

Female Psychology Analysis of the Female Character in the Movie Barbie

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Abstract: The movie Barbie offers a nuanced exploration of gender roles, cultural norms, and the impact of idealized imagery on societal perceptions. By juxtaposing the flawless world of Barbieland with the complexities of the real world, the film subverts traditional views on gender and masculinity. Barbie's evolution from a symbol of perfection to a character grappling with her imperfections serves as a metaphor for the pressures women face in conforming to societal expectations. Through characters like Barbie and Gloria, the film underscores the social and psychological toll of these ideals, presenting a sharp critique of patriarchal norms. Moreover, Barbie cleverly challenges gender hierarchies by reversing roles in Barbieland, where women dominate, highlighting the absurdity of gender expectations. Gloria's passionate speech and Sasha's critique underscore the film's call for more nuanced and authentic representations of women. Ultimately, Barbie invites audiences to reflect on societal norms, encouraging them to embrace imperfection, reject rigid gender roles, and work toward a more inclusive and equitable understanding of identity.

Keywords: Female psychology, Feminism, Cinema.

1. Introduction

Feminism and the feminist movement have been hot topics discussed on the Internet and in society recently. Feminism, a powerful social, political, and cultural movement, not only promotes the equality and rights of all genders but also empowers individuals to challenge and resolve the structural and historical injustices that women have faced. It is a movement that advocates for equal opportunities, rights, and respect for all, regardless of gender. Female psychology, a comprehensive field, focuses on understanding the unique mental, emotional, and behavioral experiences of women. It explores how women's ideas and behavior are influenced by a variety of social, cultural, biological, and psychological factors. This area of study delves into the effects of gender norms, cultural expectations, and identity on women's relationships, mental health, self-esteem, and general well-being. In addition, female psychology examines themes including body image, gender discrimination, and juggling roles at home and at work, as well as significant life events for women like menstruation, pregnancy, parenthood, and menopause.

Female psychology aims to provide mental health support and empowerment by gaining a deeper understanding of women's distinct challenges and strengths. In the end, it aims to develop a more thorough and inclusive knowledge of the psychological experiences of women. Feminism and female psychology are intertwined in their efforts to understand and address the psychological impact of

gender norms and inequalities. By combining feminist insights with psychological research, both fields work toward a more comprehensive understanding of women's mental health and advocate for social changes that promote gender equality and well-being. This connection is particularly relevant in the analysis of the representation of female psychology in the movie *Barbie* and its feminist implications. Nowadays, feminism takes many diverse forms in the political, legal, cultural, and employment domains, all supporting the more giant fight for women's rights and gender equality. These feminisms advocate for women's liberation and full participation in all facets of life, challenging and tearing down the structural obstacles that have historically disenfranchised and oppressed women. Cinema is a vital tool for furthering feminist philosophy because of its unique capacity to shape public perception, arouse empathy, and start conversations about social issues. Throughout the years, several films have come to light as important embodiments of feminist principles, providing complex depictions of the lives, challenges, and victories of women. These movies encourage viewers to think critically about gender roles and the pursuit of equality in addition to being entertaining.

This research concentrates on *Barbie*, a movie that has gained popularity because to its feminist ideas. Despite having a playful appearance and being based on a well-known cultural figure, this film explores more complex themes of femininity, identity, and social expectations. Through an analysis of 'Barbie', this research may investigate how the movie adds to the current conversation about feminism and how it speaks to modern viewers in the context of gender equality. This paper hopes to understand how *Barbie* defies conventional ideas of women and embodies feminist ideals through this examination. Fundamentally, the film explores how women negotiate the challenging terrain of femininity in a society that frequently enforces strict norms and prejudices. From the idealized image of femininity often associated with the iconic doll to the more complex and realistic portrayals of women's lives, the characters in "*Barbie*" symbolize various aspects of womanhood. Through their journeys, the film explores how women confront and reconcile the pressures to conform to societal ideals with their desires for authenticity and self-expression.

Barbie also touches on the psychological parts of these demands, emphasizing problems with body image, self-esteem, and the need for perfection. In doing so, the movie starts a conversation about the difficulties women encounter in creating their identities, both from the inside and the outside. In this approach, "*Barbie*" provides a window into women's psychological experiences, providing a forum for discussing how these experiences influence and are influenced by larger societal narratives.

Ultimately, *Barbie* and its relationship to female psychology offer insightful perspectives into the challenges of contemporary womanhood, inspiring viewers to consider the various and sometimes contradictory factors influencing female empowerment and identity. The film *Barbie* provides a rare chance to explore the intricate facets of female psychology in addition to being a fun journey into a vibrant, fanciful universe. This essay will examine the subtleties of the female characters in *Barbie*, exploring how their interactions, motives, and actions speak to more general issues in the psychology of women. This research looks at how femininity, identity, and strength are portrayed to identify underlying signals about women's experiences and expectations from society. By using several lenses, we can better comprehend the psychological aspects that influence the female characters in the movie and learn how "*Barbie*" both challenges and connects with modern conceptions of womanhood.

2. Literary Review

Feminist studies, as an interdisciplinary field, has profoundly impacted society, culture, politics, economy, and other aspects in the past decades. In recent years, with the acceleration of globalization, the development of digital technology, and the popularity of multiple identities, feminist theory and practice continue to evolve, showing a more diversified and complicated trend. Female psychology, as an essential branch of psychology, is devoted to understanding and explaining women's

psychological development, behavior patterns, and the deep causes of gender differences. There have been significant advances in the study of women's psychology over the past few decades, particularly in the areas of sociocultural influences, identity, gender roles and their impact on women's mental health. In recent years, with the acceleration of social change and the development of feminist theory, the research perspective of women's psychology has diversified, covering many emerging fields such as intersectionality theory, trauma psychology, and the influence of digital culture. This review will analyze the feminist literature and the main research results of women's psychology from 2018 to now and discuss the challenges and breakthroughs faced by the current academic community in understanding women's psychology and its development. By analyzing this literature, we can not only better understand the core issues of contemporary feminism. It can also provide insight into its practical contribution to addressing global gender inequality and social injustice, providing a theoretical basis and practical inspiration for future research directions.

Feminism is a Language: The Global Narrative of Contemporary Feminism is a 2018 book by Rosi Braidotti that examines how feminism has evolved in the context of globalization[1]. Braidotti argues that feminism is not just a social movement or ideology but also a cross-cultural language and narrative mode. Braidotti discusses how globalization has transformed feminism into a global language used to express and protest gender inequality and violence. She highlights the diverse forms feminism takes in different cultural contexts, challenging Western-centric views. Feminist language, according to Braidotti, is deeply political, serving as a tool for resisting oppression and uniting global feminist movements. She envisions a future where feminism is more flexible and inclusive, capable of addressing the complex challenges of globalization to achieve true gender equality. *A New Kind of Gender Equality: The Role of Men in Feminism* is a 2019 book by Michael Kimmel that examines men's roles in promoting gender equality within the feminist movement. Kimmel argues that traditional toxic masculinity harms both women and men, and he advocates for redefining masculinity to include emotional expression, cooperation, and equality[2]. He emphasizes that gender equality is not just a women's issue—men should actively support women in all areas of life and challenge gender stereotypes. Kimmel calls for men to reflect on their privileges and take responsibility for combating gender inequality through self-education and dialogue with feminists. He also discusses integrating gender perspectives into laws and public policies to drive societal change. Optimistic about the future, Kimmel believes that as more men join the feminist movement, achieving gender equality will become more accessible, leading to a more equitable society. The book underscores that gender equality is a societal issue requiring the involvement of all genders, contributing to the advancement of feminist theory and broader social change. Karen Horney (1885-1952) was a German psychoanalyst known for her critique and revision of Freudian psychoanalytic theory, particularly in gender and female psychology. Horney's theories emphasize the role of cultural and social factors in shaping the female psyche, rejecting Freud's biological determinism and the concept of the feminine complex.

Key points of Karen Horney's psychological theory of women: Against the "feminine complex" : Horney rejected Freud's "Penis Envy" theory[3][4]. She believes that this theory underestimates the influence of social culture on women's self-awareness and exaggerates the role of biological differences in the psychological development of gender. Horney believes that women's so-called "negative complex" is more due to social and cultural gender discrimination and repression of women rather than biological gender differences. Social roots of female jealousy: Horney points out that women's jealousy and feelings of inferiority do not stem from the envy of male sexual organs, but from society's worship of male status and power. She proposed the concept of "Womb Envy", in which men may envy women for their fertility, in contrast to Freud's theory of the feminine complex[5].

In *Cultural construction of female psychology*, Horney believes women's psychology and self-image are socioculturally constructed rather than naturally existing[6]. She emphasized that society's expectations and norms for women affect women's psychological development, causing many women to develop an "Idealized Self-Image" and conflict with their actual self-image, which can lead to neurosis. Inner conflict and neurosis, Horney developed the "inner conflict" theory, which states that neuroses are caused by three fundamental inner conflicts: Moving Toward People, Moving Against People, and Moving Away from People[7]. These inner conflicts play an essential role in the psychological development of women, especially in the face of social injustice and gender discrimination. The *Psychology of Women* by Karen Horney is a seminal work that explores gender differences and women's psychological development, challenging Freud's psychoanalytic theories, particularly the idea of "penis envy"[8]. Horney emphasizes the importance of self-realization and independence for women, and she argues that social and cultural oppression play a larger role in women's psychological problems than biological ones. She also examines how culture shapes gender roles, asserting that gender differences are socially constructed rather than innate. Horney advocates for women's mental health through psychotherapy, advocating for understanding and addressing the psychological challenges women face. Her work laid a crucial foundation for feminist psychology, offering fresh viewpoints that challenged the day's conventional wisdom. In *Neurosis and Human Growth: The Struggle Toward Self-Realization*, Karen Horney explores the relationship between neurosis and personal growth, emphasizing that neurosis is a result of internal conflicts (aggression, attachment, or avoidance) that affect one's ability to develop oneself[9]. She talks about how idealized self-images that are designed to cope with anxieties can exacerbate psychological problems. Horney contends that self-actualization through self-knowledge and acceptance is necessary for true growth. The book also discusses how societal and cultural pressures exacerbate neurosis and advocates for considering these factors when designing a treatment plan.

3. Analysis

3.1. The Plot in Barbie

The archetypal Barbie and various varieties of Barbie reside in Barbieland, a civilization ruled by women in which the ladies are self-assured, independent, and prosperous. Ken is in charge of playing on the beach. Typical Stereotypical Barbie's boyfriend, Ken, is content only when he is with her. He yearns for a closer bond, but Barbie turns him down and prefers to be independent with her female friends. One day, Barbie starts to worry about dying herself and realizes she's changed—her feet are now flat, for example—and her look is no longer flawless. She goes to see "Blame Barbie" and discovers that to recover, she needs to go out into the real world and locate the kids she plays with. Ken follows Barbie into the real world in secret, and their deeds draw the notice of Mattel and the FBI. Barbie visits her owner, Sasha, who scolds her for her shallow consumerism and unattainable beauty standards. A distressed Barbie finds Glory, Sasha's mother and a Mattel employee. Glory plays with Sasha's Barbie toys while going through her identity problem, unintentionally projecting her worries onto the stereotypical Barbie, which sets off her identity crisis. Gloria and Sasha saved the stereotypical Barbie from the Mattel CEO and his henchmen, and the three of them traveled to Barbieland. When Ken returns to Barbieland, he allows the other Kens to take charge, transforming the Barbies into subservient figures. Meanwhile, Ken is exposed to patriarchy in the real world. Gloria assists Barbie in giving the irritated Barbies a new life, ultimately leading to their liberation from Ken's authority. Barbieland has returned to its previous state, and the Kennels are stopped from changing the Constitution. After talking with the ghost of Barbie founder Rose Handler, Barbie resolves to become human and return to the real world, and Ken and Barbie apologize to each other.

Ken also starts to search for his identity. Barbie finally transitions into her actual life as "Barbara Handler."

3.2. Stereotype and Gender Roles in Barbie

Barbie has long been associated with being a white, blonde, small-framed lady with long legs, a thin waist, and large eyes. This famous picture of Barbie reflects the beauty standards prevalent in Western culture at the time of her debut. However, Barbie's "perfect image" has also been criticized and called into question in the film *Barbie*. Barbie thinks that by projecting an idealized image of herself, she can empower women in the real world by serving as a good role model. She spends a lot of time in *Barbieland*, so she doesn't grasp what people think about Barbie outside of it. As a result, when she flaunted her traditional ideal to the public, she was met with harsh criticism from Sasha, whom she had misidentified as the toy's owner. This hurt her deeply, but she also gained insight into what modern women truly needed and learned from the outside world. In *Barbie Land*, women play vital, influential roles such as those of legislators, lawyers, doctors, and other significant figures. In contrast, the Kens are usually cast in supporting or decorative parts because they are seen as less important. This dramatic reversal of traditional gender roles upends the typical gender hierarchy that exists in the real world, where men have historically and culturally held the majority of authority and leadership roles. At the same time, women have been relegated to more subordinate or supporting roles.

By inverting these exchanges, *Barbie Land* satirically portrays patriarchy in the real world. Real-world women, who typically face discrimination, lower income, and fewer opportunities than men, have long battled for equality in the workplace, political sphere, and social spheres. *Barbie Land*'s depiction of gender roles highlights these differences by reversing them, with women in positions of authority and males (represented by the Kens) excluded from meaningful social participation. This parody reveals the satire of a gender power structure that favors one gender over the other. It also discusses the social construction and arbitrary nature of gender roles, emphasizing how ridiculous it would be to treat males as perpetually inferior to women, as women have done in many nations. *Barbie Land* is a fanciful, exaggerated universe where women easily hold positions of power and men are subordinate. By acting as a mirror, it invites spectators to reflect on how pervasive and profoundly ingrained patriarchy is in real life. It raises the prospect of a more just and equal society.

3.3. Dialogues in Barbie

Gloria's teenage daughter Sasha offers a critical analysis of Barbie in *Barbie* that cuts to the heart of the doll's influence and more general concerns about gender representation. Sasha's critique highlights the contradiction between Barbie's idealized image and the problems she represents in the actual world. An outline of Sasha's complaints is as follows:

Sasha: "It's not just about how you look. It's about everything you represent.And that's not just unfair; it's harmful." As Sasha notes, Barbie embodies an unattainable standard of perfection in looks. She contends that young girls feel unfulfilled if they fall short of the doll's flawless appearance because Barbie's image feeds unrealistic standards and expectations. The criticism focuses on how these glorified characters can skew people's opinions about their own values. It also tackles the more general problem of how unrealistic ideals set by fantasy characters like Barbie influence norms and desires in real life. Sasha emphasizes that Barbie's image is fiction that does not capture the complexities and flaws of real life. Sasha's criticism is a crucial component of the movie's discussion on gender depiction and the influence of cultural icons like Barbie. It casts doubt on the concept of perfection and emphasizes how crucial it is for toys and media to have more varied and realistic portrayals.

One of the most memorable scenes in the Barbie movie is Gloria's stirring speech, which illustrates the difficulties and complexities of being a woman in contemporary society. It is a powerful feminist statement that draws attention to the unachievable standards that women are expected to attain. This is a sample of the speech:

Gloria: "It is literally impossible to be a woman. It's too hard! It's too contradictory and nobody gives you a medal or says thank you! And it turns out, in fact, that not only are you doing everything wrong, but also everything is your fault." This lecture is a sincere and emotional examination of women's challenges and contradictions when attempting to live up to society's conflicting expectations. It is one of the most important feminist moments in the movie because it criticizes the contradictory expectations and excessive obligations imposed on women.

3.4. Female Figures in Barbie

Margot Robbie's persona, Barbie, is a depiction of the ideal woman. Barbie embodies beauty, style, and the ideal lifestyle and has long been a role model for young girls. Barbie is portrayed in the film as flawless and impossible, acknowledging this cultural heritage. However, it subverts this standard by drawing attention to the unrealistic expectations and demands that it makes of women in the real world. Barbie's flawless look is called into question as she develops flaws (such as cellulite and flat feet), which represent the problems that women have as they age, deal with body image concerns, and deal with social expectations. This change in tone speaks to a larger issue of how women are frequently expected to maintain a particular standard of perfection, which can cause them to feel inadequate. Gloria is a working mother who finds balancing her career and family responsibilities difficult while trying to live up to social expectations. Barbie lives in a perfect fantasy world; Gloria deals with the messy reality of existence. The audience might be able to relate to her more because she isn't shown as extraordinary or flawless. Barbie's idealized femininity contrasts with this accurate portrayal of the feminine shape, highlighting the unreal expectations women face in both contexts. Her hardships are a metaphor for the everyday obstacles that many women face, including being a decent mother, achieving professional success, and retaining their sense of self. Gloria's character serves as a vehicle for the movie's more extensive statement on how society forces women to aspire to unreachable standards, which causes them to feel inadequate and frustrated. As an adolescent girl, Sasha is skeptical and antagonistic toward traditional notions of femininity. Her character represents a more scathing attitude toward the illusory standards and feeble elements of beauty and perfection. This cynicism exposes a generational divide in views on gender roles and societal conventions. Sasha's critique of Barbie's world represents a broader, more progressive notion of femininity that challenges stereotypical, idealized ideas of women. Barbie's original, innocent point of view is juxtaposed with her own to show how the conversation about gender and identity is evolving.

4. Conclusion

In summary, Barbie presents a complex examination of gender roles, cultural norms, and the influence of idealized imagery on perceptions of the real world. By deftly contrasting Barbieland's flawless environment with the flawed, real world, the movie subverts conventional ideas of gender and masculinity through its characters and story. Barbie's transformation from a representation of unachievable perfection to a character who struggles with her imperfections and seeks authenticity is used in the movie to highlight the pressures women face to live up to unfair expectations. Barbie's growing self-awareness and Gloria's moving indictment of societal expectations show how fantasy and reality differ and the social and psychological effects of holding onto such standards. The video offers a sharp critique of the pervasive patriarchy of the actual world through its satirical portrayal of gender norms in Barbie land, where women rule, and males are reduced to supporting roles. Barbie

challenges viewers to consider how prevalent gender hierarchies are in their own lives as well as the ridiculousness of these roles by flipping them. Barbie's perfect, idealized life and Gloria's reality hardships highlight the irrationality of the expectations society has of women, exposing the fundamental flaws in these notions.

In addition, Gloria's passionate speech and Sasha's criticism perfectly capture the movie's central theme, which is the need for a more complex and accurate portrayal of women. These conversations strike a chord as forceful pleas for change, urging a move away from ideological preconceptions and toward a more inclusive and accurate representation of gender and identity. Ultimately, Barbie is a fascinating and thought-provoking exploration of the issues of gender and self-worth because it challenges audiences to embrace imperfections, challenge conventional standards, and work toward a more equal and understanding society.

References

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