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Master Dissertation

**The Representation of Western Cultural Construction of Gender in Barbie Movie:
Challenges and Outcomes**

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Dedications

By the care of Allah and all the courage and patience he has in me brought from those years of study that I can now see the fruit of my labor this modest memory.

I dedicate this work

To My Father: After Allah, you have been my support throughout eighteen years of study. You have always believed in my abilities and defended me against any doubts. Praise be to Allah for bestowing me with such a blessing. I pray to always be a source of pride for you and ask Allah to protect you and keep you as the greatest blessing in my life.

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the impact of media on human psyche and its power to reshape culture through the audience interpretation. The analysis of such characters as the stereotypical Barbie, Ken, Doctor Barbie, and Midge the pregnant doll in *Barbie* movie shows some western cultural constructions of gender which may have an impact on audience. This analysis based on the reviews of the movie by western critics. The study requires an eclectic approach which draws on Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, theory of the unconscious, Stuart Hall's reception theory under the veil of radical of feminism. The conclusion derived from this analysis is that media may be a powerful tool shaping audience's perception of certain ideas, potentially disrupting traditional gender roles and societal values.

Key Words:

Audience perception, *Barbie* movie, interpretation, media influence, psychoanalysis, radical feminism.

ملخص

هذه الأطروحة تستكشف تأثير الإعلام على النفس البشرية وقدرته على إعادة تشكيل الثقافة من خلال تفسير الجمهور. يظهر تحليل شخصيات مثل باربي، كين، دكتور باربي، وميدج الدمية الحامل في فيلم باربي بعض التركيبات الثقافية الغربية من نوع الجنس والتي قد يكون لها تأثير على الجمهور. يستند هذا التحليل إلى مراجعات الفيلم من قبل النقاد الغربيين. تتطلب الدراسة نهجا انتقائيا يستند إلى التحليل النفسي لسيجموند فرويد، نظرية اللاوعي، نظرية ستوارت هول للاستقبال تحت ستار التطرف النسوي. والاستنتاج المستخلص من هذا التحليل هو أن وسائل الإعلام قد تكون أداة قوية في تشكيل تصور الجمهور لأفكار معينة، مما قد يؤدي إلى تعطيل الأدوار التقليدية للجنسين والقيم المجتمعية.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

مفهوم الجمهور، فيلم باربي، تفسير، تأثير وسائل الإعلام، التحليل النفسي، النسوية الراديكالية.

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General introduction

Media's influence has become a pivotal point in shaping and reshaping human psyche thereby the way audience interpret the messages may be derived from what they are exposed to on a daily basis in media generally and in movies particularly. The interaction between media and the audience is not merely passive or negative; it also increases the movies quality standards through the watcher's interpretation. Consequently, the audience's engagement with media may bring new experiences to the interpretive process.

The deep understanding of media's mechanisms allows for understanding its impact on audience who in turn decode the messages. This dissertation examines the relationship between media codes and the way it may shape the audience interpretation which may be based on their cultural background, taking into account the psychological processes. The *Barbie* movie, that has been produced in the summer of 2023 has faced different types of interpretations and criticism due to his debatable scenes and characters representations. Whilst some critics praised the movie for its modern way in tackling the gender role, others felt that *Barbie* underpin the dissimilarity between genders, from the side that one gender is superior and the other in inferior, and this is clear by watching the first ten minutes of the film. These differing in opinions proves the multiple ways on how media can be understood in various perspectives depending on their cultural background and experiences.

Barbie and Ken, in particular, show different types of relationships between the two genders. While man portrayed as submissive, weak, and an idiot somehow, woman is extremely powerful, too rational, and handling all the responsibilities of society without sharing any with the neglected and fragile opposite sex. This may be foreign for the audience specially in the contemporary time where they neither know well their roles nor preform them properly

Furthermore, other characters in *Barbie* may be putting in the spot of criticism including Midge the pregnant doll and Doctor Barbie that is characterised by a transgender actor. Firstly, Midge has shifted gender roles in changing her life and character as well. She was a normal character in the dolls version, having the title “Happy Family,” leading a happy life with her husband and kids. However, in the movie they neglect her existence, and neglect the sense of motherhood by saying that “It is fanny at least for a while, ask your mothers”. Secondly, the representation of Doctor Barbie, in this dissertation, is also studied to show the psychological and emotional reception and to check whether it challenges the existing stereotypes or not.

This dissertation aims to delve deeper into the vortex in which the audience may fall in. It focuses on the effects of western cultural construction, taking Barbie movie as an example, which in turn contains several foreign ideas for the audience completely eliminating the role of men. These ideas seem to stand against human nature, which is sharing roles, because logically the relationship between men and women is not a competitive relationship but rather a complementary one. This complementariness seems to be ignored in the film that clearly belittle man. The objectives of this research include analyzing the portrayal of gender roles in the Barbie movie, understanding its impact on audience perception of gender, and exploring the broader implications for cultural and societal norms. The study highlights the ways these media representations might contribute to the erosion of traditional values and the disruption of the future generation's understanding of gender roles.

The primary questions shall be answered through the following sub-question:

- How does the last version of the Barbie movie reflect ground-breaking ideas of gender?
- Is the Barbie movie the product of the culture it shows?
- To what extent does the portrayal of characters in the movie stand for the representation of western cultural construction of gender?

The literature review underscores critical studies of the Barbie movie from various perspectives, shedding light on its portrayal of gender roles and its impact on societal norms. Ted Baehr, author of *Movie Direct*, critiques the film as "hardcore propaganda," emphasizing its depiction of conventional gender roles and the debasement of parenthood. Baehr argues that scenes symbolizing the dismissal of traditional parenthood distort common social standards. Additionally, characters like Midge, the pregnant doll, and Doctor Barbie, played by a transgender actor, face scrutiny. Midge's role as a mother is dismissed, undermining the concept of parenthood, while Doctor Barbie challenges existing stereotypes, prompting questions about audience reception. This analysis synthesizes different perspectives on how media representations can distort social norms, particularly regarding gender roles, highlighting concerns about Western media's impact on audience reception. Ben Shapiro's critique of the Barbie movie reflects his ideological perspective and cultural positioning as a conservative commentator. His review focuses on elements that align with his worldview, critiquing perceived "woke" themes while dismissing the film's artistic and cultural merits. Shapiro's interpretation underscores the ideological conflict within the movie, with gender dynamics and social issues serving as points of contention. Piers Morgan, another critic, highlights the Barbie movie's attack on masculinity, particularly in its reductionist portrayal of male characters as simply "Ken." This oversimplification erases diverse male identities and reinforces harmful stereotypes, contributing to gender essentialism. Morgan's critique underscores the film's agenda-driven narrative, aiming to promote feminist discourse while vilifying men. These critiques offer valuable insights into the societal implications of the Barbie movie's portrayal of gender roles and its impact on cultural discourse.

This dissertation is based on the incorporation of radical feminism, Freudian psychoanalysis, and Hall's reception theory. Freud's psychoanalysis offers assistance analyzation on how characters within the movie might influence human mind, focusing on

unconscious impacts. Stuart Hall's reception theory is utilized to get it how diverse audience translate the same media substance in an unexpected way, based on their social foundations and encounters. Using an eclectic approach will gives a comprehensive understanding of media substance in the sense that *Barbie* movie seems to have shifted impacts on distinctive audience.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters started with General introduction and ending with General conclusion the first chapter covers theoretical framework which include background to the film industry and its historical development the second chapter explores and analyze Barbie movie characters from psychoanalytic perspective the third chapter analyze Barbie movie reviews from cultural perspective based on reception theory of Stuart Hall.

Ultimately, data collection involves analyzing reviews critiquing the Barbie movie to understand diverse audience perspectives on gender roles and character. The study takes an eclectic approach, integrating Freudian psychoanalysis, Hall's reception theory, and radical feminism. Freudian psychoanalysis provides insights into unconscious influences on audience perceptions, while Hall's theory illuminates varied interpretations based on cultural backgrounds. Radical feminism offers a critical lens to examine power dynamics and societal norms, and the study requires qualitative method. This approach aims to deepen understanding of how media representations shape audience perceptions of gender and culture.

Chapter One: Delving into Film: Exploring Historical and Theoretical perspectives

Introduction:

Film theory explores the essence of cinema by tracing its development and the social culture that led to its changes throughout history. Since the beginning of the current cultural scene, the film industry has seen remarkable developments. From the perspective of film theory, researchers seek to analyze the significant impact of film on society and the reading experience in terms of psychological and sociological aspects. Two well-known standard developments in this broad field are psychological film theory and cultural film theory. The former work has probed the depths of human psyche, drawing on Freudian concepts to explain the unconscious connection between cinema and mental life. Meanwhile, the latter explains the complex interactions between films and the wider cultural environment, showing how films reflect and shape social norms, values, and people. The study requires a look at the history of film and understanding the unexpected role of the film industry in shaping human experience. Furthermore, this chapter will explore radical feminism and psychoanalytical feminism in films, examining how these perspectives contribute to the broader discourse on film theory and its impact on societal and psychological interpretations.

1.1 Historical Development of Film Industry:

1.1.1 The Development of Motion Picture:

The beginning of the movie industry in the 19th century has passed through several technological developments. “The creation of photography, the discovery of the illusion of motion by combining individual still images, and the study of human and animal locomotion” are the most notable techniques that revolutionized the film industry (Understanding Media and Culture 374). Until it achieves the huge evolution of the present day, movies with a great quality and unlimited time of shooting. “Eadweard Muybridge is one of the most historically significant figures of the 19th century, whose photographic breakthroughs paved the way for moving image

technology.” (Lesso par.1) His spearheading work within the 19th century laid the foundation for advanced filmmaking and movement picture innovation. His progressive tests with successive photography, such as capturing movement through an arrangement of still pictures, gave pivotal bits of knowledge into the mechanics of development. By dismembering and understanding the mechanics of development, producers have been enabled to create stories that resonate more profoundly with groups of onlookers, drenching them in universes that feel lively and energetic.

The film industry experienced another transformation with the invention of the kinetoscope by Thomas Edison and his assistant William Kennedy Laurie Dixon. Thus, films were not presented as they are nowadays. It wasn't at Tv's and a big screen with high quality images; however, it was in a box with limited time, “Peer through a hole and view a tiny but vivid staged sequence lasting around 17 seconds. This was the culmination of a six-year project at the Edison Works, overseen by William Dickson.” (Domankiewicz par.2). The rise of the Edison `Kinetoscope' marks a significant moment within the history of the film industry, with suggestions far past its introductory oddity. This ground-breaking innovation, in a general sense, reshaped the scene of amusement, presenting audience to the concept of moving pictures in a way that was immersive.

Furthermore, the Lumière brothers` development laid the foundation for the advanced film industry, forming the direction of cinema as a mass medium that proceeds to fascinate and motivate groups of onlookers around the world. “In 1895, Auguste and Louis Lumiere designed an even more audience-accessible device, which they called the Cinematographer, a multi-image projector that could display 16 frames a second.” (Lesso par.7) Without their spearheading work, the cinematic scene would need the comprehensive and communal angles that characterize moviegoing involvement nowadays, highlighting the significant effect of the Cinématographe on the advancement of film.

In spite of the fact that Thomas Edison and the Lumiere brothers were at first doubtful about the life span of movement pictures, they saw potential advertisement openings in this developing form of amusement. They held the conviction that the interest with moving pictures would be short-lived, seeing them as a passing oddity. Be that as it may, they also recognized the potential showcase openings accessible amid this period of intrigue, provoking them to capitalize on the rising medium in spite of their skepticism about its long-term practicality.

1.1.2. An Overview of Cinema Evolution Through History:

Cinema is more than the entirety of its specialized developments and artistic expressions. It may be a significant means of communication, a channel through which the substance of humankind is extricated and transmitted. Cinema, like dialect itself, is an immersive substance, encompassing watchers within the texture of what it implies to be human, and giving a window into the collective awareness of a specific time.

Through the crystal of cinema, not as it were to witness history, occupy it, encountering the horde complexities of human condition in all its brilliant wonderfulness and deplorable loss of hope. And so, as it is navigating the records of cinematic history, which are reminded that behind the blazing outlines lies a profound embroidered artwork of human encounter, holding up to be investigated and caught on.

The pivotal role in seeing and interpreting the world is played by human minds. Understanding what is happening around their minds and making sense of encounters are encouraged by them. Sometimes, perceptions and elucidations have the potential to impact the unfolding of occasions, thus forming the world itself. So, the experiences of those exceptional events frequently provoke comparisons to scenes from a motion picture, as this comparison is the closest guess to capturing the escalated effect of the minute. (Moving Picture 4) Undoubtedly, cinema serves as a go for the encounter of the world, advertising a focal point through which it makes sense of the complexities that encompass us. Within the act of narrating,

cinema not only reflects reality but also makes a difference in shaping it, affecting recognitions, convictions, and desires. In these minutes, the lines between reality and fiction are obscured, and reminded of the significant effect that cinema has on collective awareness. In this way, the enchantment of cinema rises above the boundaries of the screen, saturating its presence and improving a well understanding of the world around us.

The significant impact of cinema on the discernment of the world is obvious in its capacity to shape reality's understanding. From its initiation to the display day, Hollywood has played a significant role in forming collective awareness, advertising experiences into human involvement and affecting understanding of the world around us.

1.1.3 The development of Hollywood From Golden Age Dominance to Worldwide Impact

The Golden Age of Hollywood, a famous age within the archives of cinema, was characterized by the power of eight impressive studios and underscored by an arrangement of significant exchange choices that permanently formed the direction of the film industry. This period, characterized by an interesting beneficial interaction between studios and theatergoer's, checked the apex of Hollywood's impact and social centrality. However, in the midst of this eminence, the development of TV as an overwhelming shape of amusement proclaimed a seismic move, challenging the built-up arrangement and requiring a re-calibration of industry procedures. As major studios hooked with the infringing danger of television and looked for to realign with advancing audience's inclinations, the industry found itself at a junction, wavering on the brink of change "The Golden Age of Hollywood began to falter by 1948 and fully came to an end by the 1960s"(Maher par.6) Enter to the New Hollywood, a progressive period checked by an essential reconfiguration of control flow inside the industry. Leaving aside the centralized specialist of makers that characterized the Golden Age.

The New Hollywood introduced a period where chiefs and stars used exceptional impact, forming imaginative preparation and cultivating an environment of brave experimentation. This worldview moved not as it freed producers from routine limitations but also proclaimed an unused period of imaginative expression and development “The next decade would become another creative renaissance for the film industry known as The New Hollywood. Like the Golden Age which rose from the ashes of the Great Depression and the rise of synchronized sound” (Moving Picture 17) However, maybe the foremost profound change seen by Hollywood in later decades has been its advancement into a worldwide social constraint. The globalization of Hollywood speaks to a fantastic worldview move, as the industry rises above geological boundaries and social isolates to become an omnipresent nearness within the lives of individuals around the world. Empowered by headways in innovation and communication, Hollywood has transformed from an overwhelmingly American-centric substance into a around the world wonder with far-reaching effect. “Back in 1983, 90% of all-American media was controlled by more than 50 distinct companies. By 2012, that same percentage was controlled by just 5. By 2019, it was down to 4: Comcast, Disney, AT&T and National Amusements.” (Moving Picture 18). This transformative travel has been checked by an arrangement of watershed minutes, from the combination of media combinations to the expansion of cross-cultural collaborations.

As Hollywood studios progressively accomplice with universal generation companies and ability, they clear the way for the creation of substance that reverberates with different audience on a worldwide scale. This merging of societies and concepts not as it were improving the cinematic scene but too underscores the significant impact used by Hollywood in forming worldwide talk and recognitions.

1.2 Exploring Film Theories: Cultural Film Theory and Psychoanalytic Film Theory

1.2.1 An Overview to Film Theory:

Movies are not about excitement; they are subjects of logical investigation, which makes them an imperative portion of scholarly film pondering, as scholarly theory and semiotics are vital in their areas. To highlight, “Film theory is a scholarly pursuit, that attempts to explain the essence of what film is.”(Fritts par.1) Analysts frequently select movies related to their interface and start analyzing distinctive viewpoints such as characters, writings, and classes "It both reflects and provides commentary on the society it came from. Thus, in the academic world, Film Theory is a branch of Film Studies. As such, it is related to Literary Theory and Semiotics.” (Fritts par.1). This broadens the scope of investigation, permitting more profound investigation into differing subjects through the focal point of cinema. Additionally, in analyzing movies, plunging into many key ranges is essential.

To begin with, seeing how they visually affect audience, this can be called a stylish examination. At that point, investigating how movies reflect the time they were made in, considering the culture, political issues, and occasions of the past, that's authentic examination. Regularly, this is often the essential of the film theory “They analyzed the mechanisms at play, which could provide meaning and impact for the viewer. More specifically, they studied what makes film stand apart as its own distinct art form.” (Fritts par.4) Thus the world of film theory and investigation lays an establishment for considering the complex ways in which movies meet with society. This understanding not as it were highlighting the essence of film-making, but moreover clears the way for investigating the significant impact that movies have in forming and reshaping culture and the complexities of human psyche.

Shedding lights on cultural film Theory and psychoanalytic film theory. For some film theorists, Freudian psychoanalysis forms the foundation of their research. In addition to that, film theory serves as the essential central focus through which to decipher and get it the

craftsmanship of Cinema. it incorporates a bunch of focuses, expanding from formalist approaches to sociocultural examination. Among the diverse branches of film theory, two recognizable ideal models stand out in cultural film Theory and psychoanalytic film Theory with the center.

1.2.2 Overview of Psychoanalytic Film Theory:

The human psyche is like a box; it may preserve anything in front of it unconsciously. Freud's most famous contributions were his accounts of the unconscious, subjectivity, and sexuality. "Psychoanalytic theories of art have focused on the relationship between the creation of art, sexuality, and unconscious mental life, and a great deal of both film and literary criticism has used psychoanalytic theory to interpret texts or genres of texts" (Cox et al. 1) From this aspect, the theories used in psychoanalytic film theory about art dive into how sexuality, and the unconscious are influenced by art and vice versa. Many researchers utilize these theories to decipher both movies and writing, shedding light on more profound implications inside writing.

Firstly, according to Freud Large aspects of human mind remain unconscious; that is, the subject is unaware of the nature of certain troubling concepts, and it often takes significant effort to bring them to consciousness. The ego, under the command of the super-ego, or conscience, will inhibit or keep undesirable thoughts out of consciousness (Creed 2) Thus, the unconscious of a human could not differentiate or discriminate what it should keep and what it must get rid of. The same case if it comes to movies, the unconscious is receiving ideas and scenes; however it can not control the way the brain translate what it receive, later on all what has been abandoned by the brain will appear in the human actions; unconsciously as well "In Freud's 4ew, repression is the key to understanding the neuroses repressed thoughts can manifest themselves in dreams, nightmares, slips of the tongue, and forms of artistic activity."(Creed 2) Accordingly, critics delve into the unconscious more in order to understand

the relation between both; movies and the human psyche, to know to what extent movies may influence the psyche and this undoubtedly will appear on the attitudes of the person.

1.1.3 Overview of Cultural Film Theory:

Cultural film theory is how the movies are affected by the culture and how it affect the culture itself, it may seem complicated but through focusing on that different cultures are exposed to the film this will be obvious and clear; to understand that the movie is affecting the culture and affected by culture, “Cultural film theory focuses on how films reflect the culture in which they are made with a goal of understanding how meaning is constructed in a society’s social, historical, political, economic, and religious context.”(Bellmore, Mark par.1) Beside talking about the producer, he is also a part of a society in which a specific culture has influenced it previously, so through the media he tries to spread his own ideas. Cultural film theory not as it were dismembering the corresponding relationship between movies and the societies that create and devour them, moreover it highlights the filmmaker's role in sustaining and challenging social standards, making it a pivotal focal point for understanding the complex transaction between cinema and society.

Culture and mass media are related in one way or another, one has a great impact on the other; however, this impact may be debatable. Many theorist like Stuart Hall specialized in cultural studies proves that the influence may happen interchangeably between them both the owner of the film, and the audience, “Hall’s article “Encoding, Decoding” (1993) was also laid the foundation in restructuring reception studies in the realm of cinema” (Python 79) In his article he highlight how the audience can decode what they perceive from the movie through a theory called “the reception theory” He devised reception theory to examine how media messages are encoded and decoded. His theory of reception “encoding and decoding” delving into how the affection between movies and culture is interchangeably in term of ,the producer aim to encode messages that the audience must decode In the media communication domain, the audience can be seen as the receiver of the television (or other medium's) message and the

source of information (Hall 3). Stuart divided the messages that the audience receives through media into three main positions the dominant, the oppositional, and the negotiated reading.

The dominant, signifies that “ The decoder decode the text according to how the encoder encoded it” (Benshoff 16) it implies that when somebody tries to get it a message, they do so by looking at how the individual who sent the message planning it to be caught on. So, the way a message is received depends on how it was sent within the to begin with. The oppositional according to Hall “Is including reflecting and rebelling. Such audience are unwilling to illustrate the connotation and meaning of the information in the way set by the producer, nonetheless, to decode “in a contrary way” (Hall 515-516) In other terms, this implies that a few individuals, when they get data, do not fair accept it as it is given. But the audience may decode it in an unexpected way than the producer who shared it was planning. The last one which combines both of the other two positions “the decoder understood the message partly based on the meaning that media prompts, and partly based on one's own social background.” (Wang,155). They might concur with a few viewpoints of the message since it adjusts with the common convictions in their societies.

From film theory to the 2023 Barbie movie, it's imperative to investigate how distinctive perspectives shape our understanding of movies. The Barbie movie serves as a case of how movies may reflect cultural background, also attempting to upgrade and progress their image. Despite these efforts, the film has confronted feedback for a few angles, which appears how movies can now and then both back and challenge societal standards. This can be particularly true when movies address subjects related to feminism, as they frequently incite a wide run of responses and highlight progressing wrangles about almost gender roles and correspondence in society.

1.3 Feminism's Historical Background and the Rise of Radical Feminism

1.3.1 Feminism's Origins

Feminism history extends back to the late 18th century. Although the word “Feminism” itself was coined within the late 19th century, the roots of feminism driven by wrangles about and battles for equity and uniformity in different circles of life. The beginnings of Feminism are profoundly interwoven with broader social and political changes. Within the late 18th century, mental and extremist ladies began to challenge the existing standards and parts relegated to them. This period saw a surge in talks about around who can be considered a citizen and what rights and duties came with citizenship (Delap par.1)

These discourses were not as it were approximately the political rights of people but too almost challenging different shapes of oppression, counting the persecution of ladies by men. Amid the French Transformation, the republican convictions around sway included early feminism's ideas. Radicalism, with its accentuation on individual independence, and early idealistic communism, which tested with radical thoughts almost property, marriage, and societal structure, also given rich ground for feminist talk (Delap par.6).

Feminist thoughts were not kept to radical developments. Traditionalist developments of the time too advertised stages for ladies to state their visions and take on administration parts. For case, devout recoveries in both Islamic and Christian traditions made openings for ladies to voice their suppositions and claim their rights as researchers and property holders, in spite of at the same time fortifying conventional gender roles (Delap par.6)

Lucy Delap have affirmed that the 20th century was checked by noteworthy rough political and social changes, which given modern openings for feminist thoughts to flourish. Anti-colonial developments, racial equality campaigns, and different shapes of pan-nationalism all advertised spaces for ladies to advocate for sex equality.

Women were habitually situated at the cutting edge of these developments, either as images of national personality or as dynamic members in resistance endeavors. These assorted political and mental conventions contributed to the improvement of different shapes of feminist thought, collectively alluded to as feminisms. It is pivotal to recognize that there is no single feminist point of view; or maybe, there are different ways of considering approximately women's strengthening and gender justice.

1.3.2 Emergence of Radical Feminism:

In the 1970s, radical feminism which has risen as unmistakable and persuasive strand inside the broader feminist development. Radical feminists looked for to create an inclusive and trans-historical account of women's abuse beneath global patriarchy, pointing to make a premise for all-inclusive sisterhood (Weedon 49). This sisterhood was established on the shared encounter of abuse, rising above contrasts of lesson, race, and ethnicity.

Radical woman's rights emphasized the idea that "the individual is political," breaking down the separate between private and open circles and centering on the individual as a key location for political activity (Weedon 27). This perspective highlighted how women's individual encounters of their bodies, sexuality, and regenerative rights were profoundly political issues, controlled and ruled by patriarchal structures.

Radical feminists contended that patriarchy was a set of control relations that looked for to preserve men's control over women's sexuality, labor, and parenthood. They accepted that women's subordination was established in men's control of female sexuality and their dominance in social educate (Mandel 32). To realize genuine freedom, radical feminists contended that patriarchy required to be totally destroyed.

Key issues for radical feminists included viciousness against ladies, sexual independence, and regenerative rights. These points were central to radical feminist writings from the late 1960s ahead and proceed to be critical in feminist talk nowadays (Weedon 27). The beginnings

of woman's rights are profoundly established in verifiable battles for justice and balance, with noteworthy commitments from both radical and preservationist developments.

The late 18th century checked the beginning of a more organized feminist awareness, which advanced through the 19th and 20th centuries. Radical Feminism, with its accentuation on all inclusive sisterhood and the individual as political, emerged as a capable constrain within the 1970s, pushing for the destroying of patriarchal structures to realize genuine gender equity. The differing conventions and developments that have contributed to feminist thought emphasize the complexity of the feminist battle for strengthening and correspondence.

1.3.3 Feminism and Psychoanalytic Film Theory:

Psychoanalytic film theory, grounded in Freudian principles, has essentially affected feminist film theory, especially through the focal point of Laura Mulvey's spearheading work. Mulvey's paper "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" laid the establishment for feminist psychoanalytic film researchers to investigate how cinema propagates patriarchal values and develops gender personalities. These researchers dive into the complex interaction between cinematic strategies and the intuitive fortification of sexual introduction standards. This paper looks at the joining of feminist and psychoanalytic viewpoints in film theory, highlighting how feminist scholars evaluate and extend upon Freudian concepts to address the subtleties of sex representation in cinema.

Freud's investigation of the unconscious has been urgent in understanding female sexuality, giving a system for feminist evaluates of therapy. As Rosine notes, "Freud's disclosure of the oblivious is centrally connected to the consider of female sexuality. In tuning in to the hysterics, Freud gave them a voice and credited a meaning to what they said" (Rosine par.1). Freud's consideration to female insanity, yet disputable, opened roads for feminist researchers to examine the ways in which women's voices and encounters are developed and deciphered in psychoanalytic talk.

Moreover, feminist researchers have too critiqued Freud's hypotheses for their characteristic sex predispositions. Issues such as the affiliation of manliness with action and gentility with lack of involvement, the concept of penis envy, and the accentuation on the fatherly part have been focuses of dispute. Rosine expounds the problematic between feminisms and Freudian psychoanalysis on " The separation between the genders... and the accentuation on the part of the father as restricted to feminists' reassessment of the mother-daughter relationship" (Rosine par.2). These evaluates highlight the ought to reassess conventional psychoanalytic concepts to superior get it and speak to female subjectivity and office.

One critical commitment of psychoanalytic theory is the refinement between the psychic and anatomical substances of sex. Rosine states, "Therapy kept up that the psychic reality of sex had to be recognized from the anatomical reality, that there was no one-to-one relationship between science and brain research" (Rosine par.4). This refinement underscores the idea that sex personality isn't simply a natural build but is formed by mental and social factors. This viewpoint adjusts with the feminist see that sex may be a performative and liquid concept, challenging the unbending parallel understanding of male and female personalities.

Unlike to Freud's accentuation on inner phantasies and protest connections, interpersonal scholars like Jean Pastry specialist Mill operator and Carol Gilligan center on women's social qualities. Rosine focuses out, "From the interpersonal school of examination, emphasize women's traits of relatedness, sympathy, and nurturance which are seen as depreciated within the male-dominated culture" (Rosine par.11) These scholars contend that the social debasement of ladylike characteristics sustains gender imbalance and call for a revaluation of these traits inside psychoanalytic and social settings.

French psychoanalytic and feminist speculations advance extend on the relationship between the oblivious and sex character. Rosine highlights that French scholars emphasize

"oblivious fantasies and crave and an endeavor to find a dialect to specific the ladylike" (Rosine par.15). This approach recognizes the ease and flimsiness of character as molded by oblivious wants, challenging settled ideas of sex. The center on finding a dialect to articulate feminine encounters underscores the significance of representation and voice in feminist psychoanalytic theory.

Feminist psychoanalytic film theory builds upon and critiques Freudian standards to investigate the complexities of sex representation in cinema. By analyzing the ways in which cinematic procedures fortify or challenge patriarchal values, feminist researchers give basic experiences into the development of gender characters. The exchange between feminist and psychoanalytic viewpoints enhances people's understanding of the unconscious elements at play in social representations, highlighting the require for more comprehensive and nuanced depictions of gender in film.

1.4 The Power of Film: *Barbie* Movie Development From a Doll to a Historical Model

1.4.1 The Barbie Historical Development

Girls used to play with Baby dolls before Ruth Handler invented the Barbie doll in the early 1950's; she was inspired by a German doll called Bild Lilli. Arguably, playing with baby dolls will limit the imagination and the inspiration of girls when they grow up; the doll was invented in order to make a new path for the girls ,unlimited path to be other things rather than being only being mothers "Handler had the rather revolutionary idea that playing with dolls modeled on grown-up women would help girls imagine what they might be when they grew up"(Dockterman par.4)

By time the Barbie Doll passed through lots of changes, from a simple doll you can dress what you want until a woman can be whatever she wants reflecting shifts in societal beliefs and social desires. "Someday I'm gonna be exactly like you... till then... I'll make you believe I'm you." So went the dulcet tones of Barbie's first ever TV advert in 1959." (Dockterman par.2)

Barbie has transitioned from an image of customary excellence to a winner of differences and strengthening, rousing eras of children to dream huge and oppose generalizations. Through continuous advancement and adjustment, Barbie proceeds to advance, symbolizing advance and the boundless conceivable outcomes of creative abilities. It takes 64 years after the invention of the Barbie Doll, to create the Barbie Model through the film that was shown in the summer 2023, this delay in producing the real Barbie figure may be due to several reasons, including “Mattel has been incredibly cautious when it comes to its most valuable asset and rightly. Barbie has spent much of her history as the bestselling doll in the world.”(Dockterman par.6)

The plot of the Barbie film revolves around the eponymous character, played by Margot Robbie, and her journey of self-discovery. Barbie lives in Barbie land, a matriarchal society populated by unmistakable adjustments of Barbies, Kens, and ceased models. Though the Kens spend their days at the shoreline, the Barbies hold prestigious businesses in several areas. Barbie, is the primary transcendent Barbie in Barbie-land but starts encountering an existential emergency. She must travel to the human world to urge and discover herself with knowledge, Ryan Gosling, joining her on this trip. Within the genuine world, Barbie meets Sasha, her human proprietor, and finds that her existential emergency was caused by Gloria, Sasha's mother and a Mattel worker, who began playing with Sasha's ancient Barbies. Barbie, Sasha, and Gloria return to Barbie land, where they find that insight has influenced the other Kens to require over and inculcate in the Barbies' psyches. Barbie, with the assistance of her friends, must spare Barbie-land and re-establish its matriarchy; all of that under the idea of underestimating the men’s roles.

Mattel was dealing with the Barbie doll in a very sensitive way, especially when it became the most famous doll in the whole. Mattel cannot risk for any portrayal of Barbie on screen would be inherently fraught, and the company hasn't always had a sense of humor about its

iconic doll. In simple words, Mattel supposed to carefully overhaul Barbie to coordinate today's values while still keeping her adored charm as a childhood toy. This implies they ought to get social changes, tune in to input from clients, and remain committed to advancing messages of strengthening and inclusivity through the Barbie brand.

In spite of Mattel's efforts to secure Barbie's picture, the film discharged within the summer of 2023 has confronted feedback for a few of its thoughts, which might appear new to the audience around the world. “Beyond the glitz of the silver screen, "Barbie" delves into a range of controversial themes, including consumer culture, growing up, parental relationships, and gender dynamics.” (Putri par.4) The *Barbie* movie is disputable since it presents thoughts that not everybody concurs with. A few individuals may feel foreign toward some ideas that the movie presents. Particularly when it challenges conventional convictions about things like gender roles. This leads to wrangles about whether the movie's messages are great or terrible, and how they might influence watchers.

1.4.2 Critics on The *Barbie* Movie 2023:

All movies face positive and negative critics. In the end it is the way to achieve high quality in the production of movies. The *Barbie* movie 2023 received a bunch of critics due to the controversies and some ideas which may be foreign to the audience around the world, as neglecting the men's role, make the women handle the responsibility of everything.

One example of the negative reviews on the movie, the founder of Movie Guide, Ted Baehr, declared how bad this movie is, as he said in his interview with CBN “The movie is worse than you could possibly expect; it's hardcore propaganda” (CBN 00:00:29). An article was written under the title “Do not take your daughter to Barbie” by Ted Baehr. He is a westerner and he criticized what they aim to present on this movie ,as the founder of Movies-Guide mentioned what has been shown in the first minutes of them *Barbie* movie, Ted said on his interview: “and the first few minutes it's got a bunch of little girls playing with little baby

dolls now I have got 17 grand children and the most of them are little girls and they love playing with baby dolls and the girls take the baby doll and bush them and slap them and say we don't have to be mothers anymore” (CBN 00:00:54). Those foreign ideas in critics’ eyes may affect young girls negatively not only in neglecting the men’s role, but also, they may become aggressive in their dealing; as it is familiar, the first thing that helps in rearing kids on a well-structured norm is cartoons and movies.

Others like Ross Bonaime, the Senior Film Editor at Collider and critic, thinks that the *Barbie* movie handle a new idea that combine between femininity and sexism which something brings new information about what people are already familiar with, by saying: “Barbie balances the incredibly pointed specificity of the jokes and relatability of *Lady Bird*, with the celebration of women and the ability to show a new angle of something we thought we knew like we saw with Gerwig’s take on *Little Women*. Gerwig and Baumbach manage to make this not feel like a toy ad, but rather, a discussion of sexism and womanhood that’s also hysterical and extremely odd.”(Bonaime par.6)

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study of film theory demonstrates the multifaceted nature of cinema as cultural heritage, intellectual language and catalyst for social change. From the depths of ignorance to the richness of cultural landscapes, films reflect the complexity of human existence. The analysis of the *Barbie* movie 2023 shows the film's profound impact, provoking debate and reflection on gender. As cinema and society continue to evolve, film theory remains a tool for addressing the complexities of the cinematic experience. Film theory not only enriches the understanding of film through analysis and critical evaluation, but also contributes to an ever-evolving human culture and understanding.

Chapter Two: Psychoanalytical Reading of Film Impact on Human Psyche

Introduction:

There are several ways, for humans to express their thoughts Sigmund Freud summed them up as follows “Repressed thoughts can manifest themselves in dreams, nightmares, slips of the tongue, and forms of artistic activity.” (Creed 2) As an example the most well-known artistic activities nowadays are the movies’ industry and cinema. The bond between cinema and the unconscious seems thus a significant and indivisible; both communicate with the viewers through the pictures.

Cinema in numerous regards, appears tailor-made to investigate the domains of the obscure, the secretive, and the unconscious inside the human. Among all the expressions, it stands for its capacity to form movies reflects the work of subconscious. For producers and audience, cinema serves as an uncommon medium to associate with the profundities of the audience’s internal selves. The prevalence of cinema through history affirms the audience's need to examine their preposterous and cloud universes through the immersive medium of film.

2.1 Movies Role in Shaping Humans’ Thinking

The movies' impact may be greater on the audience than its owner; simply the owners are already influenced by the ideas presented on the movies, in which they may be positive as well as negative “Gabbard (2001:7) describes some films as “reflective of the film-maker’s subjectivity...[as] a canvas in which the director attempts to work through and repair problematic childhood experience and conflicts.”(Cox et al. 8) In which this later confirm that the owner of the movie is already influenced by the works’ ideas. From a Freudian psychoanalytical perspective; if the unconscious receives ideas; these thoughts directly will turn into a repressed desire. “Many of Freud's theories have been used in film theory: the unconscious; the return of the repressed; Oedipal drama; narcissism; castration; and hysteria.” (Creed 2) The great deal will be on the most important part on the human particularly the part

that hiddenly manipulate and control human's attitudes which is the core focus of the psychoanalysis of Freud that is :“His most important contributions were his accounts of the unconscious” (Creed 2) According to Freud the psyche is divided into three parts id, ego, and superego), one controls the other, and one limits the actions of the other. The ego is a highly conscious part of the psyche; that is to say that the ego is the part that controls the unconscious; Id and superego.

However, not all humans have a strong will that helps them control their acts resulting from those desires, especially if they watch something which has great relation with their thoughts and desires they will fall into the trap; unable to handle the control of their desires “We are not the rational, transparent self-knowing creatures we generally take ourselves to be. Art too is uretic.” Art indeed “ functions, though not exclusively, to satisfy psychological needs of artists and audience, and related artists to the audience in virtue of common desires and satisfying phantasies.”(Cox et al. 7) From this perspective it is so relatable how great the impact of the unconscious in humans' actions also in a highly unconscious way, to be more precise human beings are not rational like they seem to be, that is to say their desires control their actions; by deeper psychological needs.

Furthermore, movies are the reflection desires of the producer that serves the unconscious desire of the audience. They are a way to please the repressed thoughts of the audience, in which it's common between the creators and the audience. From a Freudian psychoanalytic point of view “Desires and fantasies, along with the artist's often unconscious intentions, as necessary for interpreting film and for understanding spectatorship (e.g. spectator satisfaction).” (Cox et al. 7-8). In clear language, movies have great effect on how human creatures see themselves and the world, it is just like the self picture; forming through what they watch and receive, their connection with movies shapes the states of mind as well as the human associations. Through

describing and character portrayal, movies serve as able devices for consideration and shaping acknowledgments of the human experience.

The impact of movies on the human mind demonstrates the movie's essential role in digging into sentiments and feelings. Freudian psychoanalysis proposes that all that's kept inside the oblivious will be made in art, as movies. Centering on a specific example, the study and examination of *Barbie*, and exactly the characters that challenges the normal and shows all what is foreign, may lead to a profound understanding of how movies shape and reshape the human mind through the unconscious and how art and humans associate with each other.

2.2 Characters Represents Catalyst for Attitude Changes in *Barbie*

In the movie, while the stereotypical Barbie and the other Barbie characters take in charge of all the roles of the society, President Barbie, Lawyer Barbie, Doctor Barbie, Nurse Barbie, Saleswoman Barbie. The Kens' are extremely neglected. They do not even mention where they live; in a scene at 00:56:24 a character named Sasha said: "So each Barbie like have their own house. where do the kens live?" Barbie answered her 'I don't know'. Their marginalization was not only due to the fact that they do not occupy important roles in society, but rather the simplest right of them to own homes was taken away from them. Even in the movie the role of Kens, on the beach or standing around doing nothing but watching Barbies.

Ken's role is running after pleasing Barbie in a way that shows him inferior and satisfied with this case while hers is holding the whole responsibility. This may seem unfair for woman to take charge of all the matters, whether big or small, or even marginalizing the man by making him a shadow of the woman. This is what both of them represented in the movie. Barbie represents a strong, independent woman who can do whatever she wants, and Ken represents the man who hinders her from doing all of this.

Manipulating roles in the film may lead to great imbalance among viewers, especially since the conflict between the roles of women and men is an idea and the idea never dies. There

is inevitably some kind of challenge on the part of the man, and this is something that cannot be denied. In the movie, a worker at Mattel at 01:46:56 wonders: “Am a man with no power, does that make me a woman?” Empowering the role of specific gender have to do always with diminishing the other’s capacities, so the movie keeps showing the man as either superior to women or inferior to her.

The impact of this may be greater than it seems to be, because the movie doesn’t stop on only neglecting the men, but showing him in a very feminine way. “Indeed, researchers suggest that male youth are at risk of endorsing the muscular body ideal and engaging in appearance-related social comparisons” (Nesbitt et al. 14) This understanding dive into a significant viewpoint regularly dominated in discourses around media affect, especially the movie field, the depiction of male characters. It proposes that how male characters are portrayed in movies, particularly when depicted in ways customarily connected with womanliness, might hold more profound suggestions than commonly recognized. Instead of basically neglecting male characters, movies appear to require an extra step by displaying them in a way closer to characteristics regularly related with gentility. This depiction might altogether affect young men who are still exploring their personalities and ideas of manliness.

The analysts explain the danger experienced by male youth as the support of the strong body, and associated in appearance related with social comparisons. Basically, when male characters are reliably portrayed as strong and physically idealized, it passes on a powerful message to youthful watchers that such traits are not as attractive but vital for acknowledgment and approval. Thus, youthful men may internalize these messages, feeling influenced to comply with these unreasonable benchmarks, possibly driving to issues such as body disappointment, reduced self-esteem, the selection of negative behaviors like intemperate workout or disordered eating. To sum up what has been mentioned above, in movies the accentuation on appearance

may develop a destructive culture of comparison, where people persistently gage themselves against an unattainable benchmark, worsening sentiments of insufficiency and self-doubt.

The impact of Barbie will not be on girls only, but rather it is intended to be watched by males and females “Barbie dolls have been criticized for providing young girls with a tangible physique-salient representation of unrealistic female body shapes.” (Nesbitt et al.1) The statement focuses on how Barbie dolls, have been criticized for presenting young ladies with stereotypical body shapes. These stereotypical images that may create a kind of perfection body picture in their mindsets that doesn't suit with bodies because human beings are exposed to many changes in their bodies due to the hormones, which can make girls feel like they have to be seen in a certain way to be excellent. When girls play with dolls or when they focus with the movie's scene and actors and how perfect they are, they might begin comparing themselves to these perfect measures. This may make them feel terrible about their bodies, like their bodies do not degree up those measures.

2.3 Characters Standing for Challenges of Gender Role

2.3.1 Barbie and Women’s Representation

Regardless of the gender, all people have the right to receive and the duty to maintain their rights. Each individual has the independence to select their own role without being forced into activities they don't wish to embrace. It is totally satisfactory for people to share roles and duties. However, the 2023 Barbie movie presents a stark differentiate to this perfect. The film portrays an overstated situation where conventional gender roles and desires are regularly increased or subverted, highlighting the continuous battle and talk encompassing gender uniformity and individual independence. Through its story and character flow, the movie highlights the complexities and pressures that emerge when societal standards are both challenged and fortified.

At the beginning of the movie the storyteller comments, at 00:01:23 about the little girls playing with dolls, recommending that their impersonation of parenthood may be agreeable as it were incidentally, suggesting an inconspicuous belittlement of the maternal part by saying, "The girls played with them could only ever play at being mothers, which can be fun at least for a while anyway, ask your mothers." This scene may be supported by moving to the girls destroying their dolls, and the Barbie model showed laughing proudly.

The narrator clearly assumes at 00:02:57 "Yes! Barbie changed everything then; she changed it all again," This means that Barbie's presence affects the ideas of playing with dolls and the importance of motherhood's role and trying to change those ideas in the girls' mindset. In addition to that, at 00:03:39 the storyteller cleverly proposes that Barbie has settled all feminist and equality issues by saying: "Thanks to Barbie all problems of feminism and equal rights have been solved" But the movie clearly portrays the lack of gender equality within Barbie Land, where Ken's part remains neglected without any achievements; his own achievement happened when Barbie talks or deals with him. It may be less as she claims by saying: "Barbie has a great day everyday, but Ken only has a great day if Barbie looks a him." Showing the opposite sex in a way that he longs for even a single glance to live his day happily is not an easy matter, even for dolls. Dolls and cartoons are considered the first external source for children to learn values and how to deal with others.

The Stereotypical Barbie, starts to transform into a human being by having ideas about death and changes start to appear on her body, the other barbies suggest she go to the weird barbie; a Barbie gets neglected by her owner and becomes like a human being and worse. The Weird Barbie at 01:21:23 said to her: "If you want to be the stereotypical barbie perfect again" and accomplish her sentence by saying "or you gonna keep going funny, look at your upper thigh"; she start talking about cellulite as if the women must not have those physical changes by saying at 01:21:33 "That's cellulite that's going to spread everywhere, and then you are

gonna start getting sad and wishy and complicated” Barbie immediately screams out “NO!!!”; scientifically speaking, women throughout her life passed through lots of hormonal changes which may lead to changes that appear either her body or psychology; and this is completely normal and even if the women get depressed it’s normal as well it’s apart from those changes.

Barbie obviously represent the women in the movie; however, the movie includes controversies about the women’s perfectionism. Gloria the owner of barbie said at 01:38:00 “Am just tired of watching myself and every single other women tie herself into knot so that people will like us; and if all of that is also true for a doll just presenting a women” In this aspect, Gloria explains how exhausting it is for a woman to keep running after perfection, and this projection occurs on the woman, even if she is a doll. There is a huge contradiction between the ideas presented and what Gloria said, who in turn helped the Barbies in bringing Barbie Land back under their leadership and returning the Kens to the margins.

Barbie Representation of women is extremely foreign to what is familiar. Perfection seeking and emotions’ neglect, neither the extreme neglect of the opposite gender nor diminishing his power and abilities that makes her become a perfect woman. Women are the most remarkable traits that characterize the character of Barbie and makes unfamiliar and abnormal.

2.3.2 Midge the Pregnant Doll

Midge’s first depiction in Barbie was as her pregnant friend. This character shows changing views on motherhood, family, and gender. In the movie, her pregnancy is seen as unusual, which is very different from her reintroduction by Mattel in the 1980s as a married woman with a family. This difference raises questions about societal norms. Midge serves as a bridge between old and new representations of women and families, opening up discussions about independence and the experiences of those who feel overlooked.

Midge's depiction in the movie paved the way for thinking about gender roles and family life. Radical feminists challenge conventional thoughts of parenthood. They perceive that appearing Midge's pregnancy as an abnormal vision of parenthood. This thought interfaces to feminist psychoanalytic film theory which significantly looks at how movies fortify or challenge patriarchal values and shape gender personalities.

Freud's theories highlight how much the unconscious is influenced by repressed desires and societal norms. Midge's changing roles reflect these shifting unconscious attitudes towards female sexuality and family roles. Freud believed that repressed thoughts often surface in artistic expressions. Midge's character embodies this idea by making her pregnancy appear extraordinary. The movie evaluates the thought that ladies are characterized basically by their maternal roles.

Feminist researchers of Freud point out gender slants in his speculations. Midge's character pushes back against generalizations by talking to a livelier vision of womanhood. French feminist psychoanalytic scholars emphasize that identity is shaped by oblivious wants and isn't settled. Midge's advancing depiction highlights the significance of communicating ladylike encounters. By appearing her pregnancy as abnormal, the movie empowers the re-examining conventional gender roles and the depiction of parenthood.

Midge's role in the movie highlights her importance representation in challenging social standards. Looking at her character through feminist and psychoanalytic central focuses makes a distinction to a well understanding of the more significant components at play in how society sees gender and family. This appears the require for more nuanced and comprehensive delineations of ladies and family structures in children's media.

This character's story too permits the audience to conversation approximately freedom, particularly for those who feel ignored. Her role the Barbie world survey of the control of

representation in advancing social change. It energizes the watchers to think around how characters in media can reflect and affect the sees on gender and family.

2.3.3 Ken and Man's Representation

No one is perfect for every human must have weaknesses. Yet, stereotypically man is strong, unlike woman who is accustomed to being soft and full of femininity which does not diminish the strength of any of them. In any case, these generalizations don't tell the full story. The *Barbie* movie 2023 present something different which challenges this belief showing men as enormously sensitive and women as outstandingly strongly. This delineation was stereotypical of what is displayed in movies and daily life. In reality, both men and women can have different qualities and deficiencies, and it is these restrictions that make each one of them unique with his/her own abilities.

In spite of his major role in the movie, Ken seems to be the neglected male character in the movie, who stand for men in real life. Yet, he shows the extreme opposite of how men should act or be. At 00:09:03 Ken tried his best to impress Barbie by surfing but he fails down immediately, so two barbies go in order to get him up. His fragility shows up on saying: "You are so strong", logically speaking it is an arbitrary action if someone falls, he can get up easily even if he was a baby why this much of diminishing the men's abilities. The nurse informs him that: "You should heal up in no time, actually on the time that takes me to say that sentence you healed" at 00:11:04 just to ensure that the injury was not that harmful or dangerous; however, Ken's reaction was exaggerative compared to what happened to him. They do not underestimate only the physical abilities, also on the men's IQ, when Ken went to the real world with Barbie to help her find her owner and fix thing. In the scene Barbie sits and asks Ken to let her think for a way that helps her find her real owner, at 00:30:20 Ken clearly said: "I hate when people think, I get so bored". He left her and started observing that in the real world men have roles, and not neglected as it is the case in the Barbie-Land, specially when he was walking in a school

and a woman asked him about time he answered her: “You respect me” at 00:42:03 it appears from his face that it is weird if a woman respect the men.

In addition to that, Ken knows well that Barbie does not respect him or likes him but he does his best to please her. At 02:28:02 Insight sings, "It doesn't seem to matter what I do, I'm always number two," followed by, "I'm just Ken; anywhere else I would be ten," at 00:27:32, highlighting his perceived irrelevance in Barbie's world, this means that he himself confesses that he doesn't have an important role to play and he is aware of this neglect.

2.3.4 The Transgender Doctor

Including Transgender actor in the movie, especially that the movie targeted kids; may be considered as risky somehow. An article written by Movie guide titled “Do Not Take Your Daughter to Barbie”, mentioned that “The new *Barbie* forgets its core audience of families and children while catering to nostalgic adults and pushing transgender character stories.” This later explains how much is unsuitable for the audience. As quoted in “TV series with transgender characters contributed to positive attitudes towards transgender persons” (Kimmerle 931). It will show children that transgender people are part of societies and deserve respect and appreciation, just like everyone else, and that this is contrary to human nature.

The trans actor and model Hari Nef characterized the Barbie doctor in the movie. When the Kens take the leadership of the Barbie land, the doctor shows extreme submission to the Kens and said: “I like being a helpful decoration.” For children, the inclusion of transgender actors in a *Barbie* movie is inherently dangerous. This is because children are naturally curious and accept diversity when it is presented to them in a positive light. That is, showing a transgender person in a positive light may reinforce this in their subconscious that it is normal to change gender. However, discussions about gender identity may raise questions that parents or caregivers must address in an age-appropriate manner, which in turn should explain to the

child that there are only two sexes, and that the genders were created as is the human being nature and should not change.

Examining the role of a transgender character inside the *Barbie* movie that seems to target kids at the first place, can open up complex subjects such as gender identity in children's media. choosing a transgender actor in order to perform a female character such as Hari Nef, in this portion, exposing children to transgender characters in a positive light can develop sense of empathy and respect towards the transgenders in general. Therefore, concerns may rise with regard to the potential influence on young audience, especially in terms of their understanding of gender and identity.

Portraying a transgender character in children's media may normalize gender move and may create a sense of confusion in children's mindset around gender identity. Shedding the light on the importance of age-appropriate between caregivers and children concerning these complex subjects. While exposing children to arranged representations can broaden their understanding of the world, it's important to supply setting to help them investigate these talks. The consolidation of a transgender character within the *Barbie* movie prompts a big role to the media in shaping societal states of intellect towards gender contrasts and the obligations of creators and caregivers in supporting children's understanding of complex issues.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Freudian psychoanalysis of the *Barbie* Movie 2023 gives the readers the opportunity to understand the relationship between the human psyche and contemporary cinema. Likewise, it explores the film representation of gender roles, and the challenges of generalizations, and the characters introduce a new level of complexity; particularly when it comes to younger audience. The *Barbie* Movie serves as a commentary on societal construction that may changed; if it reaches the limit that media start shaping the psyche. Focusing on the change, If the individual's thought has been influenced and reshaped by the media, this will

involuntarily lead to a radical change in the cultural construction, that is to say that media has the power to influence both the human psyche and the cultural construction.

Chapter Three: The Power of Movies in Shaping Human's Culture: Analysing the *Barbie* Reviews.

Introduction:

The reception of the *Barbie* offers a compelling lens through which to examine the dynamics of cultural reception, particularly through the framework of Stuart Hall's reception theory. This chapter explores the impact of media in the way that cultural constructed norms, by applying Stuart Hall's theory of reception. Likewise, it will examine how audience interpret the messages conveyed by various forms of media in the contemporary time, where media plays a role in shaping cultural norms and values.

3.1 Audience Interpretations' Role in Media

Hall's theory emphasizes the active role of audience in interpreting media texts, highlighting the ways in which meaning is constructed and negotiated within a cultural context. By analyzing the reception of the *Barbie* Movie, allows for a deeper insight into how audience engagement with cultural products. Meanings appear to be contested and negotiated. Thus, media texts seem to contribute to the shaping of cultural norms and values.

Media has been recognized as a powerful force in shaping cultural norms, spread ideas, values, and representations that may influence how individuals act or think towards themselves and others. Stuart Hall's reception theory implement that meaning is not inherent in media texts but is actively constructed by audience through their interpretation. Stuart Hall's reception theory pave the way for a valuable study that helps for great understanding on how audience interact with media and how do they construct meaning within their cultural background. Central to Stuart Hall's reception theory is the idea that audience actively interpret and negotiate meaning when engaging with media texts. Audience bring their own cultural backgrounds, experiences, and ideologies to their interpretation, shaping how they understand and respond to

media messages. This process of interpretation is dynamic and complex, influenced by a range of factors including social context, personal beliefs.

Audience may interpret media messages in ways that align with or challenge prevailing cultural norms. For example, a television show that depicts same-sex relationships may be celebrated by some audience for its representation of foreign identities, while others may view it as controversial or inappropriate. These differing interpretations highlight the diversity of perspectives within society and the ways in which media can both reflect and shape cultural attitudes and values.

Stuart Hall's reception theory emphasizes the importance of critical engagement with media texts, recognizing that audience play an active role in interpreting and negotiating meaning. By critically examining media representations and interrogating the underlying messages and ideologies they convey, audience can challenge harmful stereotypes, promote diversity and inclusion, and contribute to positive social change.

3.2 Movie's Effect in Redefining Cultural Prospect: Gender Stereotypes' Representation

Cultural film theory delves into the intricate relationship between films and the cultures in which they are produced, aiming to unravel how meaning is constructed within the social, historical, political, economic, and religious contexts of a society (Bellmore, Mark par.1) Films, as a form of mass media, hold immense power in shaping cultural values and perceptions (Rapp par.1) The *Barbie* Movie released in 2023 serves as a pertinent example to explore the ways in which films can reshape cultural prospects. This chapter aims to analyze the impact of the *Barbie* Movie on cultural values, particularly focusing on its influence on gender stereotypes, representation, and societal attitudes

One of the essential ways in which movies impact culture is through the depiction of gender roles and generalizations, which may have negative impacts of gender stereotypes through media. According to social role theory, gender stereotypes derive from the discrepant distribution of men and women into social roles both in the home and at work (Hentschel, Tanja, et al. 2) *Barbie*, with its iconic hero, has been a subject of examination and investigation with respect to its representation of gentility and gender elements. Psychoanalytic film theory sets that media representations of sex contribute to the development and support of societal standards and desires (Bellmore, Mark par.3) *Barbie* Movie of 2023, through its account and characterizations, challenged conventional sex generalizations related with the Barbie establishment. Not at all like past cycles, which regularly delineated Barbie in cliché parts such as a fashionista or princess, the 2023 adjustment showcased Barbie as a multifaceted and enabled character.

This movie reflected broader societal developments towards gender balance and strengthening, adjusting with modern talks on woman's rights and female organization. Additionally, the *Barbie* movie presented differing representations of gentility, including characters from different cultural backgrounds and body sorts. This accentuation on differing qualities and inclusivity resounded with audience and contributed to a more nuanced understanding of gender personality and representation in standard media. As such, the film served as a catalyst for discourses encompassing gender differing qualities and acknowledgment, challenging dug in generalizations and cultivating more prominent inclusivity in well known culture.

Barbie played a significant role in forming societal states of mind towards magnificence benchmarks, connections, and individual goals. By showing Barbie as a part demonstrate for strength, desire, and self-acceptance, the film advanced values of strengthening and realness. Moreover, the *Barbie* Movie tended to topical issues such as natural preservation and social

obligation, empowering group of onlookers to reflect on their claim values and activities. Through its account topics and ethical informing, the film encouraged discourses on squeezing social issues, provoking viewers to contemplate their part in making positive changes.

Furthermore, the representation of differing characters and storylines within the *Barbie* Movie contributed to a more comprehensive social scene, challenging customary standards and cultivating sympathy and understanding over distinctive communities. This accentuation on differences not as it were reverberated with audience but moreover reflected broader shifts towards inclusivity and representation in modern media.

The *Barbie* as a compelling illustration of how movies may reshape cultural prospects and rethink societal values. Through its depiction of sex elements, representation, and topical informing, the film challenged conventional standards and cultivated a more comprehensive and cultural aspects. Cultural film theory gives a system for understanding the complicated relationship between cinema and society, highlighting the ways in which movies reflect and impact social values (Emmons & Bellmore). As mass media proceeds to advance, movies stay an effective apparatus for social expression and change, forming the cultural scene and affecting societal states of mind in significant ways.

3.2.Barbie Movie Challenges Norms: Reviews Beyond Entertainment

3.2.1 Reviews Present the Negative Effect

Hall's reception theory emphasizes the active role of the audience in interpreting and making sense of media texts. According to this framework, the meaning of a cultural product is not fixed or determined solely by the intentions of its creators, but rather emerges through the interaction between the text and its audience. Each individual brings their own social, cultural, and ideological frameworks to their interpretation, shaping how they perceive and respond to the text.

The *Barbie* movie of 2023 has sparked intense debate and criticism regarding its portrayal of gender dynamics and societal norms. By employing Stuart Hall's Reception Theory, which emphasizes the active role of audience in interpreting media texts, it becomes apparent that the movie has had a significant negative impact on cultural norms, particularly in perpetuating divisive ideologies and undermining traditional values.

Piers Morgan, a prominent critic of the *Barbie* movie, highlights the film's overt attack on masculinity, pointing out the reductionist portrayal of all male characters as simply "Ken" (Sky News 00:01:14). This oversimplification not only erases the diversity of male identities but also reinforces harmful stereotypes, contributing to a culture of gender essentialism and division. Moreover, Morgan's assertion that the movie's core focus is on dismantling the patriarchy underscores its agenda-driven narrative, which seeks to promote feminist discourse at the expense of vilifying men (Sky News 00:01:41).

Esther Krakue echoes these sentiments, criticizing the film for its lack of nuance and its attempt to indoctrinate young audience with divisive ideologies (Sky News 00:06:15). By reducing complex social issues to simplistic caricatures, the *Barbie* movie risks oversimplifying important conversations about gender equality and perpetuating harmful binaries. Additionally, Krakue's assertion that the film serves as a giant catfish (Sky News 00:15:59). Using the Barbie name to shoehorn ideological agendas into children's entertainment, further highlights its deceptive nature and potential to undermine cultural norms

Ben Shapiro's scathing critique of the movie adds another layer of concern, particularly regarding its appropriateness for its target audience of young girls. Shapiro's claim that the movie includes mature themes, such as references to landmark Supreme Court cases and sexual hints, raises questions about the ethical implications of exposing children to complex social issues without adequate context or guidance. Moreover, Shapiro's disapproval of the inclusion

of a transgender Barbie and skepticism of the movie's portrayal of the patriarchy further exemplify its divisive nature and potential to reinforce ideological biases.

France24 announces an article about the *Barbie* movie's negative impact on cultural norms is further exemplified by its reception in regions like Algeria, where it was quietly removed from theaters due to concerns over its perceived threat to societal morals (France24). This censorship highlights the global ramifications of the movie's dissemination of controversial ideologies, underscoring the need for critical engagement with media texts and their potential implications on cultural values and norms.

Accordingly, *Barbie* have had a significant negative impact on cultural norms, perpetuating divisive ideologies and undermining traditional values. Through the lens of Hall's Reception Theory, it becomes evident that the movie's portrayal of gender dynamics and societal norms has sparked intense debate and criticism, highlighting the importance of critically engaging with media texts and their potential implications on cultural values and norms. As society continues to grapple with issues of gender equality and social justice, it is imperative to scrutinize media representations and their potential impact on shaping cultural attitudes and behaviours.

In the case of Ben Shapiro's critique of the *Barbie* movie in a video, his reception of the film can be understood as a reflection of his own ideological perspective and cultural positioning. As a conservative commentator known for his outspoken views on social and political issues, Shapiro approaches the film with a particular set of beliefs and values. This predisposes him to interpret the movie in a certain way, focusing on elements that align with his worldview and critiquing those that do not.

For Shapiro, the *Barbie* movie becomes a battleground for ideological conflict, with its portrayal of gender dynamics, social issues, and cultural values serving as points of contention.

His review, characterized by its passionate condemnation of what he perceives as "woke" themes and its dismissal of the film's artistic and cultural merits, reflects his efforts to assert his own interpretation of the text and challenge alternative readings.

However, Hall's reception theory also proves that Shapiro's interpretation is just one among many possible responses to the film. Other audience may engage with the *Barbie* movie in different ways, drawing different meanings from its narrative, characters, and themes. The diverse array of reactions on social media – from mockery and criticism to support and praise, and underscores the multiplicity of interpretations that can emerge within a cultural landscape.

Given what has been said, Shapiro's reception of the *Barbie* movie serves as a case study in the complexities of cultural consumption and interpretation. It highlights the dynamic interplay between text and audience, as well as the ways in which meaning is negotiated, contested, and constructed within a socio-cultural context. By situating Shapiro's critique within the framework of reception theory, provide a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics at play in the cultural reception of media texts.

The *Barbie* movie of 2023 serves as a prime example of this phenomenon, with little substance beyond its marketing potential. Drawing insights from Greta Gerwig and Margot Robbie's discussions on the film's production, it becomes increasingly evident that the movie lacks any meaningful point beyond its commercial appeal. Margot Robbie's remarks on the global recognition and emotional resonance of the Barbie brand underscore the movie's status as a commercial enterprise (ABC News 00:00:17). Barbie, as an iconic figure, evokes nostalgia and sentimentality in audience, making it a lucrative property for exploitation in various forms of media. By capitalizing on the pre-existing brand recognition and emotional attachment associated with Barbie, the filmmakers aimed to leverage these sentiments to drive box office sales and merchandise revenue.

However, Greta Gerwig's insights into the lack of a coherent story and the daunting prospect of navigating the emotional complexities surrounding Barbie reveal the film's shallow foundation (ABC News 00:06:06). Without a compelling narrative or thematic depth, the *Barbie* movie becomes little more than a hollow shell, relying solely on its brand recognition to attract audience. Gerwig's apprehension about the potential pitfalls of the project speaks volumes about the movie's lack of substance, highlighting its superficiality and inherent commercialism.

Furthermore, Gerwig's acknowledgment of the film's "sparkiness" as both intriguing and terrifying underscores the manufactured nature of its appeal (ABC News 00:06:06). Rather than striving for artistic excellence or genuine emotional resonance, the *Barbie* movie opts for a calculated approach designed to generate buzz and capitalize on the cultural significance of its titular character. This calculated manipulation of audience emotions and expectations further underscores the film's status as a commercial product rather than a meaningful cinematic experience.

The *Barbie* movie of 2023 seems additionally to exemplify the hollow commercialism that pervades much of contemporary cinema. Despite leveraging the global recognition and emotional resonance of the Barbie brand, the film ultimately fails to offer any substantive content beyond its marketing potential. Greta Gerwig and Margot Robbie's insights into the production process shed light on the film's lack of narrative depth and thematic coherence, highlighting its superficiality and inherent commercialism. As audience continue to demand more from their cinematic experiences, it is essential to critically evaluate the motivations behind such projects and recognize them for what they truly are: commercial ventures masquerading as artistic endeavors

From the critical analysis of the *Barbie* movie's negative impact on cultural norms, it is essential to acknowledge that the film also elicited positive responses and perspectives. While

criticisms abound regarding its shallow commercialism and divisive messaging, it is crucial to examine the movie through a nuanced lens, considering both its flaws and its merits. By exploring the positive aspects of the *Barbie* movie, a more comprehensive understanding of its cultural significance and impact is gained. Ultimately, fostering a more balanced perspective on its reception and reception theory.

3.2.2 Reviews Supporting the Movie

Amidst the cacophony of criticism surrounding the *Barbie* movie of 2023, it is imperative to recognize and celebrate the film's unique merits and contributions to cinematic entertainment. While detractors may dismiss it as nothing more than a shameless commercial venture, a closer examination of reviews from respected publications like the LA Times and The Guardian reveals the nuanced charm and playful irreverence that define the movie's appeal. Despite being dismissed by some as a commercial venture, some reviews expose the movie's nuanced charm and playful irreverence, showcasing its ability to spark meaningful conversations about gender and society.

The LA Times review highlights the movie's ability to embrace its own whimsical absurdity, creating moments of sheer delight through its fast-paced humor and eccentric characterizations. Whether it's the zany antics of Kate McKinnon's Weird Barbie or the surreal spectacle of multiple dancing Kens engaged in a hypnotic dream ballet, the film reveals in its own playful silliness, inviting audience to join in the fun (LA Times). Such moments of levity serve as a refreshing departure from the film's heavier thematic undertones, offering much-needed comic relief and escapism for viewers of all ages.

Furthermore, The Guardian's review offers a nuanced perspective on the movie's commercial origins, acknowledging its status as a two-hour advertisement for the iconic Barbie brand. However, the review goes on to argue that the film transcends its commercial trappings,

drawing inspiration from classic cinematic influences such as *Toy Story*, *Pinocchio*, and *Clueless* (Bradshaw par.7) In doing so, the *Barbie* movie achieves a delicate balance between shameless promotion and genuine artistic expression, weaving together elements of nostalgia, satire, and whimsy to create a delirious bubble gum fantasy that captivates and entertains.

Indeed, Critics criticize the film's reliance on corporate sponsorship and brand synergy, particularly in its inclusion of a comic subplot featuring Will Ferrell as Mattel's CEO (LA Times). However, it is precisely these moments of corporate ribbing and self-awareness that add depth and complexity to the movie's narrative. They elevating it beyond mere commercial propaganda to a self-reflexive commentary on consumer culture and the commodification of childhood innocence.

Ultimately, the *Barbie* movie of 2023 deserves recognition for its unapologetic embrace of its own quirky charm and irreverent humor. By celebrating the iconic Barbie brand and paying homage to classic cinematic influences, the film succeeds in delivering an entertaining and amiable experience that transcends its commercial origins. As audience continue to grapple with the complexities of modern cinema, it is essential to appreciate and acknowledge the creative ingenuity and playful spirit that define the *Barbie* movie, ensuring that it receives the recognition and acclaim it rightfully deserves.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Stuart Hall's reception theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the complex dynamics of cultural reception, particularly in the context of the *Barbie* Movie of 2023. By highlighting the active role of audience in interpreting media texts and the multiplicity of meanings that emerge within a cultural context, reception theory offers intriguing insights into how films like *Barbie* are received, contested, and negotiated. As society continues to grapple with issues of representation, identity, and cultural values, reception theory

serves as a tool for critically analyzing the ways in which media texts shape and reflect the understanding of the world around us.

General Conclusion

This dissertation is an in-depth study of the media, the spectrum of ideas presented by actors and received by viewers. Focusing on the fragility of the human unconscious and the way it is easily influenced by foreign ideas, using the Freudian psychoanalytic theory of the unconscious, and the reception theory of Stuart Hall in addition to radical feminism, the study displays the ways the media messages may change the audience culture focusing on gender representation. The analysis of certain characters in *Barbie* shows how gender constructions in western society seem to eclipse the role of men and adopt radical feminist ideas as the solution to all problems faced by women in the contemporary area.

The first chapter, contains a deep historical background for the development of films since the dissertation tackles media, from the motion picture in a box to movies within unlimited time. In addition, it represents to studying the theories taken as a basis for this exploration, reception theory, psychoanalysis, and radical feminism, and their relationship to film theory on the one hand, and their relationship to the nature human's perception. Moreover, since the research concerns films, the Barbie movie was taken as a case study to apply the previously mentioned theories to it, where it delved into the historical background of Barbie and how she evolved from a doll to a model. The chapter concludes with a working plot of the film and a overall presentation of the criticism that the film was subjected to, whether negative or positive.

The second chapter, is an analysis of the depiction of gender roles that seem alien to human nature in the film and its effect on the subconscious. This is done by applying Freud's psychoanalytic theory to how the human subconscious might analyze characters that pose a challenge to what is familiar to the genders and their roles, the stereotypical Barbie, Ken, the doctor Barbie, and Midge the pregnant doll. Firstly, it shows Ken and Barbie's relationship in

a foreign way, where the stereotypical Barbie represents the perfect woman with an extraordinary beauty who ignores the presence of man's role in her life and trashes him. This man is Ken, who appears in the film as a failure and clumsy person who has nothing to do but to please Barbie and run after her to win her heart. Secondly, marginalizing the role of motherhood through the marginalization of the doll Midge appears in the movie for a few seconds and then did not appear until the end of the movie. It is confirmed in the movie that Midge is discontinued by Mattel because of her pregnancy, which is strange for a doll. That is, the representation of woman should be the same even if she is a doll. Finally, Doctor Barbie, a transgender character, clearly shows that he is not a woman, and this may have a negative impact on conservative societies where accepting such changes may become desirable and harmless. This character analysis would have been impossible without the use of Freudian theory of the unconscious.

The third chapter, is a study of the audiences' interpretation of encoding messages in films. Its basis is the reviews of the public, and critics in particular, because they are very popular, speak according to public opinion, and their opinions are considered authoritative. Firstly, this chapter based on Stuart Hall's reception theory, in exploring how Barbie moves has been received and reinterpreted by audience both negatively and positively. In addition, his theory focuses also on the audience's important role in interpreting messages that they have been received from media, taking into consideration their backgrounds and experiences. The reception of the Barbie film, based on the reviews mentioned by Ben Shapiro in the chapter, establishes the validity of Hall's theory through a wide range of interpretations and discussions of gender roles. Many reviewers view the Barbie film as a funny and silly, others shed the light on the representation of gender inequality may be non-suitable since this movie targets young audience. Inclusively, the film's reception proves the synthesis interreacting between

both media and audience, illustrating the role played by media in general and movies particularly in reshaping and challenging cultural norms.

The analysis of the movie *Barbie* can be addressed from several other points of view. For example, using the capitalist perspective may uncover the fact that women are motivated to be workaholic in order to increase the labor force. This is because the percentage of females in the world is greater than the percentage of males, so it is logical that their profit will be more. Especially when you see it from the standpoint of feminism and how they are trying to brainwash them. The idea of multiculturalism that appeared in *Barbie* can also be presented through a woman wearing a hijab, characters from Japan.

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