

The Twain is Crossing: Barbie's Existential Crisis Portrayed in *Barbie* 2023 Movie

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Abstract

The feelings of anxiety and anomalies experienced by the 'Stereotypical Barbie' in her perfect world called Barbie-land, make her question her existence. This study focused on Simone de Beauvoir's theory of existentialism depicted in the women characters of *Barbie* 2023 movie directed by Greta Gerwig. The aim of this study is to explore the existential crisis experienced by the women characters. Barbie's journey on the real-world finally discovers that her existential crisis arises from the anomalies that are affected by imperfect external human experience when the "twain is crossing". Barbie represents the principles of existentialist feminism as defined by Simone de Beauvoir by confronting these existential concerns.

Keyword: Anomalies, Stereotypical Barbie, Existentialism, Existential Crisis, Self-Discovery Journey

Abstract

Perasaan cemas dan anomali yang dialami oleh Barbie dalam dunianya yang sempurna yang disebut *Barbie-land*, membuatnya mempertanyakan eksistensinya. Penelitian ini difokuskan pada teori eksistensialisme Simone de Beauvoir yang tergambar pada karakter perempuan dalam film *Barbie* 2023 yang disutradarai oleh Greta Gerwig. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi krisis eksistensial yang dialami oleh karakter perempuan film ini. Perjalanan Barbie di dunia nyata akhirnya menemukan bahwa krisis eksistensialnya muncul dari anomali yang dipengaruhi oleh pengalaman eksternal manusia yang tidak sempurna saat "*twain is crossing*". Barbie mewakili prinsip-prinsip feminisme eksistensial seperti yang didefinisikan oleh Simone de Beauvoir dengan menghadapi masalah eksistensial ini.

Kata Kunci: Anomali, *Stereotypical Barbie*, Eksistensialisme, Krisis Eksistensial, Perjalanan Penemuan Diri

INTRODUCTION

Existence is the common means by which humans create their own presence. Existentialism is a philosophical theory that permits individuals to lead truly human lives in a ridiculous and meaningless world (Panza & Gale, 2008). Existentialists refer to human beings as "existence". It is predicated on the idea that every living person is conscious enough to take action and provide value to his/her own life. Authenticity or uniqueness is the ultimate value in existentialist ideology (Khan, 2007, p. 5). Existentialism asserts that humans are capable of existing, as indicated by the above two statements. The core idea of existentialist feminism is that women should be able to express who they are.

However, existentialism holds that having an endless amount of choice in determining how to produce

a value can cause anxiety and misery. A person may also go through a crisis in which they start to doubt their own existence. There is no set meaning to human existence, according to the theory of "existence precedes essence," which describes the phenomenon of human beings (Sartre, 1946, p. 3). It belongs to each individual to determine what purpose their life has. Since existentialism holds that existence is tragically meaningless, when it comes to an individual's logic, it can frequently cause them to feel lost or confused in a world that is defined as chaotic and meaningless (Sartre, 1946, p. 13).

Every individual has to fight against this kind of accountability, but the pressures in life eventually drive them to give up on fulfilling their obligations. Many people have struggled at various points in their life to define their identity (Andrews, 2016). Questions that may arise after existential anxiety, or what we also refer to as

existential crisis, include doubting the purpose of life and its concepts, being unclear about one's own identity, and occasionally considering death.

The issue of existence is currently portrayed in various movies, one of the selected movies is *Barbie* (2023) directed by Greta Gerwig. The premise of the movie is that 'Stereotypical Barbie' and all other Barbies live in Barbie-land, a matriarchal society where all women are self-confident, self-sufficient, and successful. While Ken, the male character of Barbie, counterparts spend their days engaging in recreational activities at the beach.

The Barbies think that by giving women the confidence to feel good about themselves and that they can accomplish anything, they have improved the actual world. Everything goes well until someday Barbie suddenly has a thought of death. This thought then brings anomalies to Barbie's life and leads her and Ken to travel to the real world, where they learn about the meaning of life and death. Based on this reason, the aim of this study is to portray the existential crisis experienced by the 'Stereotypical Barbie.'

The *Barbie* movie provides a critical and thought-provoking circumstance that directly challenges the societal gender stereotypes towards Barbies' existence. Gender norms and views are severely challenged in the scene where Ken explores the real-world, where male rules and dominates the world. Barbie-land and real-world contrast significantly, exposing the differences in societal expectation.

This study examines existential problems in the scope of literature with the existentialist feminism theory depicted in *Barbie* (2023). Theoretically, this study makes a contribution regarding Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist feminism analysis to reveal the existential problems in the movie. This research is also theoretically useful as a reference for literary studies that use Beauvoir's theory of Existentialist Feminism. The findings of this study are intended to give a positive contribution to existential crisis problems and how they lead to the definition of freedom and autonomy. This means that the readers can gain deeper insight into the ways in which the movie engages with issues of gender identity; existential crisis; freedom and autonomy within a complex societal expectations.

The scope of this study is analysing the existentialist feminism reflected in women characters of *Barbie* (2023). It focuses on how the women characters

of the movie entering the life period where they start questioning about their identity and existential meaning in either Barbie-land or real-world. Furthermore, this research will explore how the women characters finally define their choice to live in their own selected world. However, this research is specifically limited on Barbie's anxiety related to Gloria and her daughter existential problems.

This study is limited to the *Barbie* (2023) story related to Beauvoir's existentialist feminism concept. Existentialists, including Simone de Beauvoir, argue that individuals exist first and then define themselves through their choices and actions. Her well-known statement, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman," suggests that gender identity is not innate; rather, it is created through socialization and lived experience (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 283). Unlike objects, which have a predetermined essence or purpose, humans must create their own essence through their lived experiences.

Jean Paul Sartre, is most recognized for having coined the phrase "existence precedes essence" (Sartre, 1992). According to the theory, people do not have a predetermined nature or purpose from birth. Instead, individuals must develop their own identities and values by actions and decisions taken. Beauvoir's discussion of gender and identity is clearly influenced by Sartre's emphasis on radical freedom and individual responsibility. In particular, *Being and Nothingness* by Sartre offers the conceptual groundwork for comprehending how people negotiate their life and their innate right to self-definition.

Existential crises arise at perplexing and anxious moments, when a person is attempting to answer and settle difficult questions, such as "Who am I? and How the world defined me?". High levels of anxiety are experienced by those going through an existential crisis (Bugental, 1965). This anxiety stems from the realization that life lacks inherent meaning or purpose, and individuals must grapple with the uncertainty and ambiguity of existence.

Beauvoir also discusses the term "gender ambiguity" as humans are constantly strained between being subjects and objects (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 6). Her explanation of ambiguity can be a double-edged knife, as the source of anxieties or as the foundation of self-identification. Accepting ambiguity enables individuals to live authentically and reject repressive societies. Andrew's term of 'existential crisis' can best renew Beauvoir's term of 'ambiguity' as it provides a wider

perspective on how to resolve them. The term “crisis” in an existential crisis refers to both the challenging impacts and the need to escape them (Andrews, 2016).

Existentialism emphasizes the idea of radical freedom, suggesting that individuals are ultimately responsible for their own lives and the choices they make. According to Beauvoir, one of the most essential elements of being human is freedom. She believes that people are naturally free to choose their paths and define their own meanings in life. This freedom is an inherent aspect of being human, rather than a set of rights or a result of external factors (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 283). True freedom and autonomy, according to Beauvoir, are frequently undermined by repressive systems and social structures, especially those that affect women.

Humans have the responsibility for both having the freedom to choose and for the results of that choice. Regarding the existentialists Simone de Beauvoir put forward, she claimed that women only ever become the “other” for male during their lives. Men are the subject and women are objects. According to Beauvoir, existentialism is the state in which a woman ceases to be an object and instead becomes a subject.

Beauvoir’s deeper philosophical irritates that women required to lose their authentic selves when they try to become a “real woman” in patriarchal society. Women tend to find difficulties in assuming their identity of autonomous individual and their feminine destiny, causes them to be awkward and discomfort that sometimes leads them to be considered as ‘a lost sex’ (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 274).

She draws a strong connection between autonomy and the idea of “authenticity”, which is acting in line with one’s genuine self and ideals as opposed to fitting into roles or societal expectations (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 284). She investigates how women’s freedom and autonomy are restricted by cultural norms, gender roles, and expectations, which limits them from achieving their full potential as free beings. Thus, it requires several ways including building intellectual development, challenging traditional norms, and accepting the ambiguity to break the restriction. Beauvoir demands that these social institutions be modified for the purpose of every individual’s freedom and autonomy.

Abdedaim in her article found the message of the Barbie movie that women should be free to be whoever they want to be without being forced to adhere to the patriarchal norms (Abdedaim, 2024). The *Barbie*

movie promotes female empowerment and makes criticism of patriarchy in addition to challenging gender norms and conventional beauty standards. Female empowerment message was also found by another researcher on *Barbie* movie. Although the movie tends to be made for children, it tries to insert positive values including messages about gender equality and female empowerment (Alviyanti & Siraj, 2023). This message of gender equality helps to change adolescent girls’ perception to be aware of their identity in society.

Shuhua Zheng in her article analyzing the same *Barbie* movie derives a different perspective. Despite its ambition to address gender equality, *Barbie* exhibits limitations in its depth of gender discourse and promotion of gender liberation (Zheng, 2024). In addition, the topic of gender is a profound socio-cultural topic that involves multiple dimensions such as gender structure, social expectation, and identity. Hence, women will be able to deconstruct gender stereotypes and reshape their own gender identities if individuals are able to comprehend and talk about gender issues in depth.

Related to the recent findings about dismantling gender issues and identity in *Barbie* movie, the writer considers that this movie portrays an issue of existential crisis as well. However, research on finding the women’s existential crisis as the process of defining identity and autonomy in movies has not been widely studied. Therefore, this study will depict the existential crisis experienced by the women characters by applying Beauvoir’s existentialist feminism approach as the main concept.

RESEARCH METHOD

The data sources in this study are taken from the screenshots and the script in the form of dialogues, monologues, and narration between the women characters and others from *Barbie* (2023). The writer watched the movie and took note of the quotes and scenes on existential matters, and afterwards investigated the information connected with the inquiries. In addition, the writer compiles, analyses, and comprehends several related sources, figures, and facts.

Several steps are used to analyze this movie: First is watching *Barbie* (2023) several times to understand the issue. Second is choosing the supporting scenes by taking screen capture and taking notes on important script in the form of monologues, dialogues, and narration. Third is analyzing the theme of the study by connecting the evidence to Beauvoir’s perspective of freedom and autonomy.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Barbie's Identity as Idealized Representation of Women

The grand concept of female identity of Simone de Beauvoir (2011) "One is not born but becomes a woman" highlights that female identity is shaped not merely by biological, but also by socio-cultural influences. Despite the fact that all genders have equal access to education and career, cultural expectations sometimes drive women toward roles connected with family and caregiving, which do not typically pay well or provide high prestige (Yinhe, 2003).

In the opening scene, the first Barbie doll wore a black and white zebra-striped swimsuit, had blonde hair in a ponytail and came with accessories like sunglasses, high heels, and a towel. Over the years, Barbie has evolved to reflect changing fashion trends, cultural shifts, and societal expectations. The doll has taken on various professions, hobbies, and styles, reflecting different aspects of women's role in society. Barbie's image and design have been updated to be more diverse and inclusive, with dolls available in various skin-tones, body shapes, and hairstyle to better represent a wider range of people.

As time passed by from its very first appearance in 2001, Barbie now historically evolves from a fashion doll to a career woman. It comes with countless roles and careers represented by how they dress vary from a pilot, a president, into more unconventional roles. The classical Barbie represents not only a classic toy but also a cultural icon that has sparked conversation about body image, gender roles, and societal expectations over the decades (Yingning, 2024). By the Barbie multitude roles portrayal, *Barbie* movie underscores the idea that women can go beyond any field. Barbie's various careers emphasize her versatility and many roles she has embodied over the years.

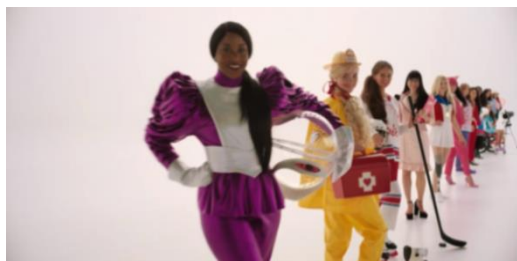


Figure 1. Barbie varieties

Helen Mirren (VO): She has her own money, her own house, her own car, and her own career. Because Barbie can be anything, women can be anything. (00:03:09 – 00:03:20)

The script on the next scene contributes to the understanding that Barbies live a perfect life in their utopia called Barbie-land, where they can do sunshine baths, get their nails done and throw parties at their luxurious houses. They can afford everything they want including educational and political positions as they should. These depictions reflect the traditional view of Barbie as a symbol of perfection by the underlined script.

Despite the way they create their own social life, Barbies steal the audience's focus on their appearance as well. The film *Barbie*, from its very opening scenes, showcases Barbie as the options of sophistication, fashion, and an idealized form of a sexy femininity. To highlight this representation, the director cleverly incorporates a plethora of costume styles inspired by Barbie's toy clothes line, resulting in a multidimensional personal that represents considerable cultural influences. The film's aesthetic, from the pink tones of its clothing to substances like skirts, sequins, and bubble sleeves, perfectly represents these features.

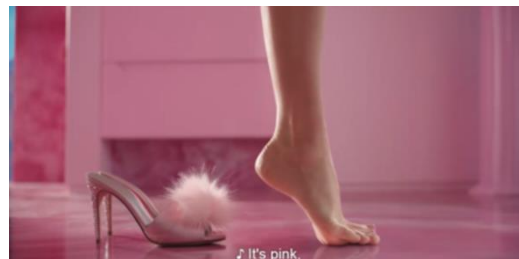


Figure 2. Barbie's arched feet

To maintain Barbie's traditional image, the scene includes distinguishing gestures such as her exclusive usage of high heels and her barefoot tiptoe stance. These meticulous details reveal the male-gaze-driven aesthetics that underpin Barbie's portrayal, tying the female image onto conventionally feminine characteristics and forms and promoting narrow definition of beauty based on sex appeal and thin body shapes. The representation above approves the idea of body-biased gaze that has long been recognized as an important feature of sexual objectification (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

However, Barbie confidently initiates the idea of living her best life to the fullest by being an independent woman. The Stereotypical Barbie and other Barbies believe that the society in Barbie-land has overcome

some of the key difficulties which the real-world women experience, such as the career development and rights to speak in public sphere. Barbies spend their days performing dance routines, driving luxury cars, and motivating each other. Ironically, there is a fact that Barbies' life never touches the reality of women in real-world.



Figure 3. Barbies in Supreme Court

Barbie Sharon: So any claim on their part to be exercising a right is just their attempt to turn our democracy into a plutocracy. This makes me emotional! And I'm expressing it. I have no difficulty holding both logic and feeling at the same time. It does not diminish my powers, it expands them. (00:07:10 – 00:07:32)

Barbie Sharon in front of the Supreme Court, passionately debates a case that is supported by all Barbies. The above clue approves Abdedaim's finding that Barbie stands out as an independent woman which is not just characterized neither by her attractive appearance nor her attachment to Ken (Abdedaim, 2024).

Based on the prior few scenes, Barbie is shown as a respected woman with a great career who rules her own world. She is portrayed as a capable, intelligent woman rather than as a stereotypically feminine figure. Barbie is presented as a problem solver who uses her cleverness and creativity to solve problems throughout the entire movie. Rather from being a damsel in distress who needs Ken to save her, she is presented as a strong and resourceful woman.



Figure 4. Multifaceted Barbies in Barbie-land

Helen Mirren (VO): Thanks to Barbie, all problems of feminism and equal rights have been solved. At least that's what Barbie thinks. After all, they're living in Barbie-land. (00:03:32 – 00:03:45)

Supported by the script on the next scene, Barbie has overcome all the feminism problems that we might often experience in the real-world. Barbie plays a variety of inspiring roles in the film, including a leader, a scientist, an astronaut, and many more. This not only highlights her various careers, but also strengthens her standing as a role model for young girls, encouraging them to achieve anything they want.

Barbies' characters are portrayed as empowering for women, proven on how they tackle issues of leadership, independence, and self-worth, showing that women can be multifaceted and powerful. Barbie's beauty is not the major focus of the movie. She is not objectified or sexualized in any way, but the movie centers on her character and accomplishments (Gerwig, 2023). By all the achievements that she has made, Barbie is convinced that she has managed to become the idealized representation of women, particularly real-world's women.

The Anomalies that Mark Barbie's Existential Crisis

Barbie is portrayed as living a perfect eternal life in Barbie-land, without suffering, aging, or having any idea of her own mortality. She reflects a fragile idea of immortality by living a life of idealized beauty and endless youth. Behind all the perfection she lived in, Stereotypical Barbie ever once thinks she may lose her destiny as a doll.

The crucial part in the movie occurs when Barbie begins to notice anomalies and imperfections in her utopia. This experience causes her to reconsider her own existence and the nature of her being as a doll. For example, she begins to have new thoughts and feelings, such as questions about her purpose and the meaning of her life.

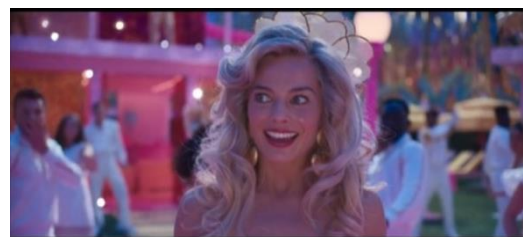


Figure 5. Barbie in the middle of dance floor

Barbie Margot: Do you guys ever think about dying?
(00:13:37 – 00:13:39)

This random thought indicates her first anomaly that she starts having human-like emotion which is a contrary of her being. While having a dance party with all the Barbies, she gradually had an anxiety of dying as an opposite of the ideal life they were living. However, this thought of immortality haunts her like a nightmare before going to bed. The anomalies continue to develop an increasing number each time, ranging from physical alterations to the advent of feeling she is unable to define.



Figure 6. Barbie's flat feet

Barbie Sharon: Hey Barbie, are you ok?
Barbie Margot: Yeah, Barbie. I just fell...
Barbie Hari: Fell?!
Barbie Margot: I'm so...embarrassed.
Barbie Alexandra: Barbie doesn't get embarrassed!
(00:17:46 – 00:17:50)

Barbie then confesses that she experiences unusual changes on her body. She realizes that her heels are not arched anymore as portrayed in the opening scene. She lost one of her identities as a Barbie, standing on tip-toe. The storyline revolves around Barbie's flat feet, which become a central theme and a symbolic break from the traditional Barbie image. Barbie, the plastic representation of herself, has flat feet and finds it difficult to walk despite having perfectly arched feet. This physical attribute of Barbie serves as a symbol for the character's turning point from the established conventions (Abdedaim, 2024).

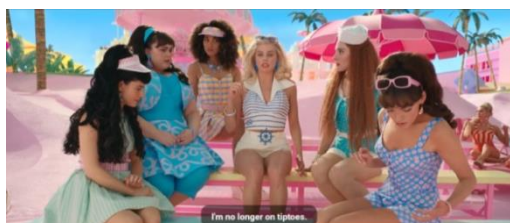


Figure 7. Barbie confesses her anomalies

Barbie Margot: I know I'm stereotypical Barbie, and therefore don't form conjectures concerning the causality of adjacent unfolding events, but some stuff has been happening that might be related; bad breath this morning, a cold shower, burnt waffle, falling off my roof...

Barbie Alexandra: You're malfunctioning!

Barbie frantically confronts the anomalies she never experienced before to other Barbies. This makes Barbie Alexandra react with her thought of malfunctioning, which indicates that Barbie gradually lost her sense of being an immortal doll. Those two clues above depict the Barbies' astonished reactions towards Stereotypical Barbie's anomalies. They believe that there is something happening outside their bubble that influences her function as a Stereotypical Barbie.

The underlined script above indicates Barbies belief that Stereotypical Barbie is not supposed to feel shame or any other emotions, even have to walk with flat feet. As for now, those characteristics have been inherent in her and no one has ever departed from those norms. Those characteristics that have been attached to Barbie implicitly trap Barbie in the need of perfection. Her Barbies friends are so accustomed to their nearly-perfect life that even a single imperfection represents a major threat to their identity.

This gives her more pressures and thoughts on either she can still be considered as the Stereotypical Barbie or not. To manage this newfound problem, Barbie encounters "weird Barbie", obviously by the advice of other Barbies who have ever got minor changes on their bodies. Her meeting with "weird Barbie" allows her involved in a philosophical dialogue regarding life and decision. Barbie finally finds out that there is a correlation between the doll-player feelings in the real-world and Barbie's existence in Barbie-land.



Figure 8. Weird Barbie's explanation

Weird Barbie: We are all being played with, babe. But usually there's some kind of separation; there's the girl and the doll. And never the twain shall cross.

Barbie Margot: The twain is crossing?

Weird Barbie: Yes! The girl playing with you must be sad and her thoughts and feelings and humanness are interfering with your dollness.

Barbie Margot: Why would she be sad? We fixed everything so that all women in the real world are happy and powerful!

Barbie dolls have historically existed as idealized representations of women, separated from the complex realities of the girls who play with them. Weird Barbie's sentence above depicts the separation that represents the contrast between the immanence of everyday life such as actual challenges, emotions, and mortality; and the transcendence represented by the doll's perfectly idealized life.

The idea generated above approves Beauvoir discussion on how women in reality have historically been assigned to roles of immanence, which restrict them to limited task, rather than transcendence, which entails pursuing greater goals and dreams that contribute to societal change (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 36). The term "twain is crossing" connotatively means that the girl's emotions can connect with Barbie's existence, symbolizing the disintegration of this breakdown. Barbie's existence is being influenced by genuine human experiences, resulting in an existential crisis.

Barbie's realization that she is being affected by the actual human emotions and experiences, rather than simply being a perfect doll, symbolizes an existential awakening. This reflects Sartre's view, in accordance to Beauvoir's concept, that "existence precedes essence," implying that one's identity is formed by lived experiences rather than predefined roles (Sartre, 1992, pp. 19-20).

This interference challenges Barbie's nature as a perfect doll. She must now confront the reality that her identity is flexible and impacted by imperfect external human experience. Barbie's concern at why the girl is sad despite the perceived perfection of the real-world also highlights the disparity between Barbie's representation of idealized life and the complex reality of human existence.

At the turning point, "weird Barbie" presents our lead character with a hard choice: accept her flat feet and proceed with an unusual adventure, or wear heels to be aligned with societal expectations. Actually, she has no choice than to embark on a journey to find what causes her anomalies. This brings her to explore the real-world to find the girl who plays with her.



Figure 9. Barbie observing the real-world

Along the journey, Barbie finds out that the real-world is indeed a reversed version of Barbie-land. This fact is exemplified by how the construction site is managed by men, unlike Barbie's version of a construction site that is all managed by women. Barbie then takes time to have a vision on the girl, but she accidentally dropped her focus on the surroundings where humans of all age ranges experience many forms of struggles and emotions. This realization leads her to meet the girl straight away.



Figure 10. Dialogue with Sasha

Sasha: You set feminism movement back 50 years, you destroy girls' innate sense of worth and you're killing the planet with your glorification of rampant consumerism.

Barbie Margot: But I'm supposed to help you and make you happy and powerful –

Sasha: I am powerful and until you showed up here and declared yourself Barbie. (00:40:31 – 00:41:13)

Those dialogues with Sasha cause Barbie to doubt the authenticity of her own existence and the society standards she represents. Dialogues that question the purpose of life and reality are the central to the existential crisis inquiries. It forces her to seek a deeper understanding of herself beyond the superficial ideals she was designed to embody. At this point, however, Barbie finally realizes that Barbie's life in Barbie-land is indeed just a manifestation of societal expectations that can not be realized in the real-world. The clue above gives Barbie the realization that the societal expectations she once embodied are superficial.

Ken's return to Barbie-land from the real-world creates a male-dominated society, symbolizing Barbie's change from a career woman to a male submissive. Barbie now has to fulfill Ken's various need including providing beer, snacks, and massage service. Barbie's portrayal of women has shifted from a world where "a woman can be anything she wants" to a patriarchal one where women are marginalized.

Barbie's decision to leave Barbie-land, at the first place, indicates the beginning of her path to freedom. This departure represents her breaking free from a world where everything is predetermined and ideal, allowing her to explore a larger unexpected world in which she can make her own decisions., In the middle stage of the movie, Barbie is shown in the movie reflecting about herself, which is an important part of building autonomy.

After their real-world exploration, Ken creates a patriarchal society and brainwashes Barbies, making them uninterested in scientific and technological developments, and solely focused on serving men. This is the moment where Barbie questions her personal beliefs and the purpose of life due to these changes. Barbie's past behaviors, beliefs, and intentions are brought into question through introspection and debates.



Figure 11. Barbie's lowest phase

Barbie Margot: I'm not Stereotypical Barbie pretty. It's not just that, I'm not smart enough to be interesting.

Gloria: But you are smart.

Barbie Margot: I can't do brain surgery, I've never flown a plane, I'm not president, no one in the Supreme Court is me. I'm just not good enough for anything.

The captured scene above, followed by the dialogues on the next scene, shows that Barbie is mourning her existential crisis while lying down facing the ground. This scene symbolizes that she has now physically and mentally down. This remarks the lowest phase of her identity, where she has her self-worth thrown away by Ken's mistreatment. This is the moment where Gloria plays an important role in assisting Barbie in identifying and rebelling against patriarchal society.

Through insightful dialogues on women complexity, Gloria encourages Barbie to pursue self-exploration and take control of her life.

Barbie and other characters, Gloria and her friends promotes the importance of solidarity in challenging and changing the status quo. Barbie discovers the nuances of gender dynamics and begins to reflect critically on her own identity and purpose. Beauvoir encourages for equal educational opportunities for women so that they can challenge cultural standards and form their own independent thoughts (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 739)

This transformation highlights the impact of societal expectations and prejudices on women's identities in various socio-cultural contexts. It also provides the reality of gender inequality and patriarchy. This idea becomes one of the interpretations from Beauvoir's argument, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the woman presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and female, which is described as feminine" (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 283). Through her journey in the real-world, Barbie discovers that her existential crisis arises from the anomalies affected by imperfect external human experience when the "twain is crossing".



Figure 12. Gloria's monologue on her disappointment

Gloria:You have to answer for men's bad behaviour, which is INSANE, but if you point that out then you're accused of complaining.

Gloria's disappointment on the inconsistent and thankless nature of her being, emphasizes Beauvoir's belief that women are required to adhere to societal standards that are merely limiting and contradictory. Women are examined against unrealistic standards and blamed for failing to reach them, a phenomenon based on their status as the "Other" (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 24). Gloria begins to subvert these norms by her questions on why women – and even a doll symbolizing a woman – must adhere to such limited and contradictory standards. This questioning is also corresponds with Butler theory that

revealing gender performativity can lead to challenges the patriarchy norms (Butler, 1990, p. 139). This self-awareness will help her define her genuine-self and make autonomous decisions in the future.



Figure 13. Barbie decides to live as a human

Ruth: I mean humans make things up like patriarchy and Barbie just to deal with how uncomfortable it is.

Barbie Margot: I understand.

Ruth: And then you die.

Barbie Margot: I want to be part of the people that make meaning, not the thing that's made. I want to be the one imagining, not the idea itself.

The underlined clue addresses the existential discomfort of human existence. Humans frequently experience this suffering because they have to manage their freedom within the framework of societal expectations. Beauvoir underlines that accepting one's freedom comes with the discomfort of acknowledging the significance of one's choice and responsibility (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 283). Through the underlined statement, Ruth reminds the human existential reality that life is not eternal, and everyone will ultimately face death. However, Barbie consistently expresses her desire to leave her perfect self, moving from immanence to transcendence.

By accepting the consequences as a human being, she no longer wants to be a passive object defined by social standards but rather an active subject who creates meaning through her finite life. The above elaboration is consistent with Beauvoir's notion that in order to achieve the highest stage of freedom woman should be able to lose herself so that she might rediscover her true self (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 10). Barbie's motivation to be a creator of meaning rather than a product of social standards also resonates with Beauvoir's suggestion for woman to embrace their freedom and actively shape their future.

Barbie's relationships change as she gains greater autonomy. She develops deeper, more lasting relationships with people who value her for who she genuinely is. This transition is reflected in her encounters with other characters who encourage her self-discovery

and value her autonomy. Barbie begins making autonomous decisions about her next life. She decides to stay in the real-world, accompanied by Ruth Handler, to pursue a meaningful career, form genuine relationship, or engage in social cases. Finally, this journey not only redefined her identity but also offers a powerful message about the value of living authentically and making every moment of our short existence.

Barbie's desire for authenticity reflects Beauvoir's existentialist emphasis on being genuine to oneself (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 791). Barbie's journey represents a direct challenge to traditional gender norms. Her awareness that she is not required to conform to the idealized image of womanhood enforced by her creators marks a striking protest against traditional norms. Barbie's transition involves discovering her own self and making decisions that represent her genuine goals and values. Barbie learns to accept her ambiguities and complexities. This acceptance enables her to handle her new environment with a sense of empowerment and freedom.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that Barbie's journey on the real-world finally discovers that her existential crisis arises from the anomalies affected by imperfect external human experience when the "twain is crossing". The 2023 *Barbie* movie, through Barbie's encounter with mortality and consequent existential struggle, aligns with Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist feminism. The dialogues between Weird Barbie and Barbie Margot embody Barbie's existential crisis by depicting the doll's idealized world colliding with the emotionally complex reality of human life. This encounter leads her on a quest of self-discovery, honesty, and liberty. Barbie represents the principles of existentialist feminism as defined by Simone de Beauvoir by confronting these existential concerns.

Barbie's journey of self-discovery liberates her from societal expectations and allows her to accept her genuine identity. This transformation is exemplified by engaging in self-reflection, challenging the patriarchy, and accepting the consequence to be a human as her new identity. By the end of the film, Barbie has redefined her identity, establishing herself as an independent person capable of living truthfully and freely. Overall, this transformation not only redefines Barbie's character, but it also delivers a clear message on the value of self-discovery and autonomy that helps her in redefining her true freedom and autonomy.

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