

## "Beyond the Dream house: Unmasking *Barbie* (2023) Movie' Subversion of Patriarchy and Stereotypes"

"مايخبؤه منزل الأحلام: كيف يخرب فيلم باربي السلطة الأبوية والصورة النمطية للمرأة"

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### Abstract:

This article delves into the nuanced feminist themes and empowering messages within the *Barbie* movie (2023). It examines how this movie has garnered both praise and criticism for its portrayal of feminist ideals, emphasizing its critique of unrealistic beauty standards and advocacy for women's autonomy to break free from patriarchal conventions. The article also explores the movie's poignant depiction of beauty standards and highlights Barbie's resonating words, "Because Barbie can be anything, women can be anything," as a compelling and recurring message. Ultimately, the article posits that the *Barbie* movie represents a complex and thought-provoking exploration of feminist themes, challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes, and asserts that it constitutes a significant stride toward improved feminist representation in media.

**Keywords:** Feminism, Movie, Patriarchy, Stereotyping, Female empowerment.

### ملخص:

يتناول هذا المقال الثيمات النسوية المعقدة والرسائل الموجهة لتمكين المرأة من خلال فيلم باربي الأخير (2023). ويفحص هذا المقال كيف حصل الفيلم على الإشادة والانتقاد لتصويره للمثل النسوية، مؤكداً على نقده لمعايير الجمال غير الواقعية ودعوته لحرية المرأة في كسر التقاليد الأبوية. كما يستكشف المقال أيضاً التصوير المبالغ فيه لمعايير الجمال في الفيلم ويسلط الضوء على عبارة باربي المؤثرة "لأن باربي يمكن أن تكون أي شيء، المرأة يمكنها أن تكون أي شيء" كرسالة قوية ومتكررة طوال الفيلم. وفي النهاية، يقدم المقال فكرة أن فيلم باربي يمثل استكشافاً معقداً ومثيراً للتفكير للثيمات النسوية، ويتحدى الأدوار الجنسانية والصور النمطية التقليدية، ويوضح أنه يشكل خطوة هامة نحو تحسين وصف المشاكل النسوية في الإعلام.

**كلمات مفتاحية:** النسوية، معايير الجمال غير الواقعية، حرية المرأة، الأدوار الجنسانية، الصور النمطية التقليدية.

## **Introduction:**

It is crucial to talk about the persistent problems of patriarchy and stereotypes in the media in today's vibrant culture. Movies, television shows, and ads are just a few examples of media platforms that have a significant influence on how we perceive the world and how society functions. Over time, patriarchy has persisted across cultures, sustaining gender inequalities, limiting opportunities for women, and upholding conventional roles and expectations. In patriarchy, men have disproportionate authority and control over women. The media has a significant impact on society, and its portrayal of harmful stereotypes, particularly of women, can reinforce existing power dynamics and contribute to a broader climate of inequality, limiting girls' and women's self-perception and aspirations and perpetuating notions that prioritize physical appearance, passivity, and reliance on men.

Addressing these issues becomes essential in the journey toward cultivating a comprehensive and just society. By carefully examining depictions in media, like those presented in the *Barbie* film, concealed biases and harmful stereotypes can be uncovered and subsequently questioned. The aim of this article is to highlight the impact of the movie *Barbie* in generating discussions about patriarchy and feminism in the broader media landscape. The article explores the narrative of the film, which follows the character "Stereotypical Barbie" portrayed by Margot Robbie, as she transitions from her pleasant life in Barbie land to the real world, revealing how the movie fights the stereotypes and subverting patriarchy and traditional gender norms. The article emphasizes the need to examine and challenge societal patterns, particularly within the context of the *Barbie* movie, in order to create a more inclusive and just media landscape that respects the diversity of human experiences. This examination illuminates the broader significance it holds in terms of reshaping media portrayals and driving societal change.

### **1.1 Story of Barbie**

Barbie was first introduced on March 9, 1959, by Mattel, Inc. Barbie was created by Ruth Handler, the co-founder of Mattel, in the late 1950s. Ruth noticed that her daughter, Barbara, enjoyed playing with paper dolls and imagined a three-dimensional doll that could inspire girls to dream and imagine. She named the doll Barbie after her daughter. Ruth faced challenges in bringing Barbie to life, including convincing her husband and business partners that there was a market for an adult-like doll. She also had to overcome resistance from toy buyers who were skeptical about the doll's potential success (Honigsberg, 1995). Despite the initial challenges, Barbie quickly became a hit. The doll's popularity soared, and sales went into the stratosphere. Ruth built the Barbie brand through aggressive television advertising and licensing agreements with companies around the world. Barbie's success helped Mattel become the largest toy company in the world. By the late 1960s, Barbie had brought in retail sales of more than half a billion dollars and had a wide range of relatives and friends (Lord, 2010).

Barbie was marketed as a teenage fashion model and was seen as revolutionary at the time, as it was the first adult-like doll designed for children. However, over the decades, Barbie has received fierce criticism for creating unrealistic body standards and promoting gender stereotypes. Criticism of Barbie's body image began as her popularity grew. Many argued that Barbie's unrealistic proportions promoted unhealthy body standards. Mattel responded by changing the body mold for Barbie on several occasions. Barbie has also been criticized for materialism, amassing cars, houses, and clothes. Barbie has faced criticism for perpetuating gender stereotypes as well. The doll was

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perceived as a "teaching tool for femininity" which represented a perfect western woman. Critics argued that Barbie's unrealistic body image and focus on fashion and beauty reinforced gender stereotypes and limited girls' aspirations (Hook, 1999).

***Figure N° 1. Ruth Handler, executive of Mattel Toy company, posing with collection of Barbie dolls (1961)***



Source: <https://digital.library.ucla.edu/catalog/ark:/21198/zz0002qg0b>

### ***1.2. Negative Receptions about the Doll Barbie***

Barbie has been a controversial figure since her creation, with some critics arguing that she promotes a sexist view of women and encourages young girls to focus on physical appearance and unrealistic body standards. Barbie's unrealistic body proportions have been a topic of concern for many years. Critics argue that they contribute to body image issues and low self-esteem among young girls. Barbie's body proportions are not only unrealistic but also physically impossible, and this can lead to confusion and unrealistic expectations among young girls about what a "normal" body should look like. Studies have shown that playing with Barbie dolls can negatively impact young girls' body image, leading to more complaints about their own bodies than girls who played with dolls that had more realistic body proportions (Gale, 2016).

In their study: *Fashion versus fitspo: The effect of viewing images of contemporary Barbie dolls in passive versus active poses on college women's body image and affect*, Jennifer B Webb, Nataya M Ford, and Meagan P Padro find that the effects of exposure to images of Barbie dolls on body image and appearance comparison in young women are harmful. The initial findings did not support the hypothesis that participants exposed to images of Barbie dolls would have higher body appreciation. However, there was some evidence suggesting that participants were more likely to compare their appearance to the Barbie dolls. The study also found that the effects may have been stronger if participants were able to touch and manipulate the dolls. Overall, the study provides initial insights into the impact of Barbie dolls on body image and appearance comparison, but further research is needed to confirm these findings.

Feminist thinkers have argued that Barbie can be seen as an icon of liberation for modern women, as she has ventured into traditionally male-dominated careers such as piloting, medicine, and entrepreneurship. However, this does not negate the potential harm that her unrealistic body proportions can cause. It is important to note that Barbie is not the only toy that can contribute to body image issues, media images and societal pressures can also play a role in shaping young girls' perceptions of their bodies. While some argue that it is not Barbie's fault that young girls internalize unrealistic beauty standards, it is important to recognize that toys and media images can have a powerful influence on young children's perceptions of themselves and the world around them (Dittmar et al., 2006). As such, it is important to be mindful of the messages that these images are sending and to promote positive body image and self-esteem in young girls.

Scholar Trinna S. Frever argues that the doll symbol represents the very social messages of dollness—and by association, girlhood, and womanhood—that circulate constantly through the popular culture in which they also participate: “Highly gendered concepts of beauty and fragility are its obvious consumer currency” (Frever, 2009, p.139). Charlotte Perkins Gilman, a feminist writer, believed that the beauty standards of women loved by men were a product of our androcentric culture. She argued that women were expected to conform to a narrow standard of beauty that was defined by men and that this standard was harmful to women's health and well-being. Gilman believed that women should be able to define their own standards of beauty and health and that they should not be judged by men's standards. She also criticized the way that women's sexuality was often defined by men and argued that women should be free to explore their own sexuality on their own terms (Gilman, 2009, p. 203).

Similarly, in “*The Beauty Myth*” by Naomi Wolf, she argues that the beauty standards imposed on women are a social construct designed to control and limit women's power and agency. The book claims that as women have gained more social and economic power, the pressure to conform to unrealistic beauty standards has intensified. This pressure leads to harmful behaviors and a preoccupation with appearance, which in turn hinders women's ability to be effective and accepted in society (Wolf, 2002, p. 187).

Barbie's extensive wardrobe and accessories have been seen also as promoting materialism and consumerism, as girls are encouraged to collect multiple dolls and outfits, leading to excessive consumption. Barbie's image as a fashion icon has been a significant part of her marketing strategy, with new outfits and accessories released regularly. This has led to a culture of collecting multiple dolls and outfits, which can contribute to excessive consumption and a focus on material possessions. Critics argue that this focus on materialism can be harmful to young girls, as it can lead to a sense of entitlement and a lack of appreciation for non-material things like experiences and relationships (Hook, 1999). However, others argue that Barbie's fashion focus can be seen as a positive thing, as it encourages creativity and self-expression. Additionally, Barbie's extensive wardrobe has been seen as a reflection of changing fashion trends and societal values over time.

Moreover, Barbie has faced criticism for its lack of diversity, particularly in terms of race and body type representation. Critics argue that this limited representation can reinforce stereotypes and exclude certain groups of children. Barbie's image as a blonde, blue-eyed, and thin doll has been the subject of criticism for decades, with many arguing that it promotes unrealistic beauty standards and reinforces Eurocentric beauty ideals (Webb et al., 2023). However, in recent years, Mattel, the

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company that produces Barbie, has made efforts to increase diversity in the doll's representation. They have launched Barbies of 22 ethnicities, 35 skin tones, and a range of body types, including curvy, tall, and small. While this has been seen as a positive step towards inclusivity, some critics argue that it is not enough and that more needs to be done to represent a wider range of body types and abilities.

***2.1. The Barbie Movie: A New Narrative***

*Barbie* (2023) follows the adventures of the titular character, a perfect and carefree inhabitant of Barbie-land, where everything is pink and perfect. However, Barbie's life takes a turn when she is expelled from Barbie-land to the real world, where she discovers that she is not as perfect as she thought. Barbie goes on a journey of self-discovery and identity, where she learns to embrace her imperfections and find her true self. Along the way, Barbie meets new friends, including a diverse cast of characters with different skin colors, body types, and abilities. Barbie-land in the movie is a utopian world where women hold positions of power and authority, while men are associated with the ambiguous occupation of "beach". The society in Barbie-land has overcome some of the key difficulties of the real world, such as the need for money in shops and medical ailments being cured instantly. People's days are filled with dance routines, driving elegant cars, and giving each other affirmation and awards. The film portrays a utopian vision of society, where some key difficulties of the real world have been overcome, even if they remain imperfect and present new challenges.

***Figure N° 2. Barbie-Land, where life is perfect***



**Source : <https://www.vox.com/culture/2023/7/12/23790929/barbie-movie-2023-barbiemania-explained>**

The central themes of the *Barbie* movie include self-discovery, identity, female empowerment, and inclusivity. The movie explores the idea that everyone is unique and special in their own way, and that imperfections should be celebrated, not hidden. The movie also challenges traditional gender roles and stereotypes and promotes the idea that girls can be anything they want to be. The *Barbie* movie departs from traditional narratives and stereotypes in several ways. First, the movie features a diverse cast of characters with different skin colors, body types, and abilities, which is not common in mainstream media. Second, the movie celebrates female empowerment and challenges traditional gender roles, portraying a world where girls hold society's important roles. Third, the



movie promotes inclusivity and celebrates differences, challenging the idea that there is only one way to be beautiful or successful.

### ***2.1. Reception and Controversies about the Movie:***

Critical receptions of the movie *Barbie* have been mixed. Some critics have praised the film's attention to detail and subversive themes, while others have criticized its lack of depth. Some of the positive reviews, including the American Film Critic Roger Ebert, who calls the movie "a visual feast that succeeds as both a gleeful escape and a battle cry," and praises its "impeccable attention to detail" (Ebert, 2023). Similarly, Rolling Stone, the famous American Magazine publishing about Pop Culture, suggests that "Barbie" may be "the most subversive blockbuster of the 21st century," and praises the film for adding "levels of intelligence and interrogation into not just the script." (Fear, 2023). The Telegraph's Robbie Collin was also positive, awarding the film four stars and describing it as "deeply bizarre, conceptually slippery and often roar-out-loud hilarious" (Collin, 2023).

According to *The New York Times*, the film has garnered mixed reviews, with some critics perceiving it as "satirically capitalistic," while others interpret it as being "capitalistically satirical" (Buchanan, 2023). *BBC News* takes a nuanced stance, acknowledging that director Greta Gerwig has skillfully left her mark on the film and unearthed deeper themes within a seemingly rigid framework; however, they also highlight the observable sacrifices made to the narrative (Youngs, 2023). In contrast, *Collider*, a divertissement website, contends that the negative reactions to "Barbie" serve to underscore the movie's intended message about the constraints of feminism. Meanwhile, *Time* provides a more critical perspective, describing the film as "very pretty but not very deep" and lamenting that it "feels like a missed opportunity" (Bonaime, 2023). These varying assessments contribute to the complex tapestry of opinions surrounding the movie's reception.

### ***3. Challenging Perfection and Breaking Stereotypes:***

The first Barbie doll hit shelves in 1959, making the iconic doll 64 years old in 2023. Ironically, in the 1950s, women's roles were largely defined by traditional gender roles and societal expectations. Women were expected to identify primarily as wives and mothers and to avoid work outside of the home. Despite this, women continued to make up a significant proportion of the postwar labor force. Women might have had the vote on the same terms as men since 1929, but for most, that was pretty well the limit of their equality. The dominant theme promoted in the culture and media at the time was that a husband was far more important for a young woman than a college degree. Although employment rates also rose for women during this period, the media tended to focus on a woman's role in the home. During the 1950s, women faced many challenges and gender inequality. Here are some of the main challenges faced by women during this period: Traditional gender roles, Limited educational opportunities, Discrimination in the workplace, Exclusion from the postwar ideal of domesticity. Despite these challenges, the 1950s was also a decade of change, when discontent with the status quo was emerging (Dicker, 2016).

It is often argued that Barbie is simply a reflection of her times, a mirror of fashion, women's roles, body image, and material consumption. What Barbie reflects is a complicated tangle of

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dominant ideologies and resistant symbolism: if Barbie is a mirror of society, it is at best a distorted and prepossessed reflection. Before 1963, when Betty Friedan defined “the problem that has no name,” a significant number of women were defying the Feminine Mystique and forging a place for themselves in the male-dominated workforce (Friedan, 1983, p.93). Barbie was created in the image of these women, the Charlotte Johnsons and Ruth Handlers of the world, whose aspirations and agency basically went unspoken. Consequently, the doll had potentially revolutionary implications from the outset by even tacitly acknowledging women’s agency and power in a wide range of settings.

The *Barbie* movie challenges stereotypes about Barbie symbolism and females in general by promoting feminist themes and female empowerment. In the movie, Barbie is portrayed as a strong and independent woman who is not defined by her looks or her relationship with Ken. At the beginning of the movie, Barbie is shown as a successful businesswoman who runs her own company and is respected by her peers. She is not portrayed as a hyper-feminine stereotype, but rather as a competent and intelligent woman. Throughout the movie, Barbie is shown as a problem solver who uses her intelligence and creativity to overcome obstacles. She is not portrayed as a damsel in distress who needs to be rescued by Ken, but rather as a capable and resourceful woman. Barbie's relationship with Ken is also portrayed in a non-traditional way. She is not defined by her relationship with him, and she is not interested in him romantically. Instead, she encourages him to find his own passions and identity. Barbie's appearance is not the focus of the movie. She is not objectified or sexualized in any way. Instead, the movie focuses on her personality and her accomplishments (Gerwig, 2023).

The *Barbie* movie also promotes the idea that women can be anything they want to be, regardless of what society expects of them. In the movie, Barbie's friends are shown pursuing different careers and hobbies. One of her friends is a scientist, another is an artist, and another is a musician. This diversity shows that there is no one way to be a woman. The movie also shows Barbie's friends supporting each other and working together to achieve their goals. They are not portrayed as rivals or enemies, but rather as a team of strong and capable women. Additionally, the movie challenges traditional gender roles by showing boys and girls playing with dolls and pursuing non-traditional interests. This scene shows that children should be free to explore their interests and passions, regardless of their gender.

Within the narrative of the *Barbie* movie, the theme of flat feet takes center stage, emerging as a pivotal plot point that serves as a symbolic departure from the conventional Barbie image. Unlike her plastic counterpart, Barbie, who is accustomed to having impeccably arched feet, grapples with the challenges of walking due to her flat feet. This physical attribute becomes a metaphorical crossroads for the character, representing her divergence from the established norms. To navigate this newfound challenge, Barbie encounters "Weird Barbie," a character brought to life by the talented Kate McKinnon. In a moment of decision, "Weird Barbie" presents our protagonist with a compelling choice: conform to societal expectations by donning heels or embrace her flat feet and embark on an unconventional adventure. This intriguing subplot delves into the complexities of conformity and the pervasive pressure to fit into predetermined molds, all the while challenging prevailing notions of perfection and individuality. The narrative cleverly references the iconic Barbie pose characterized by arched feet but subverts this well-known image, prompting audiences to reconsider and question established ideals in the pursuit of a more authentic self. In

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doing so, the movie skillfully navigates themes of identity and self-acceptance, providing a thought-provoking layer to its exploration of societal expectations and personal choice.

***Figure N° 3. Title. Kate McKinnon stars as Weird Barbie. Warner Bros..***



***Source:*** <https://www.insider.com/weird-barbie-kate-mckinnon-movie-mattel-limited-edition-collectible-doll-2023-8>

The *Barbie* movie challenges the idea that women are only valuable if they are beautiful and thin. Barbie's body is not the focus of the movie, and she is not objectified or sexualized in any way. The movie promotes the idea that women are more than just their appearance and that they should be valued for their intelligence, creativity, and accomplishments. In fact, toward the end of the film, Barbie discovers that simply voicing the cognitive dissonance of modern womanhood — “You have to be thin, but not...”. The movie also explores the contradictions of girl-boss feminism and promotes the idea of Barbie's evolution from a symbol of patriarchy to a feminist icon (Gerwig, 2023).

The *Barbie* movie uses irony to highlight the way men treat women in the real world. For example, there is a scene where Ken is shocked to discover that Barbie is his boss, and he struggles to take orders from her. This scene is meant to show how men often underestimate women in the workplace. The movie challenges traditional gender roles and promotes female empowerment by portraying Barbie as a strong and independent woman who is not defined by her looks or her relationship with Ken. However, some critics argue that the movie still represents an outdated female stereotype. The movie explores the contradictions of girl-boss feminism and promotes the idea of Barbie's evolution from a symbol of patriarchy to a feminist icon. Overall, the *Barbie* movie challenges traditional beauty standards, and gender roles, and promotes female empowerment.



#### 4. Subversion of Patriarchy:

The movie *Barbie* subverts patriarchy by exploring and satirizing gender roles and expectations in Barbie-land. Margot Robbie portrays "Stereotypical Barbie," enjoying her life while challenging the idea of the perfect woman. Through Ken, the movie delves into patriarchy, highlighting that no one benefits from a system demanding conformity to an ideal. Barbie-land's matriarchy symbolizes the real-world patriarchy, and the movie swaps gendered roles to expose invisible gender expectations. Examples from the movie subverting patriarchy include Barbie as the hero and Ken as the damsel in distress, challenging traditional gender roles. The movie critiques the notion of a perfect body type, celebrating individuality over conformity. It portrays Barbies reclaiming their homes and igniting men's jealousy, challenging toxic masculinity.

*Figure N° 4. Title. Scene showing Barbie leading the way everywhere (Boss).*



**Source:** [https://www.moviejones.de/news/news-erste-meinungen-sind-da-barbie-begeistert-bei-premiere-in-la\\_47181.html](https://www.moviejones.de/news/news-erste-meinungen-sind-da-barbie-begeistert-bei-premiere-in-la_47181.html)

Gloria's monologue in the movie reflects the challenges women face under patriarchy. She discusses the contradictory expectations placed on women, such as being thin yet not too thin, successful but not too assertive, and loving motherhood while not mentioning kids too often. She addresses the pressure to never age, show weakness, or step out of line, highlighting the exhausting demands women navigate daily, the monologue is as follows:

It is literally impossible to be a woman. You are so beautiful, and so smart, and it kills me that you don't think you're good enough. Like, we have to always be extraordinary, but somehow we're always doing it wrong. You have to be thin, but not too thin. And you can never say you want to be thin. You have to say you want to be healthy, but also you have to be thin. You have to have money, but you can't ask for money because that's crass. You have to be a boss, but you can't be mean. You have to lead, but you can't squash other people's ideas. You're supposed to love being a mother, but don't talk about your kids all the damn time. You have to be a career woman but also always be looking out for other people. You have to answer for men's bad behavior, which is insane, but if

you point that out, you're accused of complaining. You're supposed to stay pretty for men, but not so pretty that you tempt them too much or that you threaten other women because you're supposed to be a part of the sisterhood. But always stand out and always be grateful. But never forget that the system is rigged. So find a way to acknowledge that but also always be grateful. You have to never get old, never be rude, never show off, never be selfish, never fall down, never fail, never show fear, never get out of line. It is too hard! It is too contradictory and nobody gives you a medal or says thank you! And it turns out in fact that not only are you doing everything wrong, but also everything is your fault. I'm just so tired of watching myself and every single other woman tie herself into knots so that people will like us. And if all of that is also true for a doll just representing women, then I don't even know (Gerwig, 2023).

Overall, the *Barbie* movie subverts patriarchy, and shows how awful the world will be when one gender tries to marginalize the other.

### **5. Feminist Themes and Empowerment :**

The terms "feminine" and "feminist" are related but have distinct meanings. "Feminine" refers to qualities, behaviors, or characteristics traditionally associated with or considered typical of women. These can include traits such as nurturing, sensitivity, grace, elegance, and empathy, which are all associated with Barbie the Doll. The concept of "feminine" often pertains to societal expectations and stereotypes about gender roles. "Feminist" refers to a person who advocates for and supports gender equality, particularly addressing the historical and ongoing inequalities and discrimination faced by women. Feminism is a socio-political movement that seeks to challenge and change societal structures, norms, and attitudes that perpetuate gender-based disparities. Feminists strive to achieve equal rights, opportunities, and treatment for people of all genders. Feminism aims to dismantle patriarchal systems and promote justice and inclusivity.

John Crimmins, a Consultant Psychotherapist, claims that the *Barbie* movie is not just a hit — it is a groundbreaking feminist milestone. Garnering \$162 million on its opening weekend, it set a new record for a female-directed film, a clear indication of progress in the entertainment industry (Grimmins, 2023). The film, championing the message "Because Barbie can be anything, women can be anything," encourages viewers to challenge societal norms and celebrate their individuality. The *Barbie* movie has been celebrated and criticized for its feminist themes and messages of female empowerment. Here are some examples of how the movie addresses these themes:

- Critiques of unrealistic beauty standards: In the movie, one character tells Barbie that she sets problematic, unrealistic beauty standards.
- Autonomy for women: The movie's message is that women should have the autonomy to be what they want to be without having to conform to the patriarchy's ideals.
- Barbie's personal word: Barbie's personal word, "Because Barbie can be anything, women can be anything," is a powerful message that echoes throughout the movie. Overall, the *Barbie* movie can be seen as a complex and nuanced exploration of feminist themes and empowerment.

In short, the *Barbie* movie offers a complex and nuanced exploration of feminist themes and female empowerment. It challenges unrealistic beauty standards, advocates for women's autonomy, and underscores the idea that women can achieve anything they set their minds to, making it a thought-provoking addition to the conversation on gender empowerment.

## Conclusion:

The *Barbie* movie challenges stereotypes about Barbie symbolism and females in general by promoting feminist themes and female empowerment. The movie portrays Barbie as a strong and independent woman who is not defined by her looks or her relationship with Ken. The movie explores the contradictions of girl-boss feminism and promotes the idea of Barbie's evolution from a symbol of patriarchy to a feminist icon. Barbie's friends are diverse and have different interests and talents, which shows that there is no one way to be a woman. The movie also critiques patriarchal thinking and encourages responsible citizenship. The movie challenges traditional beauty standards and gender roles and promotes female empowerment. While some critics argue that the movie is not as feminist as it seems, the *Barbie* movie is being celebrated as a feminist film with its themes of female empowerment and critiques of the patriarchy.

*Barbie* is on course to be a runaway box office success, and has already come under attack from the radical right, with the production being described as “woke” and “an assault on all men”. Such attacks betray fundamental fears that such reactionary platforms have to media that is a mobilizing force for change. *Barbie* shows us not only how oppression operates, but how it is dismantled. The movie provides a powerful example of how women's stories can be told in a way that is both entertaining and empowering and highlights the importance of representation and diversity in popular media.

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## **7. Appendices:**

1. **Figure N° 1.** Ruth Handler, executive of Mattel Toy company, posing with collection of Barbie dolls (1961)  
Source: <https://digital.library.ucla.edu/catalog/ark:/21198/zz0002qg0b>
2. **Figure N° 2.** Barbie-Land, where life is perfect  
Source : <https://www.vox.com/culture/2023/7/12/23790929/barbie-movie-2023-barbiemania-explained>
3. **Figure N° 3.** Title. Kate McKinnon stars as Weird Barbie. Warner Bros.  
Source: <https://www.insider.com/weird-barbie-kate-mckinnon-movie-mattel-limited-edition-collectible-doll-2023-8>
4. **Figure N° 4.** Title. Scene showing Barbie leading the way everywhere (Boss).  
Source: [https://www.moviejones.de/news/news-erste-meinungen-sind-da-barbie-begeistert-bei-premiere-in-la\\_47181.html](https://www.moviejones.de/news/news-erste-meinungen-sind-da-barbie-begeistert-bei-premiere-in-la_47181.html)