

GENDER ROLES AS SEEN IN 'BARBIE' MOVIE BY GRETA GERWIG

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to analyze how gender roles seen in the movie 'Barbie'. This research is classified as a qualitative research type using a descriptive approach. The data from this study comes from 'Barbie' movie and script. Then, in collecting data the researcher used documentation by watching the movie and reading the script. In analyzing data, the researcher used interactive data analysis by Miles and Huberman. To find the research's validity, triangulation data and triangulation theory were used to check validation for the data. The result of the research showed that the 'Barbie' movie critiques societal norms and gender roles by contrasting Barbieland's matriarchal utopia with the real world's patriarchal limitations

Keywords : Gender roles, Descriptive Qualitative, Barbie movie, Equality.

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis peran gender yang terlihat dalam film Barbie. Penelitian ini tergolong jenis penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Data penelitian ini bersumber dari film Barbie dan naskahnya. Kemudian dalam pengumpulan data peneliti menggunakan dokumentasi dengan menonton film dan membaca naskahnya. Dalam menganalisis data, peneliti menggunakan analisis data interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Untuk mengetahui keabsahan penelitian, digunakan triangulasi data dan triangulasi teori untuk memeriksa keabsahan data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa film 'Barbie' mengkritisi norma sosial dan peran gender dengan membandingkan utopia matriarki Barbieland dengan keterbatasan patriarki di dunia nyata.

Kata Kunci : Peran gender, Deskriptif Kualitatif, Movie Barbie, Kesetaraan.

1. INTRODUCTION

Literary work is a work created with the aim of an aesthetic from a writer in a communicative form that can be enjoyed by readers and viewers (Evy Tri Widyahening & Tria Risqa, 2023). Movie is a type of literary work in the form of audiovisual media. Movie is also a very complex literary work, because in the movie there is a combination of various types of literature and art. According to James Monaco (2009:24), movie can be seen as a form of visual literature, in which the narrative elements commonly found in novels, such as character, plot, and setting, are translated into a visual medium. Linda Hutcheon (2006:16) discusses how movie adaptations of literary works not only reproduce the story, but also provide different visual interpretations, showing that movie is an art form that can be considered as a literary work through narrative adaptation. Apart from that, movie also includes various messages, including moral messages, education, entertainment and information. The messages that are present in movies usually use the mechanism of symbols that exist in the human mind in the form of the content of words and conversations conveyed by actors in the movie. When compared with other literary works, movies have a position that attracts quite a lot of interest among fans of literary works.

Many aspects of life can be depicted through movies, one of which is gender roles. Raewyn Connell (2022:32) explains that gender roles are the ways in which societies divide and distribute tasks and expectations based on gender. She emphasizes that gender roles are closely related to power relations and social structures, and often reflect the dominance of masculinity in many societies. Santrock (2014: 184) stated "*Gender roles are a set of expectations that determine how women or men should think, act and feel*". Gender roles refer to how a person takes on certain roles as mandated by his culture. Gender identity refers to the level of awareness and recognition of individuals in taking on the role of whether male or female, in accordance with the prevailing gender roles in the culture. While gender stereotypes point to biological and psychological characteristics that are adjusted to gender.

Feminism is a central theme throughout the movie, and it extends beyond the mere advocacy for gender equality. As explained by Maggie Humm (2002:177) feminism is a women's liberation ideology because inherent in all its approaches is the belief that women experience injustice because of their gender. The connection between women as a social group and the analysis of economic class has sparked political debates within Marxist and Feminist circles about whether the women's movement, which opposes male domination, can represent a unified set of women's interests (Evy Tri Widyahening, 2016). The concept of feminism encompasses a variety of important issues, including the historical struggle for women's suffrage, the ongoing fight for equal pay, efforts to combat domestic violence, advocacy for reproductive rights, and the push for paid maternity leave. These aspects highlight feminism's broader commitment to social reform and equity.

In this study, the movie "Barbie" was examined. Gender roles portrayal can be seen in one of Warner Bros' movies, directed by Greta Gerwig. 'Barbie' is a live action movie adapted from a fashion doll. The 'Barbie' movie inserts several aspects of gender equality. Greta

Gerwig used satire to highlight the absurdity of rigid gender expectations, presenting exaggerated stereotypes to critique conventional norms. Gerwig challenges the traditional image of the doll and explores feminist themes, such as the struggle for equal representation and the limitations imposed by societal expectations. The movie features role reversals and power dynamics that subvert traditional gender roles, and emphasizes personal empowerment and self-discovery as Barbie breaks free from conventional expectations. Through these elements, the movie engages with and questions gender roles, reflecting a modern feminist perspective on how they impact both individuals and society.

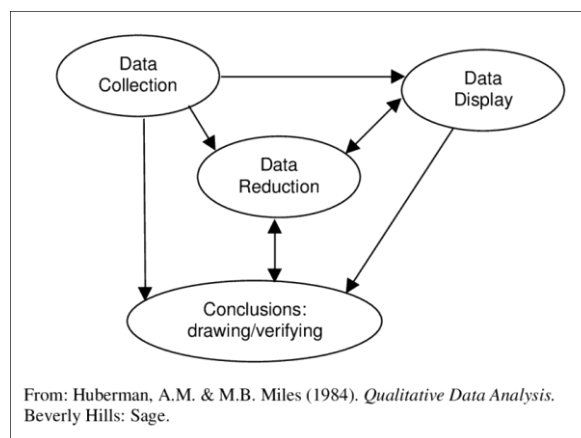
Based on the explanation above the researcher intended to analyze and conduct the study project entitled "Gender Roles As Seen In Barbie Movie by Greta Gerwig"

2. METHODS

In this study, the researcher used a movie entitled 'Barbie' directed by Greta Gerwig as the object of research because it depicts how gender roles that occur in the community environment are shown. The research would be conducted in the center library of Slamet Riyadi University and at the Karanganyar Archives and Library Service.

The researcher used descriptive qualitative research to analyze the movie. Creswell & John W. (2018:15) define qualitative research as a research approach that aims to understand social phenomena or human behavior from the perspective of participants, with a focus on deep meanings, experiences, and contexts. The qualitative research was articulated through detailed descriptions and narrative forms. It employed a library research methodology and utilized a case study approach, specifically an embedded case study. The analysis was based on two main sources: the 'Barbie' movie itself and the corresponding script or dialogues.

The researcher used a documentary technique to collect the data for this study, reading the script and watching of Barbie movie by Greta Gerwig to collect the data. The researcher process analyses the data by using a descriptive technique. The Miles & Huberman (1994:10) data source must be analyzed in four steps as well as the analysis of the data: 1) data collection, 2) data reduction, 3) data display, and 4) conclusion drawing.



Picture 1 Figure data analysis according to Miles & Huberman (1994:12)

In finding the validity of the data, the researcher used triangulation. The researcher applied the triangulation technique to increase the validity and credibility of the data. Based on Denzin & Lincoln (2018:765), there are four types of triangulations, which covers methodological triangulation, investigator triangulation, data triangulation, and theory triangulation. Thus, the researcher used the type of data triangulation and theory triangulation to check the validation of the data. they were used to observe how gender roles are depicted in 'Barbie' movie. The study on how gender roles are depicted in the Barbie movie uses Simone de Beauvoir's theory "The Other". Then, the researcher examines the script and analyzes the data. The study was conducted by analyzing all the dialogues in the movie.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this part, the answers of the stated problem were described by the researcher. The problem of this study was about how society influences gender roles seen in the movie 'Barbie'. As this study was a descriptive qualitative study, the result and the discussion of this study were described in the form of description and narration. The findings and discussion related to the theory of Simone de Beauvoir (1949).

No	Gender Roles Elements	Total of Data
1	Gender roles represented by the main character of the movie 'Barbie'	10
2	The influence of society on gender roles as seen in the movie 'Barbie'	37
3	The impact of gender equality represented by the main character in the movie 'Barbie'	6
Total		53

In this study, the researcher discussed three elements of gender roles. They were Gender roles represented by the main character of the movie 'Barbie', The influence of society on gender roles as seen in the movie 'Barbie', and The impact of gender equality represented by the main character in the movie 'Barbie'. In addition, three elements of gender roles found in the Barbie movie are as follows:

a) Gender Roles Represented by the Main Character of the Movie 'Barbie'

- Women Who is Independent and Support Each Other

1) Context: Barbie revealed she loved women and wanted to help them

.....

Barbie : I think I owe you ladies an apology. I thought Barbie had made the Real World better, but the Real World is forever and irrevocably messed up!

Gloria : Well the real world isn't perfect, but you inspired me!

Barbie : But I love women, I want to help women.

.....

(Data 1)

From the dialogue (1) on (Data 1) “But I love women, I want to help women” shows that Barbie demonstrated a very positive and empathetic gender role. Barbie not only expressed her love and concern for women, but also showed her desire to help and support them. This gender role emphasized the importance of solidarity and support between women, and showed that women can be a source of strength and inspiration for each other.

- Women's Drive to Fulfil Beauty Standards to Become the Perfect Woman
- 2) Context : Barbie felt embarrassed because her feet were not on tiptoes like other Barbies

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Barbie : I’m so... embarrassed.

Writer Barbie : Barbie doesn’t get embarrassed!

(Data 2)

From the dialogue (2) on (Data 2) “Barbie doesn’t get embarrassed!” showed that the gender role shown by Barbie was that women had very strict beauty standards and high expectations for their own bodies. In this context, the gender role shown by Barbie was that women must have perfect and ideal bodies, and flat feet were considered an inappropriate disability.

b) The influence of society on gender roles as seen in the movie 'Barbie'

- Society's Standards of Beauty for Women
- 3) Context : All Barbies considered Weird Barbie unusual because her appearance was not like Barbie in general.

.....

Lawyer Barbie: I heard that she used to be the most beautiful Barbie of all but then someone played too hard with her in the Real World...

Dr. Barbie : ...and now she’s fated to an eternity of making other Barbies perfect while falling more and more into disrepair herself. And that we call her

Weird Barbie all the time both behind her back and also to her face. Anyway, you have to go see her!

.....

(Data 3)

From the dialogue (3) on (Data 3) “...and now she’s fated to an eternity of making other Barbies perfect while falling more and more into disrepair herself.” showed how society influenced gender roles by perpetuating unrealistic beauty standards and societal expectations. This dialogue criticized this aspect of societal influence by showing how these expectations could be damaging and limiting, especially for women.

- Society's View of Women as Mere Objects

4) Context : Construction workers flirted with Barbie and verbally insulted her

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Construction Worker 1 : Do fries come with that shake?

Construction Worker 2 : If I said you had a hot body, would you hold it against me?

.....

(Data 4)

From the dialogue (4) on (Data 4) “If I said you had a hot body, would you hold it against me?” women are not seen as autonomous individuals but instead are seen through the eyes of men's desires and expectations. This made women easy targets for harassment because they were seen as lacking the strength to fight back, while men were often associated with power, dominance, and high sexual desire.

- The Consequences of the Patriarchal System on Social Structures

5) Context : The office employees admitted that they were still running the patriarchal system in secret.

.....

Ken : But that's not what books say! **You guys certainly aren't doing patriarchy well.**

Office Employee : (winked at Ken) Oh, we're doing it well. We just hide it better now.

.....

(Data 5)

From the dialogue (5) on (Data 5) “Oh, we're doing it well. We just hide it better now” showed that there were still many workplaces where men were often given positions of power, while women were relegated to more traditional or 'feminine' roles. This perpetuated a cycle where men were seen as the primary breadwinners and decision-makers, while women were expected to manage domestic responsibilities.

- The Stereotypes of Men and Women in Society

6) Context : Aaron Dinkins, who was just an ordinary employee, wondered if he was a woman because he had no power.

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Aaron Dinkins: Um, I'm a man with no power, does that make me a woman?

.....

(Data 6)

From the dialogue (6) on (Data 6) “Um, I'm a man with no power, does that make me a woman?” highlighted how men could be perceived as powerless or

marginalized in certain contexts, challenging traditional notions of masculinity and power.

- 7) Context : When Barbie ran away from Mattel officers, Barbie hid in a room. She found a kitchen and an old woman who was writing. The old woman invited Barbie to sit down.

.....

Barbie : **So, a woman does work here. (in the kitchen)**

Old Woman : Oh, sweetie, we do more than work here.

.....

(Data 7)

From the dialogue (7) on (Data 7) “So, a woman does work here. (in the kitchen)” criticized the stereotypical roles often expected of women. Barbie’s assumption that women worked in the kitchen reflected societal expectations that women were primarily responsible for domestic tasks. The view that women should work in the kitchen was often a result of social and cultural norms that had been entrenched in society for years.

c) The impact of gender equality represented by the main character in the movie ‘Barbie’

- Awareness of Self-discovery and Free Expression in Fulfilling Desires

- 8) Context: Barbie discussed the plan to return Barbie Land from the patriarchal system

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Barbie : Here’s the deal. It’s not just about how they see us, it’s about how they see themselves.

.....

(Data 8)

From the dialogue (8) on (Data 8) “Here’s the deal. It’s not just about how they see us, it’s about how they see themselves.” Barbie wants to return Barbie Land from the patriarchal system by indoctrinating the Barbies that patriarchy is something that is not beneficial for both parties, not only the Barbies, Barbie also wants to make the Kens who have been indoctrinated by patriarchy aware by telling them their true identities.

- Equality of Rights Between Men and Women in the Constitution of Barbie Land

- 9) Context : Barbie apologized to Ken that not every night has to be a ‘girl’s night’.

.....

Barbie : I think I owe you an apology. I’m sorry I took you for granted. **Not every night had to be girl’s night.**

.....

(Data 9)

From the dialogue (9) on (Data 9) “I think I owe you an apology. I’m sorry I took you for granted. **Not every night had to be girl’s night.**” By admitting her mistakes and giving Ken space to express himself, Barbie built a more balanced relationship with Ken. This was a powerful representation of a gender relationship based on mutual respect and equality.

- An Open-minded Approach to Equality Between Men and Women



Picture 2 Sasha and her mother, Gloria became close thanks to Barbie

(Data 10)

The impact of Barbie on the relationship between Gloria and Sasha was multifaceted and deeply rooted in societal influences on gender roles. The relationship between Gloria and Sasha in ‘Barbie’ movie was strained by societal pressures on gender roles and beauty standards. Sasha criticized Barbie for promoting unrealistic ideals and harming girls' self-worth, while Gloria internalized these expectations in her role as a mother. This led to tension and disconnection between them. However, Gloria's sketches of imperfect Barbies acted as a turning point, allowing them to bridge their differences and connect over a more realistic and relatable vision of womanhood.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, movies can be used as literary works that are used as a media to convey messages to the audience such as gender roles. Greta Gerwig's movie 'Barbie' is one of the movies that discusses the roles of men and women in society. The depiction of the roles of men and women is analyzed using Simone de Beauvoir's theory "The Other" (1949). After analyzing the scenes and scripts of the movie 'Barbie', the researcher sorts out 3 elements of gender roles, namely Gender roles represented by the main characters in the movie 'Barbie', The influence of society on gender roles as seen in the movie 'Barbie', and The impact of gender equality represented by the main characters in the movie 'Barbie'.

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