

Gender socialization by the toy industry

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The message of gender socialization being imposed upon young children subliminally becomes quite obvious when one observes the Wal-Mart toy department from an unbiased viewpoint. Normally when I venture into the toy department, which is almost always against my will, I'm on a swift mission. Find a toy to reward my 3 year old nephew with after a good week of daycare and get the heck out of there. However, when you're child free and walking the aisles, you become bombarded with gender driven propaganda.

You enter an aisle that might as well say " For Boys Only" at the entrance. Taking a look around you see cars and trucks packaged in oversized, brightly or dark colored boxes splattered with images of little boys happily playing with the toy all over the box. You pass fire trucks, police cars, race tracks, cowboys, astronauts and construction toys, all clearly portraying them as " Boys Toys" so vividly all they're missing is a button one can push that will shout " This is so not for girls! On a trip to the next aisle over you become overwhelmed by bright pink or pastel boxes, decorated with flower images or sparkly pictures of little girls playing with the toy. You pass Barbie with her plastic blonde hair and plastic blue eyes, next to her obviously less popular brunette friend, Teresa. Clearly this shows little girls what the " ideal gorgeous woman" should look like. Barbie shows a woman can conquer the world if she's wearing the right outfit.

She can be a CEO, flight attendant, lawyer, nurse, doctor, dancer, princess or astronaut and all she has to do is stand still, look pretty, have monstrously oversized breasts, and wear the right clothes. Who really wants their daughter to believe this is the ticket to success? You see the Easy Bake Oven

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with a big glossy picture of two young girls baking a small desert. You see tea sets and baby dolls and all you come to find is that girls are being subliminally trained they are to be subservient, attractive, domestic and beautiful. They should be demure, domestic, and trained to raise children.

I left the toy section a little nauseous. As a child I was given Hot Wheels cars and Barbie's. I had a black big wheel with flames on it and an Easy Bake Oven. I had an ant farm and a doll house next to each other in my childhood bedroom, and I think I turned out alright. It's sad to see children's genders being shoved down their throats by propaganda, especially now that we have male nurses and women in congress; however, pink is for girls and blue is for boys according to the advertising and toy industries, and I doubt that will ever change.