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## STEREOTYPE OF WOMAN PORTRAITS IN BARBIE MOVIE

### BY GRETA GERWIG: A SEMIOTIC STUDY

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#### Abstract

Stereotypes are labels often used by certain people to others. One of the stereotypes depicted in the 2023 live-action Barbie film by Greta Gerwig is a woman stereotype. This research aims to describe the practices and signs of stereotypes against women experienced by the character Barbie in the 2023 live-action Barbie film. Stereotypes construct society's perception of women and strengthen the stigma that women tend to be the objects of labels. Forms of negative labels It is developed from the order of social life internalized by the woman Alone. Negative labels can have an impact on women's lives. This type of research uses descriptive qualitative methods to obtain information and depict stereotypes experienced by the character Barbie. The data source was taken from the film entitled Barbie Greta Gerwig and uses Halliday's social semiotic theory. Data collection stages Use listening and note-taking techniques to obtain relevant information. Meanwhile, the data research stage uses data analysis techniques. Research result shows the practice of stereotyping women with negative labels as women who are less free to speak, more emotional, not commonly to appear as a leader, Home oriented, and not very independent which is a theory from Unger (1979).

Keywords: Movie, Semiotics, Signs, Stereotypes.

#### 1. Introduction

Literary works greatly influence the mindset in society. Stereotypes, negative or positive, usually occur in human life based on observations, experiences, relationships, and other activities that occur. This labeling is a study found in various media or products. Various basic products that can be found regarding these stereotypes are one form of literary work, namely film. Esten (1978) explains that literature is the expression of artistic and imaginative facts as a manifestation of human life and society through language as a medium and has a positive effect on human life (humanity), one form of literary work is a movie. According to Wibowo in Rizal (2014) movie is a tool to convey various messages to the general public through the medium of stories, and can also be interpreted as a medium of artistic expression for artists and film people to express their ideas and story ideas. Therefore, a movie is one of the literary works that is not only able to convey information and messages creatively and uniquely but also tucked away a message that the filmmaker wants to convey through audiovisual media. One of them is the live-action Barbie movie 2023 by Greta Gerwig.

Stereotypes are labels for a person or group in the wrong assumption (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia, paragraphs 1-3 in Perdana, 2014). The process of labeling women has become a tradition in a capitalist patriarchal society. Stereotypes limit women's space for movement and in the end, women will consider the marking or labeling as part of their destiny. Stereotypes that develop in society tend to harm women and

hinder women's steps in social life. Ironically, the construction that women want to eliminate is reinforced by society. As stated by Barker (2005) stereotyping is the process of a person becoming a set of characteristics or traits that are exaggerated and usually negative. Stereotypes define differences through power to mark the boundaries between dominant groups between subordinate groups made from the order of community life. In line with what was stated by Handayani and Sugiarti (2017), stereotypes are negative labeling of certain groups that can cause injustice. This can occur due to differences in social relations between men and women.

The stereotypes experienced by Barbie Margot's character can be identified through the signs contained in the dialog in the film with a social semiotic approach. Halliday and Hassan (1992) argue that semiotics is not only a study of signs but as a study of sign systems or in other words a study of "meaning" in the most general sense. So, it can be concluded that a statement contains meaning that represents or describes something else.

Therefore, this research uses a social semiotics approach to analyze various statements that show the existence of stereotypes about the Female gender documented in the Barbie live-action film 2023 by Greta Gerwig. The selection of Halliday's social semiotics of language because of the use of language in the film Barbie Live Action 2023 by Greta Gerwig reflects the representation of gender inequality in society which in general this film is present to represent the world and life of women with a dominating patriarchal culture so that stereotypes on women are seen in contrast.

The movie portrays the story of a stereotypical Barbie, Barbie Margot, who lives in Barbie Land, an imaginary world where Barbie Margot and other Barbies live. In that world, the Barbies live with flawless perfection with a strong culture of feminism together with Ken and Allan. Until one day Barbie Margot experiences something strange about herself, from waking up and greeting her friends to the way she walks, Barbie no longer does it in a "perfect" way. In the real world where the patriarchal culture reigns supreme, this culture upholds men as the dominant party while the role of women is only that of authority. It is because of this that the main character Barbie Margot is affected by the stereotypes built by society in the real world.

## 2. Methods

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with an utterance analysis design to obtain information and depictions of female stereotypes. Qualitative method (descriptive) interpretation as stated by Piliang (2010) "The semiotic method is qualitative - interpretative (interpretation), namely a method that focuses on the sign of the text as the object of study, as well as how researchers interpret and understand the code (decoding) behind the sign and text". According to Djajasudarma and Citraesmana (2016), the qualitative method is a research procedure that produces a description of data analysis both in writing and orally (library/field).

The research sample comes from dialogs and monologues or utterances spoken by the characters in the Barbie live-action 2023 film. Speech analysis is carried out by identifying signs in the utterances that represent stereotypes of the female gender, the use of words spoken by the characters, and social semiotic aspects to support the author's argument. The object of the research lies in the stereotyping of women who are considered incapable of fighting back including negative labeling. The problem limitation in this research highlights the stereotyping of the main female character, Barbie Margot, which will be associated with negative labeling.

Listening and note-taking analysis techniques are used for data collection techniques in the form of sentences and quotations of dialog in the film. The listening method is a study of language by listening to the source or object to be studied (Sudaryanto, 2015).

The methods and techniques used to collect data on this study were documentation and note-taking.

According to Ary et al. (2010), the documentation method was the use of written or text-based artifacts (textbooks, novels, journals) or nonwritten records (photographs, audiotapes, computer images, musical performances, YouTube videos) in the research. Two steps were followed in this section. Firstly, the researcher downloaded and read the posters one by one. Then, note-taking was the final step in the data collection process, and it was used to collect the verbal and visual signs found in the posters. The data were collected through images, colors, sentences, clauses, and phrases.

### 3. Results and Discussion

The following are the steps in analyzing the data used by the author. First, data collection is the stage of collecting data by collecting all relevant data regarding female stereotypes in the 2023 live-action Barbie film. Second, data reduction is the stage of reducing the data that has been found by selecting and classifying data that is relevant to the analysis criteria. Third, data presentation, the data is displayed in the form of descriptive analysis of female stereotypes in the form of sentences and dialog quotes between characters systematically. The last stage is concluding by concluding the problem regarding female stereotypes with the help of social semiotic theory.

Greta Gerwig's 2023 live-action Barbie movie wakes up the imagination of those who grew up playing with her, and the plot successfully makes moviegoers feel the pain felt by Margot's Barbie. The story further illustrates how perceptions about female stereotypes regarding negative labels are now used in culture and make Women who are born only more passive people than men. (Unger 1979)

The movie tells the story of a stereotypical Barbie, Barbie Margot, who lives in Barbie Land, an imaginary world where Barbie Margot and other Barbies live. In this world, the Barbies live with all perfection without the slightest flaw with a strong culture of feminism together with Ken and Allan. Until one day Barbie Margot experiences something strange about herself, from waking up and greeting her friends, to the way she walks, Barbie no longer does it in a "perfect" way. Because of this, she had to go to the real world to meet the person she was playing with and fix all the oddities that happened to her. In the real world where the patriarchal culture reigns supreme, this culture upholds men as the dominant party while the role of women is only that of authority. It is because of this that the main character Barbie Margot is affected by the stereotypes built by society in the real world.

	Discourse participants	Data Number	Evidence/Quotation in Dialogue	Stereotypical form according to Unger (1979:30)
1	Construction worker	1	"If I said you a hot body, would you hold it against me?"	Less free to speak

2	Sasha	2 3	You really think you are Barbie?! I am powerful and until you showed up here and declared yourself “Barbie”, I hadn’t thought about you in years, you FASCIST	More emotional
3	Mattel CEO	4	Listen, I know where you’re going with this, and I have to say I really resent it because we are a company literally MADE of women. There was a woman CEO in the 90’s and another one at some other time. Women are the freaking foundation of this long phallic building! We have gender neutral bathrooms up the wazoo! Every single one of these men you see before you love women	Not common to appear as a leader
4	Aaron Dinkins	5	Um, I’m a man with no power, does that make me a woman?	
5	Ken Ryan Gosling	6	Look, I’m just hanging down with my <b>bro-homies having a brewski beer in my Mojo Dojo Casa House.</b> (to Barbie Margot) You can stay here if you want as my bride-wife or my long-term-low commitment-distance girlfriend. Now, brewski beer me.	Home oriented

6	Barbie Margot	7	I can't do brain surgery, I've never flown a plane, I'm not president, no one on the Supreme Court is me... I'm just... not... good... enough...for... anything ...	Not very independent
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**1. Discourse Field**

As explained earlier, the discourse field refers to the events that are happening (discussed) by the participants with language being the main element. So in Greta Gerwig's Barbie movie, the field of discourse is the stereotypes accepted by women with a Barbie background. A Barbie enters the real world with an ideal physical condition with the naive thought that everyone in the real world is happy with the creation of Barbie, she thinks that Barbie can be an inspiration for everyone, especially women with her tag line "you can be anything", but this is precisely what becomes a "weapon" for society to label her badly. This is related to the strong stereotypes attached to women in society, when a woman has a different physique and thinking then she will be considered different and get prejudice or labeled bad.

**2. Discourse Participants**

Discourse participants refer to people who take part in an interaction related to the role position and nature of the participants in a society. So, in the movie "Barbie Live Action 2023" the discourse participants are Construction workers, Sasha, Mattel CEO, Aaron Dinkins, Ken Ryan Gosling, and Barbie Margot.

**3. Textual Analysis**

In this study, there are 7 data in the form of texts that describe the conditions of women in the community that show the existence of stereotypes according to Unger (1979). The analysis is as follows:

- a. Less free to speak. Based on the data found, Barbie can be identified as experiencing female stereotypes of negative labeling less free to speak. The dialogue quote "If I said you had a hot body, would you hold it against me?" delivered by the construction worker shows that Barbie has an ideal and beautiful physique but is delivered in a way that is not polite and as if the statement she makes is true and cannot be refuted by Barbie, and if Barbie refutes her assumption, then Barbie seems to challenge her. This shows that Barbie does not have the freedom to express her discomfort because she cannot refute the disrespectful or violent statements she receives.

- b. More emotional.

In the quote of Sasha's question "You really think you are Barbie?!" this is a question that means insult because Barbie is too confident in declaring herself as a Barbie. Sasha did not hesitate to express that even though she and Margot are both women. In addition, in the utterance "I am powerful and until you showed up here and declared yourself "Barbie", I hadn't thought about you in years, you FASCIST" delivered by Sasha cornered Barbie so much that it made Barbie Margot shed her tears. Sasha is not above saying the word FASCIST in her statement, the use of this word is excessive because this word is a principle or understanding of extreme

nationalists who advocate authoritarian rule. Fascism is often referred to as an attitude of excessive nationalism or classified as a radical movement of nationalist ideology that embraces authoritarian politics. In the context of the sentence delivered by Sasha Barbie is too idealistic by voicing that Barbie wants to help Sasha to be happy and powerful.

c. Not common appear as a leader.

In the sentence above "Look, I know where you're going with this, and I have to say that I hate it because we are a company MADE by women. There was a female CEO in the 90s and another one at another time. Women are the very foundation of this long phallus building! We have gender-neutral bathrooms throughout! Every man you saw before you loved a woman", showing that it was not common for women to appear as leaders, women as leaders only existed in the 90s. This is reinforced by Aaron Dinkins' statement which stated "Um, I'm a man with no power, does that make me a woman?". This statement shows that if a man does not have a position, does that make him a woman?

d. Home oriented.

In essence, the nature of women given by God cannot be changed or is absolute. Every woman is born free and they are free to make their own choices without any coercion from any party. Women are not only born as servants of men but the shackles of patriarchal culture that create these labels. Barbie is one of the women shackled by the stereotype of being Ken's servant or someone who will only be home-oriented. "Look, I'm just hanging down with my bro-homies having a brewski beer in my Mojo Dojo Casa House. (to Barbie Margot) You can stay here if you want as my bride-wife or my long-term commitment- distance girlfriend. Now, brewski beer me." Barbie Margot is belittled by Ken Ryan Gosling for not owning a house. Ken Ryan Gosling indirectly puts pressure on trying to get Barbie Margot to be his wife and just stay at home to serve him because she is a home-oriented person.

e. Not very independent.

Women are seen as not very independent because they don't have positions. "I can't do brain surgery, I've never flown a plane, I'm not president, no one on the Supreme Court is me... I'm just... not... good... enough... for... anything..." Barbie Margot's utterance is the result of Barbie Margot's thoughts influenced from the real world. The above sentence shows that women are not independent enough because they do not hold certain positions such as surgeon, astronaut, president, and government positions. When she is just an ordinary woman, she is not independent enough as a human being.

#### 4. Conclusions

Based on the results of the data analysis was found in the form of text which can be used as a representation of excessive application of cultural stereotypes to women. In textual analysis, this is shown in the use of sentences where negative views or labels of women occur in several ways, including declarative (statements) and rhetorical questions of the players. These statements and rhetorical questions identified excesses in the application of stereotypes

towards women, namely less free speech, more emotional, not common to appear as a leader, home-oriented, and not too independent.

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