was no longer propitious for dreaming, extravagance, or anarchy. In the first half of 1971 there was a national economic recession in the U.S.A, making the bizarre fashion of the 1960's obsolete. Teenagers world-wide were now among the instigators of political and moral movements; they rejected Western materialism and its money-grabbing rat-race. Fashion became more practical, easy to wear, and less exhibitionist; Barbie couldn't resist this more relaxed attitude to life. The theme for style was democratic uniformity - the most conspicuous manifestation being 'blue jeans.' An editorial in Vogue in 1971 was unequivocal: "The blue denim look - Levis, a pullover, belts - it's the uniform of the world, the way we all want to look when we're feeling easy, moving fast - a way of life. The all-time, all American super fashion you see all over the world. " (Devlin, 1979, p. 142) Ostensibly blue denim bridged the generation gap and class or money barriers and only a few status symbols in the form of special accessories and integrated designers signatures appeared (**Fig. 24**). In the eyes of the fashion media, the West Coast seems to have replaced London as the new incubator of youthful mores. "The hippie revolution (starting late 60's continuing into 70's)", George Melly claims in Revolt into Style, "killed the



Barbie wearing
"Lemon Kick,"
a Mary McFadden-
esque pantsuit,
circa 1970.



Fringe, fringe, fringe.
Live Action P.J.
goes berserk.



FIG.26

FREE MOVING BARBIE

swinging London image of the pop dandy and dolly frugging in an 'in' discotheque stone dead." (Melly, 1970, p. 20) The 1970's style facilitated the dissolution of societal conditioning with everyone discovering creative alternatives to fashion through thrift stores. When singer Janis Joplin had her T-shirts and satin sheets tie-dyed, they appeared in American Vogue. Barbie's pastiches of velvet, lace, and second skin synthetics echoed the hippies simultaneous embrace of tribal and futuristic modes. Time magazine described San Francisco's Haight Ashbury as "a quilt of living colour." (Charles 1984, p.45) and trendy boutiques eventually copied the iconoclasm of the original community. The style-conscious L.A. girl Barbie, adopted San Francisco's sartorial license wholeheartedly, glossing it, of course, with a flossier veneer. In 1970's, the rich watched in disbelief as young multiracial apostates replaced the mature Caucasian women who had formerly steered fashion's course. The 1970's set the seal on the 'anything goes' attitude, mixing up ethnic and psychedelic influences (echoed in Barbie's multi-coloured fringed outfit (1971)), which had been building up for many years. In fact, the young had such a widespread impact that, by the end of the seventies, long hair and ethnic clothing had become just another way of dressing, with little or no political significance attached. **(Fig. 25)** The most valuable lesson that Barbie taught little girls in the 1970's was that they had an unquestionable right to do and be whatever they wanted. It was the beginning of bra burning and the end of an era when females were merely accessories to men. Barbie was taking advantage of the change to dress more casually - in practical trouser suits and pants **(Fig. 26)**. Unisex dressing was the style and 'you can't tell the boys from the girls these days' was a common complaint.

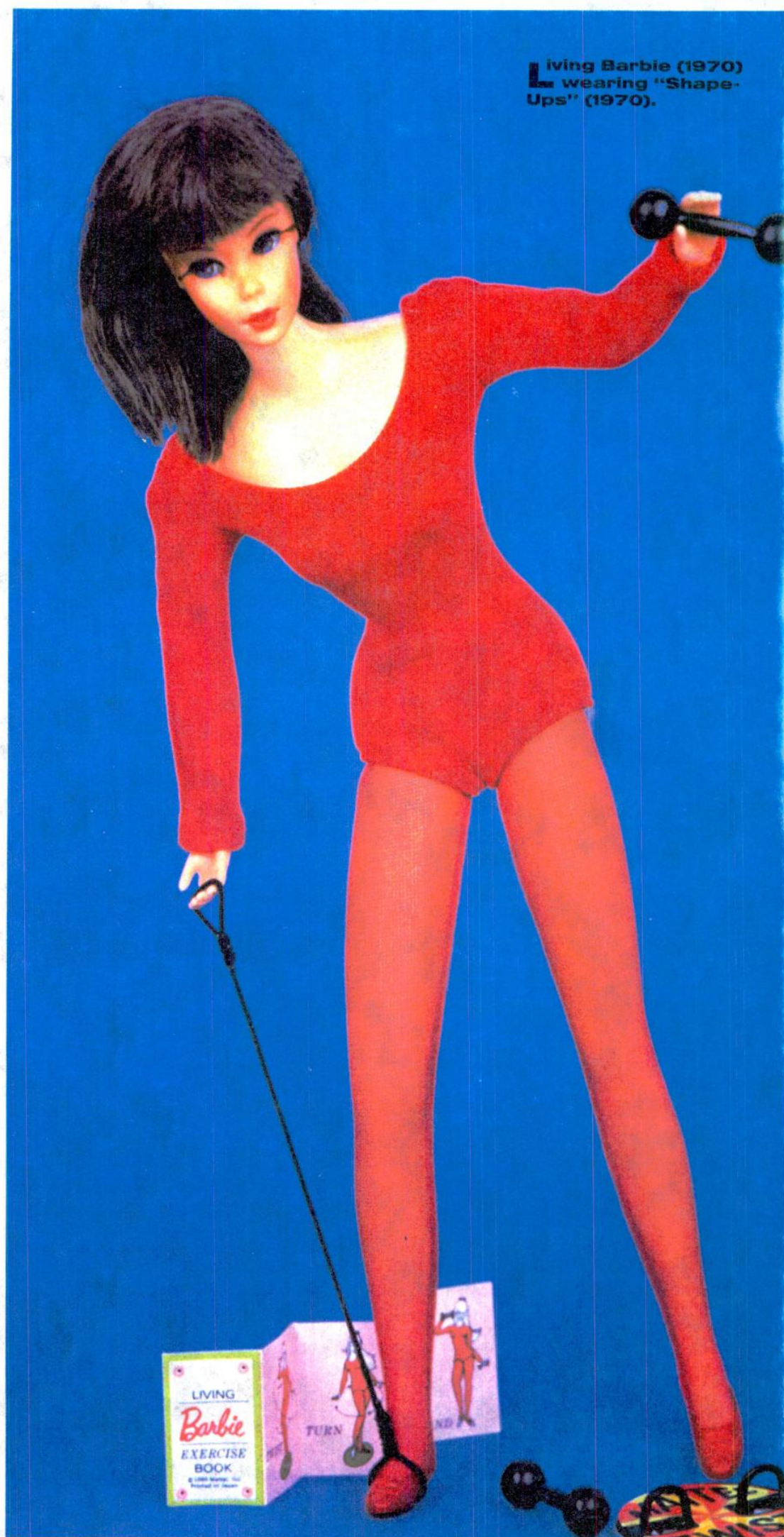
Now everything became an accessory, and looks were put together to suit the mood, the time, the circumstance. Women might dress up for a special occasion in the evening; and occasional anachronisms, like the spectacular costumes of some haute couture, still had a place in fashion. But these had no reality or connection with

Dramatic Living Barbie wears a darling red jumper and yellow flower print blouse. The jumper is made of red velvet. A red velvet hat completes this set. Barbie's friend thinks her outfit is out-of-this-world!



Living Barbie (1970)
wearing "Shape-
Ups" (1970).

A Mattel catalogue from 1970 featuring "New! Dramatic! Living Barbie" who had arrived in 1969 but was already a seventies girl . . . pert, perky, and totally posable. "It makes playing Barbie a whole new thing," the TV ads announced.





'1144 Barbie W/Growin' Pretty Hair, 1972

A new dress and different hairdo along with hair piece changes occurred this year. Rooted eyelashes, centered eyes. Marks: ©1967 Mattel, Inc./U.S. Patented/Other Patents Pending/Patented in Canada 1967/Taiwan.

MIB \$185-225 MNP \$65-75



'1183 Walk Lively Steffie, 1972

Long brunette flip hair (no bangs), brown eyes, rooted eyelashes. Wears multi-color polyester jumpsuit. Walk action. Marks: ©1967 Mattel, Inc./U.S. Pat. Pend./Taiwan.

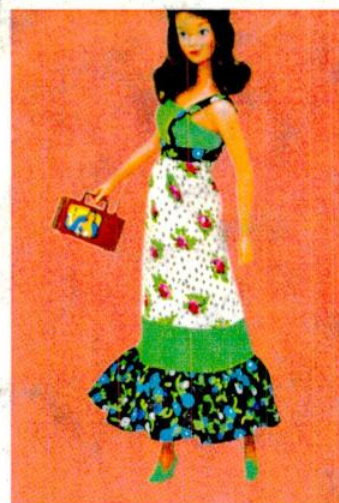
MIB \$240-260 MNP \$55-75



'3311 Busy Barbie, 1972

Long straight side parted hair with gold barrette. Blue denim top with patchwork skirt. Marks: ©1966/Mattel, Inc./U.S. & Foreign/Patented/Other Pat's/Pending/Made in/U.S.A.

MIB \$240-260 MNP \$55-75



'3312 Busy Steffie, 1972

Long brunette hair and blue eyes, painted eyelashes. Long dress in three different pieces of fabric. Marks: ©1966/Mattel, Inc./U.S. & Foreign/Patented/Other Pat's/Pending/Made in/U.S.A.

MIB \$240-260 MNP \$55-75



'3313 Busy Francie, 1972

Blonde hair drawn to back and tied with ribbon. Blonde hair, brown eyes and painted eyelashes. Wears jeans and green top. Marks: ©1966/Mattel, Inc./Hong Kong/U.S. & Foreign/Patented/Other Pat's/Pending.

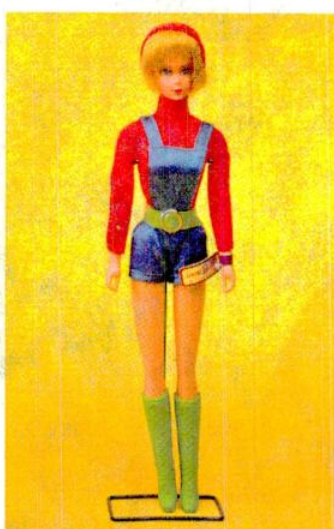
MIB \$240-260 MNP \$55-75



'3314 Busy Ken, 1972

Brown painted hair. Wears jeans and red tank top. The first male doll with bendable elbows. Marks: ©1968/Mattel, Inc./U.S. & For. Pat'd/Other Pat's/Pending/Hong Kong.

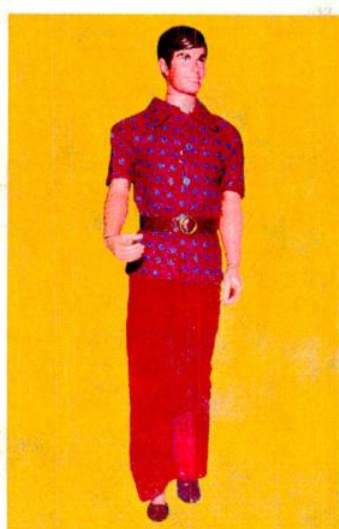
MIB \$185-200 MNP \$55-75



'1195 Talking Busy Barbie, 1972

Short blonde hair with bangs, blue eyes and rooted eyelashes. Wears blue bibbed hot pants and rose blouse, hat, green belt and boots. Marks: ©1967/Mattel, Inc./U.S. & Foreign /Pat's Pend./Hong Kong.

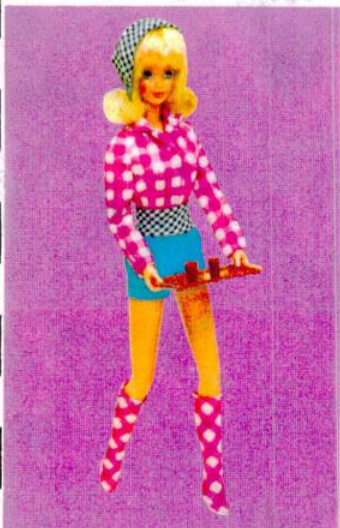
MIB \$250-275 MNP \$75-85



'1196 Talking Busy Ken, 1972

Brown painted hair. A record player, travel case, serving set, T.V. and telephone came with all the Busy and Talking Busy dolls. Marks: ©1968/Mattel, Inc./U.S. & For. Pat'd./Other Pat's/ Pending/Hong Kong.

MIB \$225-250 MNP \$75-85



'1186 Talking Busy Steffie, 1972

Shoulder length blonde hair with curly ends and bangs. Blue eyes and rooted eyelashes. Wears blue hot pants with pink and white blouse & leggings. Marks: ©1967/Mattel, Inc./U.S. & Foreign /Pat's Pend./Hong Kong.

MIB \$250-275 MNP \$75-85



'1199 Pose 'N Play Tiff, 1972

Made from Fluff head mold, brown eyes, tilted hair & painted eyelashes. Wears blue jeans, white top and white with red trim sneakers. Marks: ©1969 Mattel, Inc./Taiwan/U.S. & For. Pat'd./Other Pat's Pend./U.S. in Canada, 1967.

MIB \$325-350 MNP \$125-145



'3210 Montgomery Wards Barbie, 1972

Tan skin tone, hard hollow torso, and saran ponytail in brunette color only. Blue irises, molded eyelashes and curved eyebrows. Marks: ©Midge T.M./1962/Barbie®/1958/bj/Mattel, Inc./Patented.

MIB \$400-450 MNP \$225-250



'4221 Quick Curl Kelley, 1973

Brown eyes, medium long red hair featured ultra thin wire, enabling it to be curled instantly. Marks: ©1966/Mattel, Inc./U.S. & Foreign/Patented/Other Pat's/Pending/Made in/Taiwan.

MIB \$60-75 MNP \$35-40

a daily life; they were the stuff of memories and dreams. (Devlin, 1979, p. 102).

DRAMATIC NEW LIVING BARBIE

The popular magazines of the 1970's showed women dancing, jumping, playing and embracing the world. Fashion photographers like Richard Avedon, Patrick Lichfield and new female photographers like Toni Frissell and Karen Radkai captured this 'live your life to the full' ethos. 1970 saw the introduction of 'Dramatic New Living Barbie' (**Fig. 27**) who celebrated her 'joie de vivre' with a new more posable body. She was bendable in natural ways at the elbows, knees, ankles and wrists and could swivel her waist, neck hands and legs. Barbie had always epitomised the healthy, athletic girl-next-door style and now with her new more posable body, keeping-fit could be more fun. The Californian emphasis on health and sports was obvious in Barbie's 'Shape-ups' of 1970, (**Fig. 28**) an outfit that included red panty hose, a leotard, dumbbells, and exercise book, a rope and a body toner called 'Mattel's Twister'. The brilliant Malibu dolls reflected the easygoing, tanned, California lifestyle. They were dressed in light-coloured bathing costumes and had wonderful sun streaked hair and pleasant smiles. The Malibu dolls provided an alternative to the wilder side of Barbie's culture, and they also proposed extended play with a number of exciting accessories (including the car Sun'n'Fun Buggy). Californian youths favoured a style of easy casual dressing suitable for the hot sunshine. The flavour of this period is well captured in the 1973 film 'American Graffiti' with its period costume and funky soundtrack. Overall, the 1970's signalled a rethinking of femininity and Barbie's transformation from a very exact and formal self presentation to a more informal, natural kind of beauty (**Fig. 29**).

My hairstyles reflect the trend toward brush-and-go preparation. Once I let my hair down in the late 60's I never really went back to the fancy coiffeurs. From the 70's on, I've worn my locks long and wavy, and have settled on blonde as the colour that suits me best. (Jacobs, 1994, p. 10)

KNOWING THE CONSUMER

Even now, most people have only a vague awareness of the scale of planning, concentrated resources and creativity that are directed at consolidating our beliefs, values and consumption patterns. Talented and clever people in cultural disciplines ranging from theatre to make-up spend day after day dreaming up ways to make us buy. Their tools of communication are varied, including packaging, personal selling, public relations and advertising through all media. The reason our modern environment resonates with commercial themes and promotional motifs is because merchandisers strive to use all available channels to stimulate interest in their products. It was not until the 1970's, in the wake of twenty years of television broadcasting and advertising, that the issue of their influence on mass culture reared its head. This period marked growing parental activism around the issue of the quality of children's advertising. Critics began to call television a cultural wasteland where advertisers created desires in children that could only be fulfilled by product ownership and use. In the 70's cultural theorists began to discover what market managers had known for some time, that children's orientation to goods goes far beyond price and product comparisons. Consumerism demanded a social imagination, an ability to project how we will look and feel once we own and use certain goods. Mattel were fascinated with the potential of television advertising. Their brand name and slogan 'you can tell it's Mattel, it's swell' which featured significantly in all its advertisements, seemed to register with children.

A brand that is popular with children takes on meaning far

beyond a personal preference... character takes on special meaning in the same way. There is peer pressure within the child's world to use the right one - a pressure that doesn't exist to the same degree with adults. (Schneider, 1987 p. 90)

PEERING AT PEERS

Mattel also believed that advertising could aid children's influence in the family, arming them with strong preferences. Studies concerning the 1970's (like the Barcus report) noticed that children who watched a lot of television and who zeroed in on commercials, began to make more requests for 'specific' goods (Kline, 1993, p. 3). Promotion on television demanded that the specific toy be valued and clearly integrated into the social surroundings of childhood. The advertisements that best shaped the formation of preference tended to set up a meaningful relationship between the toy and the children playing with it. Investigations into children's responses to television programmes, to everyday activities, to their consumer habits and to their ways of choosing and using products; in other words, children's culture, grew steadily in the 1970's. Thanks to a Federal Trade Commission hearing on children's television advertising, in 1978. The Gene Reilly Group's tremendous study, The Child came into public domain. It, once and for all, showed how television had penetrated children's culture. This four-volume report provided a wealth of information on the attitudes and behaviour of the six to fourteen age group in early 70's America.

Even more interesting is the fact that each of the four categories mentioned here - snacks, movies, television and restaurants - represent products which throughout the 1970's are heavily advertised to children. While this finding may be coincidental, it strongly suggests the power of advertising in determining children's activity preferences. (Reilly, 1975, p. 163)

The Child also showed that children, especially the eight year olds and under, had trouble remembering brand names. Of all the toy manufacturers, only Mattel seemed to make an impression with more than 1 in 5 children. Under 7's had a perceived inability to form, retain or communicate brand attitudes, Brand - image advertising did not seem a useful way of promoting products. Although they had trouble remembering the varying attributes of products, they responded to and remembered advertisements that were designed with 'child appeal' and were repeated often enough. Researchers confirmed that children formed preferences for products based on simple image attributes. In the 1970's, parents noticed that their children saw goods as instrumental in achieving social goals rather than as filling a functional need. The issues of having the right toys, eating the right foods and dressing for others became a matter of great emotional intensity, even for very young children. Mattel had based many of its Barbie advertisements on this notion of peer acceptance and cultural positioning. Barbie advertisements linked the product to other things - emotions, activities, products and people. They proposed that children would get something else they wanted just by owning the product, possibly status, or happiness. These associations basically work because children orientate themselves to products on an emotional level. A report written in 1979 on behalf of the American Academy of Advertising wrote:

Advertisers have done a poor job of self-regulation up to this point. The Broadcasting Code and other efforts at industry standards are recognised as being ineffective. These industry efforts have also lacked a sound empirical base. In this sense, children's advertising, is centred on what works rather than a knowledgeable model of children as a special guidance with particular needs and characteristics which must be addressed. (Kline, 1993, p. 215)

STYLE WARS

Barbie's success hinged on being able to create enough excitement among children so that purchases would be made. Also, the excitement had to be specific so that the product couldn't be undercut by imitators (e.g. Jem or Cindy). Mattel had to differentiate their toys (e.g. Barbie plus He-Man), attributes and uses from competing goods and make children want to request or buy their product only.

Targeting by peer strata enabled toy advertisers to concentrate on communicating just the right play values and styles to the right age group and gender segments, rather than depict generalised values that would appeal to all children. Marketers (including Mattel) clearly made strong assumptions about each market segment and the different methods that should be used to communicate to those segments. They continued their trend towards personality marketing, believing that little girls became emotionally involved with Barbie's persona. Stephen Kline and Debra Pentecost's study The Characterisation of play: Marketing Children's Toys randomly sampled 140 toy commercials from the US and Canada. The results in **Table 1** show how personality - related toys (Barbie, He-Man, G.I. Joe) stand apart from other toy advertising because of their production values, their depiction of peer play and their reference to imaginative engagement with toys.

Table 1 Content of Toy Commercials (occurrence %)

	<u>Personality Toys</u>	<u>Other toys Verbal</u>
Reference to play:		
Imagine/pretend	34	20
power to build/control/		

master	6	29
Voice-over:		
Describes play	14	29
product info.	38	21
Parents in play:	0	9
Play activities involve:		
laughing	0	10
talking	30	20
manipulating toy	24	8
competing	4	12
fighting	10	2
building	6	15
Play elements:		
care for toy	20	9
skills/operate/assembly	8	23
role play	0	6
objects imitate real objects	0	17
games	0	13
narrative	16	0
manipulate/hold product	14	15
Play sociality:		
alone	14	23
two same sex	46	33
familial	6	15

Play styles:

functional	12	33
skills/construction	4	21
sensory	18	9
role taking	26	45
fantasy play	92	32
game play	0	15

Most personality-oriented toy commercials designed for this market segment stressed this strengthening of emotional bonds with the toy. Little girls especially, valued these imaginary companions who proved easier to get along with than the self-willed lot they meet in the world around them. By turning toys into companions, children build strong bonds of attachment to them. Pre school girls especially spend hours conversing with, hugging and loving their Barbie dolls and adults often have strong memories of their own attachments to her. Attachment to the doll was an emotional state that could be connoted by a tactile relationship. 'Hair play' for example expressed love through the rituals of admiring touching, kissing and fondling. This 1979 advertisement for Barbie also shows how important play values like hair play are in positioning even well loved dolls like Barbie in the competition with Corn Silk Cabbage Patch dolls and the My Little Pony creations.

Woman (singing): We girls love styling our long luscious hair.

Chorus: Like Super Hair Barbie.

Woman (singing): First twist it around the secret barrette, push the tip and then the clip.

Chorus: Super Hair Barbie.

Girl: More Hair.

Woman and chorus: Anyway we want to look, our magic barrette is all it took. (sparkles around the hair and a magic sound) We girls can do anything. Right, Barbie?

Female voice: Super Hair Barbie Do.. With magic hair barrette and glamorous jump-suit. New from Mattel.

Barbie advertisements usually portray one or two of the products symbolic attributes (style, glamour) known to interest and attract children and use whatever technical skills (clever animation, lights music) necessary to catch attention. They found boys tended to like driving music or action: the girls preferred pink glows and magical twinkles. In comparison to Barbie, advertisements for boys character toys (He-man, Action man) used forceful, loud music and fast cutting, to raise the advertisement above the clutter of promotions. They accentuated or exaggerated the range of emotional response by dramatising extremes of anger cruelty, terror and triumph e.g. this 1975 G.I. Joe Advertisement.

Male voice: You're looking at an incredible new plane. The G.I. Joe Conquest X-30 (Model beauty shot).

Male voice (sings): The G.I. Joe Conquest X-30.

Boy: Wow!

Male singing: Imagine being aboard it, as it takes flight (boy climbs into model).

Boy: There's Cobra (in cockpit).

Male singing: The G.I. Joe Conquest X - 30. It's going to beat Cobra in a big dogfight. (Animation.) And Cobra's gonna know you can't beat G.I. Joe.

Male voice: Live the Adventure of G.I. Joe. G.I. Joe Conquest X-30 comes with pilot.

Kids: Go Joe!

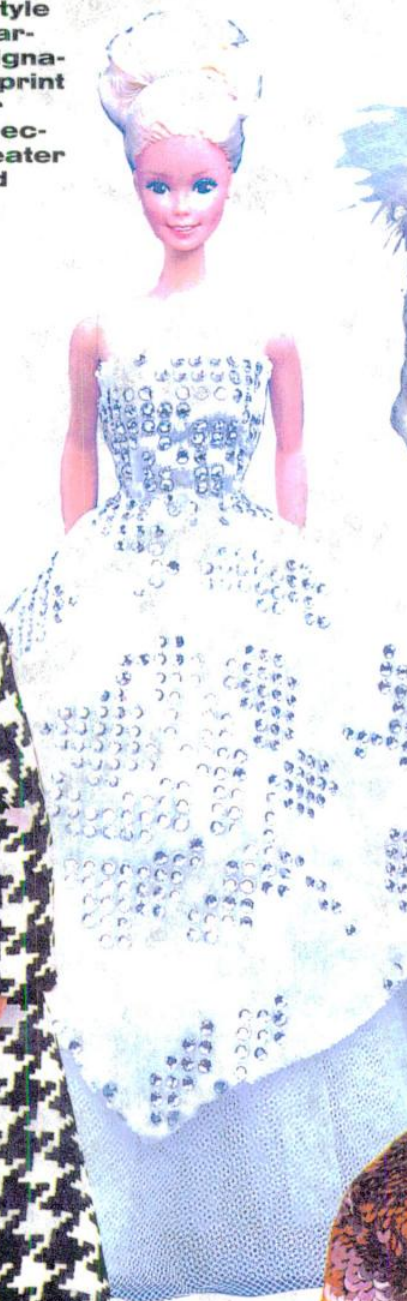
Character commercials often use up to one-half of their time to portray the alternative imaginary world produced by the toy. Clever tactics, including animation, give a lesson in imaginary play and instruction on how to use the toy to access a different world. Dreaming is the source of fantasy and toy advertisers invoke the emotional qualities of the dream in their commercials to strengthen fantasy appeal. Girls may be 'able to do anything' as Barbie well knows; but what her advertisers capitalise on is the social dynamics of glamour. The 1970's focused adults on realism and dealing with themselves as they are, it re-iterated the importance of the 'fanciful' in the creation of children's cultural symbols (e.g. Butterfly Princess Barbie comes from a land of secrets and magic).

Chapter 4

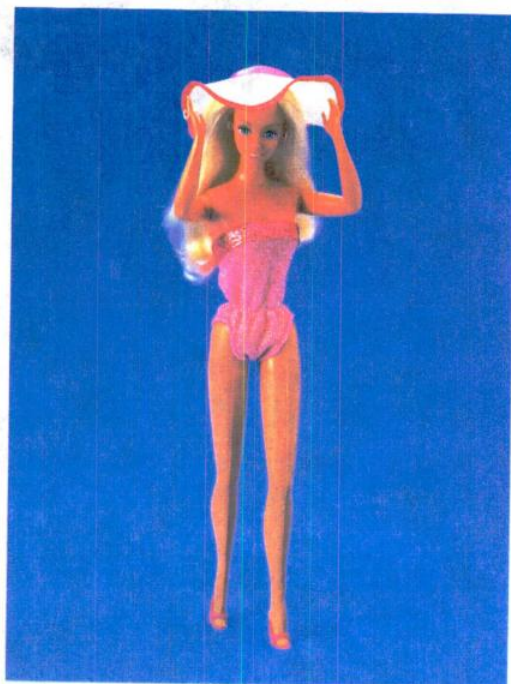
BILL BLASS's name always evokes thoughts of high style and quality. For Barbie, he used his signature houndstooth print in an A-line duster coat, over his impeccable angora sweater with softly tailored slacks.

ARNOLD SCAASI, whose name is synonymous with glamorous clothes, created his diamanté-embroidered white velvet gown with full tulle skirt.

The long, well-tailored line of FERNANDO SANCHEZ creations are well suited to Barbie. Pink pleated fabric is used for a gown and matching long coat, and a smart velvet cowl is matched with a lace bodice for another.

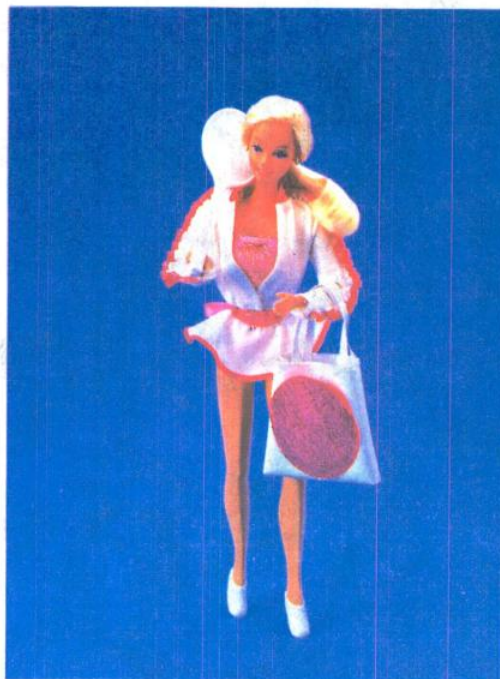


GEOFFREY BEENE's shimmering purple sequin football jersey-style gown is a great example of his witty fashion style. The gown is perfectly proportioned and couture-made, which enhances the splendid ambiance that this fashion innovation creates.



1984

Pink knit bodysuit/swimsuit



1984

White tennis jacket and matching skirt with pink trim over pink knit bodysuit

FIG.31

Barbie's undisputed reign as the most popular doll for little (and bigger) girls alike may soon be challenged by the Happy To Be Me Doll, recently launched in America. She's the same height as Barbie but, rather than the latter's implausible vital statistics of 36-18-33, she boasts a far more realistic figure, measuring in at 36-27-38. Developed by Cathy Meredig

"Happy" is an attempt to persuade impressionable young minds that you don't have to be thin and beautiful to be loved, though "Happy To Be Me" is not what anyone would call grotesque or obese. But as Barbie will verify, it certainly helps when you get 100 new ensembles every year compared to Happy's far more realistic and sensible nine-piece wardrobe.

FIG.32

AMERICAN WAISTLAND

Women in the 1980's were expected to 'have-it-all' and 'be it all'. Media (e.g. magazines like *Cosmopolitan*) portrayed the new all-rounder as possessing a high powered job, a perfect relationship with husband or boyfriend and as ever beautiful looks. Fitness fever struck in the 1980's making everyone aware of the 'inadequacies' of their physical condition and appearance. Both women and men were encouraged to work hard and play hard, putting in long hours at the office and gym. Barbie followed suit mimicking the dynamic outfits worn by the female characters on popular night-time soap operas like *'Dallas'* and *'Dynasty'* (Fig. 30). Stars like Joan Collins and Linda Gray played successful business women who stunned in power suits during the day and glittered in glamorous gowns at night. The obsession with fitness did not go unnoticed by Barbie. In 1986 the 'Barbie B-Active' fashion line was launched. The range included sweat suits and sport-inspired daywear created in stretch lycra and wool jersey (Fig. 31). The cult of the 'The Body Beautiful' permeated all realms of popular culture throughout the 1990's, ignoring the implausibility of the average woman ever reaching this ideal shape. In her article entitled *'Barbie Doll Culture and the American Waistland.'* Kamy Cunningham relates the pressures felt by women to conform to this representation of ideal beauty stating;

A waistland is a land where, if you're a woman, you have to have a tiny waist in order not to feel like something the cat dragged out of the garbage bin... Doesn't every little and big American girl want to look like Barbie, wholesome and popular and perky. (Cunningham, 1993, p. 79)

Cunningham realised that Barbie combines the cute wholesomeness of the Ms. Teenage American Pageant with the slinkiness of a Super model. The Ms. Teenage American Pageant parades before our eyes a stream of pure young American beauties. Cunningham says:

The teenage hopefuls were all ruffles and tans and soufflés of cliché's each determined to be herself and not succumb to peer pressure, and of course the most wonderful thing in life is to help others and to be the best you can be... Their Super model counterparts slid along the stage like skinny eels, in that funny model posture, pelvis jutting forward. (Cunningham, 1993, p. 80)

Once again the plastic 'person', Barbie, carries the Virgin/Whore paradox. The doll has lavender eyes, both willing and innocent, that look out of a face cutely dimpled yet somehow she appears seductive. Cunningham then examines the impact that this image had upon her as a child. She believes that as a young girl Barbie was influencing the reinforcing cultural norms of physical beauty: To Kamy Cunningham, Barbie symbolises an oppressive equation of beauty. She feels that 'surface' image so dominates essence in America that the equation has gotten out of hand. The reason is obvious "we are bombarded by images of 'Barbie Doll' women" (Cunningham, 1993, p.80).

HAPPY TO BE ME

In 1989, to combat what some consider to be Barbie's promotion of an unattainable figure, an American company developed the 'Happy to be me Doll' (**Fig32**) This doll is the same height as Barbie, but rather than Barbie's vital statistics (which I have mentioned would be 39-18-33 life size), the 'Happy to be me Doll' boasts a far more realistic figure measuring in at 36-27-38. The doll was developed by Cathy

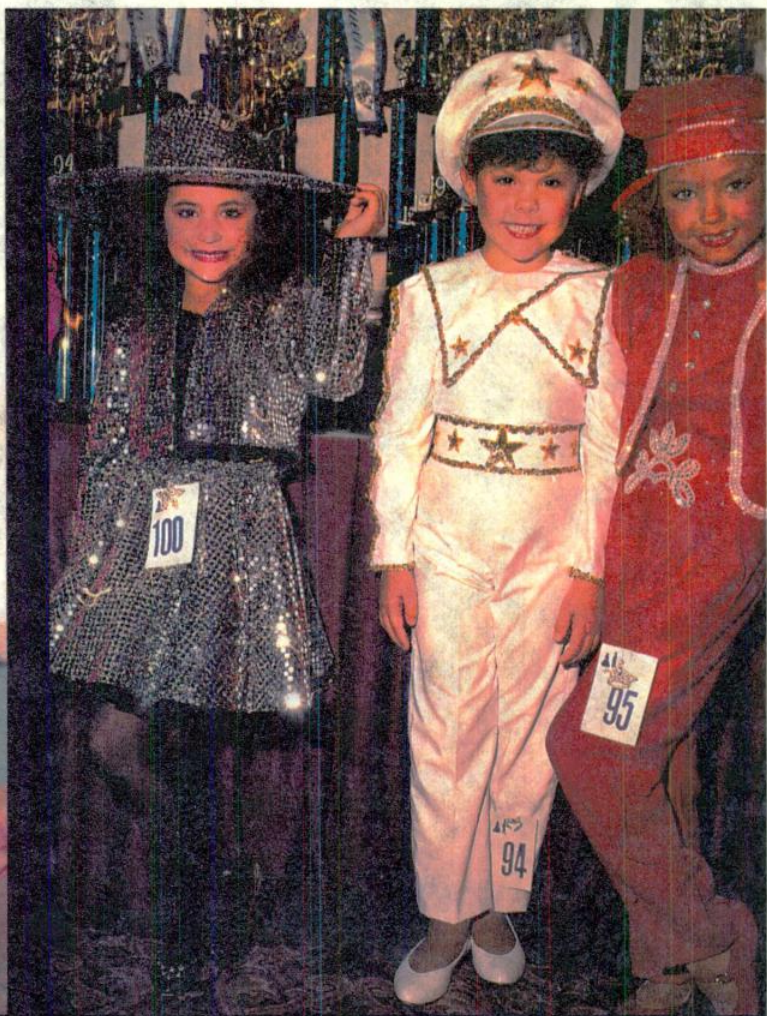
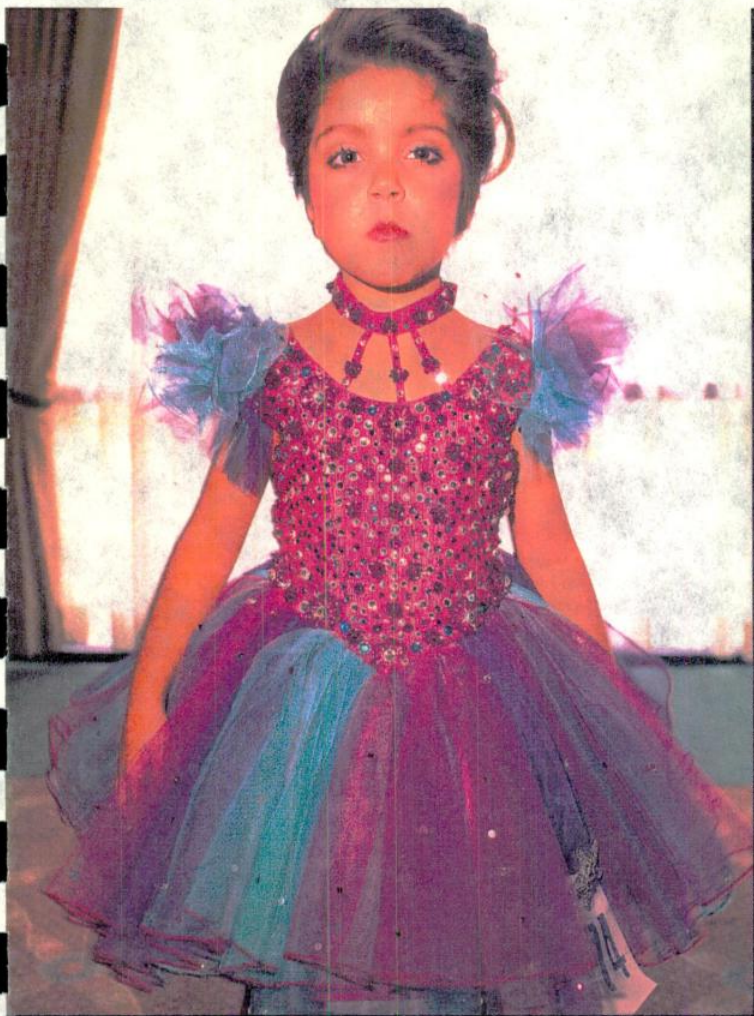
Meredig and according to a piece in 'SKY Magazine' the 'Happy to be me Doll' is an attempt to persuade impressionable young minds that you don't have to be thin and beautiful to be loved (SKY Magazine, 1989, p. 50) However, this doll has failed to make any serious impression upon the market, with Barbie still maintaining her undisputed reign as the most popular doll for little girls. Many feel that Barbie fills young girls heads with crazy ideas and ludicrous images that effect the way they feel they should look. One lady has carried this to the ultimate extreme, Cindy Jackson has had eighteen operations in order to become more 'Barbie-esque'. Cindy appeared in an edition of the Channel Four Programme (see video). 'Without Walls'. The episode entitled 'Face Value' explored our notions of beauty and how they subscribe to a norm. Cindy who has spent over \$30,000 on cosmetic surgery feels the feminine 'ideal' is embodied in the Barbie doll especially the wide eyes and the turned up nose. Cindy feels that it is only through conforming to this ideal of beauty that a woman gains any recognition stating:

Ever since I made the changes, I don't have to do anything,
I don't have to try. Before the surgery I was invisible as
many plain women are. I have a genius I.Q., I am a member
of Mensa, it never got me anywhere. The features I was after
are really the feminine ideal embodied in plastic dolls
especially Barbie. (Jackson, 1994, Without Walls)

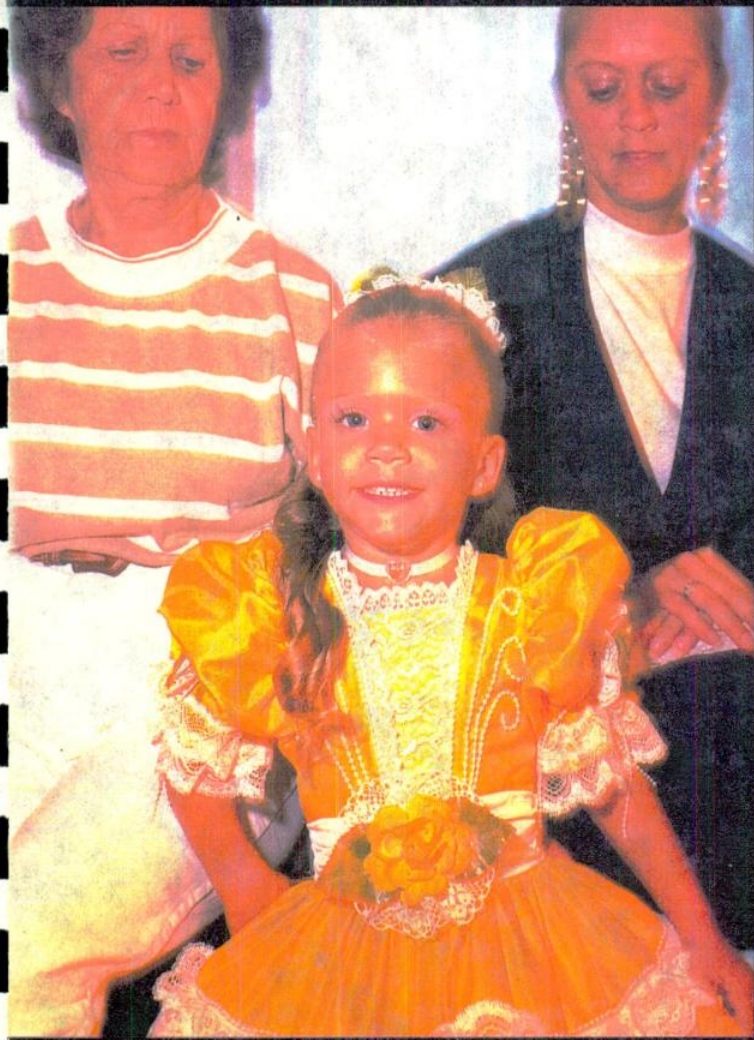
According to Cindy Jackson, real life 'Barbie Dolls' are to be found in any Californian street. This she believes is a social phenomena that is not widely recognised 'Barbie is all around us. If you watch television Bay Watch is full of Barbies. Ivana Trump is a Barbie, Victoria Principal also. Barbie clones are all about". (Jackson, 1994, Without Walls. Whilst it is obvious that Cindy Jackson illustrates the extremes to which an individual can embrace this notion of beauty, the arrival of Barbie cosmetics and life-size clothes for little girls bridges, the gap between playing the Barbie and pretending to be her. Lisa McKendle,



For her mother and grandmothers, Brooke Breedwell's pageant career is a family passion. 'It's like travelling with a show and she's the star,' they say



Clockwise from above: a beauty pageant contestant in elaborate formal dress; three young hopefuls in confident mood; Brittany Breed, the five-year-old from Las Vegas with a room full of trophies; Chastity Gail Murt with mother and grandmother



Mattel's director of Public Relations comments upon these cosmetics. "We think it's important that the cosmetics be child-like and involve fantasy. The applications are heart and star shaped, all the lip glosses come in flavours and the perfume has sparkles in it (Zeitlin, 1992 p. 25). This marks a departure from mere make belief and allows children to actually change their appearance or image. This trend is also evident in the increased popularity of infant beauty pageants through the United States (Fig. 33). At these events children as young as six months are clad in frills, heavily made-up are forced to compete for the numerous cash prizes. Some believe the ideal 'beauty' sought here, is quite similar to that portrayed by Barbie (Fig. 34) Maureen Bailey explains:

.....in the South, particular Mothers take the pageants very seriously. Contestants from Florida and Tennessee are hard to beat. They peroxide their kid's hair, dye their eyebrows, and use hair extensions until they end up like mini Barbies (Hilboldt, 1994, p. 119).

These children, like Barbie, must be all rounders, projecting their personalities and talents to the onlookers. They must also maintain an impeccable appearance and smile constantly. Like any individual attempting to personify glamour, a lot of work is required to achieve this image. Just as the average woman would have to work hard to achieve the 'perfect look'. Many of the mothers believe that the pageants help raise self-esteem, improve relationships with men, and promote good eating habits. The mothers persistently project their idea of glamour and beauty upon these young children. It is a beauty that does not come naturally or easily, "The children have been up since 7 a.m. getting their hair and make-up done - they are dumb struck. In between pageants Brooke studies dance, modelling and voice... Dresses that cost between 400 and 700 dollars only last three months (Hilboldt, 1994, p. 119). Some of the contestants mothers professed their belief in

an 'all round' ideal, "We're church people and we want Brooke to be an all-round American girl with good morals" (Hilboldt, 1994, p. 12) Nonetheless it is apparent that the greatest emphasis is placed upon the surface beauty of the individual child. Mothers are hoping that their daughters will continue to maintain this carefully constructed 'beauty' when they mature. These women recognise the power that the 'look' brings them. I came from nowhere and I wanted power, and thought that if I looked young and pretty I could have it (Jackson, 1994, W.W.) People like Cindy Jackson believe that it is not enough to be clever and qualified, to be successful one must also look the part.

DRESSED FOR SUCCESS

In the 1980's, Barbie epitomised the career women who 'dressed for success'. In 1982 a publication entitled Having it all was penned by Helen Gurley Brown, editor in chief of Cosmopolitan. The 1980's saw the emergence of the young urban professional - the so called 'yuppy'. Their aerobic bodies and expensive dress smacked of physical and economic well-being. By the end of the 1980's women had worked for, and achieved legislation that guaranteed access to this corporate world. However, access did not guarantee success as western industrial society was based on severe competition. Helen Gurley Brown advocated a plan of action which utilised a woman's physical attractiveness in order to rise up the corporate ladder. The key to Brown's success formula was 'applying one-self.' This entailed using your feminine guile to your best advantage. She again illustrates a preoccupation with appearance:

It is unthinkable that a woman bent on having it all would want to be fat, or even plump.....from decent skinny eating, exercising an hour a day, taking vitamins (six a day now), no smoking, no drinking, no caffeine, no drugs, your life can change



PER SPOOK's couture ensembles for Barbie prepare her for any occasion that calls for casual elegance. For day, he offers a three-piece suit with a loose jacket, striped blouse, and straight skirt, a well-tailored, modern, and lovely style.



Hermès designer ERIC BERGÈRE created for Barbie a travel costume with timeless Hermès detailing and quality: the beige tweed skirt with hand-stitched belt, the turtleneck pullover, the camel's hair coat lined in a Hermès print are accented with a matching hand-rolled scarf, large chain jewels, and equestrian-style brooch. John Lobb-style boots and a hand-stitched miniature travel bag complete the accessories. The "Star" outfit (left) from Bergère's recent collection also suggests comfort, elegance, and luxury.

utterly. (Chapkis 1986, p.85)

According to Gurley Brown, chapters on 'Diet', 'Exercise', 'Your Face and Body' and 'Clothes' help to fulfil one third of the recipe for success. Barbie sported numerous work outfits throughout the 1980's, with her perfect figure and face she embodied Brown's 'idea'. Yet, Barbie seems to have portrayed a female 'elite'. The reality of working outside the home was not as glamorous as media images would have us believe (e.g. Falcon Crest). Most women were working in lower paid jobs, without benefits or security. Of those working within the corporate structure most did not become senior executives. The majority remained on a parallel job ladder which ended in the position of executive secretary or senior administrative assistant. These were the women who ran organisations yet they did not have the money or the authority to accompany the responsibility. According to Brown any success women gain, is through careful manipulation of appearance and the 'right' attitude. The appearance of a successful young woman of the 1980's was serious, there was no room in the workplace for overtly feminine or frilly outfits. The dichotomy is mirrored in Barbies's outfits. During the 1980's we see the emergence of several serious work outfits for Barbie. (e.g. **Fig. 35**). Also we see the feminisation of the suit, where many women adapted the uniform commonly associated with white upper class. During this period, Barbie sported tailored jackets, pinstripes, padded shoulders and generally more structured less frivolous daywear. In John J. Molloy's text Dress for Success, he claims that women must fall into line where it comes to the corporate dress code claiming 'Business women cannot get away with wearing feminine prints, although most of those prints are perfectly acceptable to wear socially they will make men think that a business woman wearing them to work is frilly and ineffective'. (Molloy, 1980, p.98) It appears that what makes women seem ineffective in a work setting may be just the

thing for a social occasion where overt femininity is an asset not a liability. Whilst Barbie was maintaining a serious daytime image, her gowns for night wear were as feminine and frilly as ever. With increased participation in the workforce women discovered that they were expected to have not one, but several conflicting images including 'the capable professional business woman' and 'the sexy mistress'. Barbie coped with this bewildering set of demands by donning the outfits in the 'Spectacular Fashions Range'. It offered a new kind of ensemble which comprised of a multi-piece colour co-ordinated wardrobe of five fabulous looks. This range catered for the busy, all-systems-go pace of the new American Woman. Business suits could be reversed to reveal shimmering night-time fabrics in the blink of an eye. These multi-purpose outfits facilitated the transition from one role to another. In his book 'Barbie - Her Life and Times' Billy Boy traces Barbie's adaptation to her multi-faceted life.:

Nineteen eighty five saw a 'Day to Night Barbie' emerge. The theme of Barbie in the eighties is 'We girls can do anything', which seems to say it all. She is an active business woman by day, and a glamorous fun-loving woman by night. She comes with a computer as well as a calculator, credit card, business card, and international daily newspapers and magazines. All her accessories fit into an attaché case. Barbie wears a suit that turns into a frilly evening dress, just as 'twice as nice' fashions doubled their play value. (Boy, 1986,p.97)

HAVING-IT-ALL

It is evident that Barbie took the hard work ethos of the 1980's quite seriously. By 1985 Barbie worked day-to-night, managing five simultaneous careers - Dancer, Fashion Designer, T.V. News Anchor, Business Executive, and Teacher. It is interesting to note that in this period, Ken only had one career as a Sports Reporter for T.V. She became competent veterinarian in 1986, a performer in 1988 and an

Barbie Is Now!



Look who's blasting off on a new adventure! Astronaut Barbie is a sensation in any galaxy. She's dressed for first class space travel in her hot pink and silver metallic top with matching hot pink pants, clear plastic bubble helmet, and back pack.

Animal Rights Activist in 1989. 'Astronaut Barbie (Fig. 36) was designed during the period when the Space Shuttle was being successfully launched and the Columbia went on a daring mission to repair a Satellite in orbit. This intergalactic doll came with a computer keyboard, flagpole and flag, space maps, astronaut certificate. Some women argue that Barbie can be seen as a symbol of female emancipation because, she works for a living and doesn't depend upon men for her possessions. In a recent publication entitled 'Forever Barbie - the unauthorised biography of a real Doll' written by M.G. Lord, we hear that "Barbie was never the much maligned dumb dependant blond of popular lore, on the contrary she lived alone, drove her own pink car, had little time for dull boy friend Ken, was encumbered by neither husband or children and paid her own way, with a career dating from 1959 as a model and clothes designer" (Glacken, 1995, p. 10) However, some still maintain that Barbie is successful where others would fail because her looks open doors for her. Women of all classes know that beauty matters and can mean power. In the book 'Dress for Success' John J. Molloy states:

The pursuit of beauty is one of the few avenues to success over which a woman has some measure of control. You can mould your body much more easily than you can force access to the old-boy networks or get the job you want, the promotion you deserve, the salary you need, the recognition you are owed. And implanted in the effort is the belief that after beauty follows the job, the money, the love (Molloy 1980, p. 72)

Yet I feel Barbie in many ways provides a positive role model for young girls. Barbie acquaints them with the notion of a woman possessing power and control over her own destiny because she makes her own decisions. Billy Boy points out the fact that children have no problem with her being too difficult to emulate

because if "Barbie should ever be accused of being a bad influence the true judges of that would be children." (Boy, 1986, p. 42). In the 1980's, a school competition posed the question "Who is your hero?", one little girl chose Barbie saying:

She has a castle; she is pretty; she is good at playing ball; she is smart; she goes places; she is good to people; she works very hard. (Boy, 1986 ,p. 126)

IRISH INDEPENDENT MON / JAN 30 1995

Baywatch Barbie . . . the top doll



● Julie Gillan with Baywatch Barbie, a new doll in the Barbie range, at a preview of the 1995 British International Toy Fair, which opens today at Olympia, London. The glamorous blonde doll, a favourite with little girls for 35 years, will today be named Doll of the Year and the Baywatch version of the doll should be in the shops in June.

THE REAL BARBIE
CLAUDIA

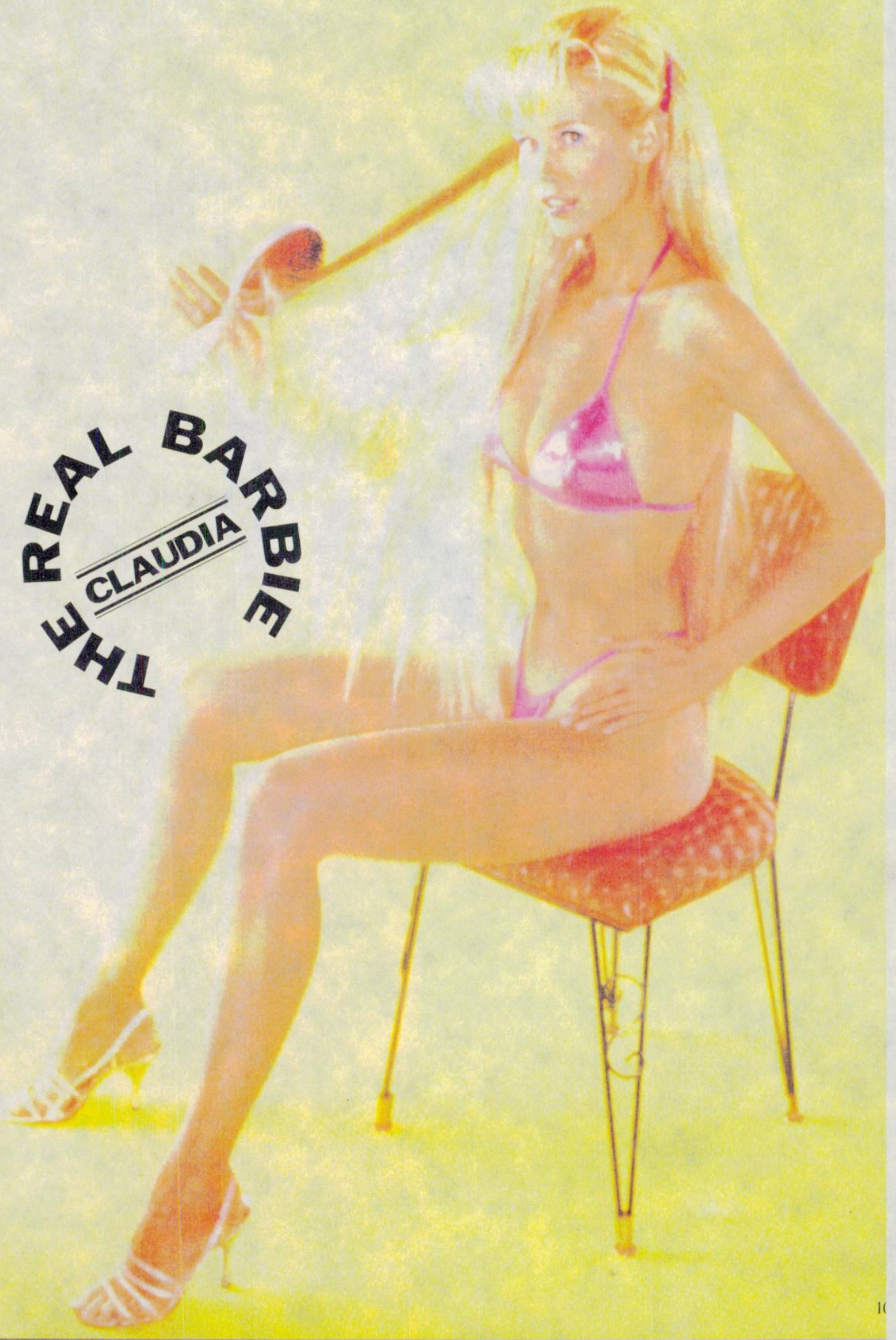




FIG.39

Conclusion

Barbie, the world's most famous doll, at thirty-six years of age, is one of the most enduring beauty emblems of all time. She is also a pop icon and cult figure. Since her introduction, in 1959, she has mirrored all the idealised values and aspirations of western culture, as well as every important fashion trend. Long before today's super models were born, Barbie's career or should I say careers, were in full swing. Her air-brushed, high maintenance look has survived a thousand fashion changes and inspired a generation of modern day 'living dolls'. (e.g. the Baywatch cast) (Fig. 37). This miniature model represents a mandate of a way of life for women throughout the world; regardless of how unrelated to each of our ethnic or economic possibilities it is. With her white-blond hair, breathtaking elongated proportions and crystal blue eyes. Barbie has provided the impetus for designers, stylists and models alike. Nowhere is this more obvious than Vogue Italia's recent fashion spread entitled 'The Real Barbie-Claudia' Decked -out in the latest fashions (Fig. 38) and (Fig. 39), super model Claudia Scheiffer reinvents herself to look like the most influential vinyl doll ever. (Vogue Italia, 1994, pp 110-115). Similarly, the special anniversary exhibition Art, Design and Barbie (See video) of 1994, at Berlin's Maring-Gropius Bau, gave artists the challenge to represent Barbie as an aesthetic cult object. World famous creators whose mediums range from sculpture, painting and video, through photography and industrial design confirmed the dolls absorption into culture once and for all. The fact that she has a role beyond the one created for her by Mattel, shows how Barbie has become more than just a child's plaything. Racquel Welch said that when she became aware of Barbie, she realised that this doll wasn't a mother therefore not a wife and therefore something new.

Barbie was a seductress, a sensual being, and indication of a woman's sexuality being acceptable. (Parks, 1995, p. 40) Camille Paglia compared Barbie, a "modernised streamlined" doll to "a tribal fetish of a great nature cult" and noted that women as diverse as Gloria Stenam and Nicole Brown Simpson have modeled their look, whether consciously or not on Barbie. (Parks, 1995, p. 40) This icon enables girls to examine their own sexuality in a relaxed fashion. It is this sort of play which makes Barbie a positive and powerful toy. Over the past 36 years, the 5 ounce eleven and a half inch icon has been the perfect daughter for parent Mattel. Her cute button nose and smooth, smooth skin has triumphed over countless imitators. In 1991, 'Sindy' (made by Hasbro) was revamped and allegedly remodelled to look more 'West-Coast' American. Her bust swelled, her head shrank and she grew and streaked blonde her brown hair. A copyright trail issued by Mattel was only averted by an agreement from Sindy to have another facelift. Since 1959, Mattel has sold over 700 million Barbie dolls. More than 200 million of her outfits are bought each year. The sheer scale of Barbie product consumption, illustrates her high profile in popular culture. Through 'bubble' haircuts and rebellion in the 60's, feathered, styles and burning bras in the 70's, the power suits and fitness fads of the 80's ; Barbie has remained true to form. Barbie has reinvented herself more often than most and in doing so has become a barometer of popular culture.

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