

**A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF LIBERAL FEMINISM REPRESENTATION IN
BARBIE (2023)**

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STATEMENT BY THE AUTHOR

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis.



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ABSTRACT

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As a historical and controversial global cultural icon, Barbie (2023) has drawn worldwide attention to its feminist representation, which has also been critiqued for inadvertently reinforcing traditional gender stereotypes it attempts to undermine. This study employs Roland Barthes' semiotic framework to analyze key signs, symbols, and narratives in the film, examining how it represents and challenges liberal feminism. This study conducts a semiotic analysis of Barbie's (2023) signs, symbols, and narratives by deconstructing them at three fundamental levels (denotative, connotative, and myth) to uncover embedded ideological meanings about gender roles, power, and social reform. Through a qualitative-descriptive approach, this research reveals how the film conveys liberal feminism ideals, such as individual empowerment, representation, and autonomy. The findings indicate that liberal feminist themes of agency, empowerment, and representation are communicated through the film's visual and narrative elements. Simultaneously, it critiques liberal feminism's reformist approach through its portrayals that reinforce the patriarchal culture and norms that connote the fragility of liberal feminism in a patriarchal context. The findings conclude that Barbie (2023) serves more as a critique of the limitations of liberal feminism than as a representation of liberal feminism as a single feminist framework.

Keywords: *Barbie, Liberal Feminism, Patriarchy, Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis, Media Representation*

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DEDICATION PAGE

I dedicate this work to the glory of my God, my family, and my loved ones.

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