

Read the female values from the movie Barbie

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Abstract. Barbie has been a source of controversy and fascination. The article "Barbie Has Never Been a Great Symbol, but She's an Excellent Mirror" suggests that Barbie embodies both an unrealistic image of femininity and the aspirations of women. Her beautiful image has exacerbated women's anxiety about their physique and appearance, and movies and brands related to Barbie may have invisibly spread the stereotype of women in their era; But at the same time, Barbie is a product of innovative significance, emphasizing the independence of women as subjects. Barbie has attracted attention to women's issues, and Barbie has also become an important cultural idol. Overall, Barbie represents a continuous struggle for women to gain freedom from stereotypes and expectations.

Keywords: Barbie, gender discrimination, feminism.

1. Introduction

In my early years of elementary school, I found myself struggling with math. My mother used to joke, saying, "Maybe girls' thinking isn't as logical as boys." These words left me with a sense of unease. One day, when I faced a math problem that I couldn't solve, I turned to my deskmate for help. Instead of explaining, he quickly dismissed my plea, insinuating that my lack of comprehension and logical thinking hindered our collaboration. In that moment, a profound realization surged through me like an electric jolting, why society deemed girls inferior in math? Motivated by this incident, I dedicated myself to endless hours of practice. Eventually, my efforts bore remarkable fruit, as I triumphantly secured a substantially higher score than my deskmate during a decisive exam.

Similarly, when I was a child, I loved all kinds of Barbie dolls. Most of them had beautiful faces, excessively thin figures, and long, bushy hair. Barbie is the image of the ideal woman that I always thought, but at the same time, it also deepened my stereotype of female gender and strengthened my desire for beauty.

The article "Barbie Has Never Been a Great Symbol, but She's an Excellent Mirror" suggests that Barbie has been a source of controversy and fascination; she embodies both an unrealistic image of femininity and the aspirations of women. To some extent, Barbie serves as a mirror reflecting society's views and opinions on women[1]. In 1992, Mattel's introduction of Teen Talk Barbie, which included the phrase "Math class is tough!", revealed the brand's outdated perception.

2. bias against women

In real life, this unconscious gender discrimination is also very common. They occur in every corner of our lives, such as the stereotypical impression that women are not good at learning mathematics, physics, and chemistry, the inherent bias that women do not have a sense of direction when driving, or the natural belief that men in conference rooms are in charge and women are assistants. Unconscious gender biases are some unconscious associations based on gender[2], as stated by the Acting Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Durant, "Some biases are obvious, such as women in politics who raise their voices or strongly express their emotions, being described as 'hysterical', while men who do the same are praised for bravery, strength and determination. Other biases are more subtle and imperceptible, such as excluding women from specific projects, praising them for being 'charming' and 'elegant', and so on."

Therefore, Durant stated that addressing both conscious and unconscious gender biases requires courage and wisdom. The Director of the United Nations Office in Geneva, Valois, believes that the power of role models is crucial in eliminating gender bias.

Varovaya said, "My way to face these biases is to be the best one. Fully demonstrating your abilities and becoming a leader in your professional field is the most effective way to deal with these biases. Your success, for other young girls, is also the best motivation to help them overcome the obstacles of biases more easily."

Although this unconscious gender discrimination may stem from traditions, norms, values, culture and life experiences, the deepening gender stereotypes can affect decision-making, career development for men and women, access to opportunities, and the promotion of gender equality[3]. Everyone is multifaceted, and no one can be simply summarized in just a few words. Every woman is an independent individual, and the group of women should avoid being simply and roughly "categorized" into stereotypes. And our society should also truly understand everyone in front of us, and not look at people with colored glasses.

3. Barbie is a reflection of women's demands in modern society

At the same time, Barbie dolls are also a mirror that reflects society's requirements for women's figure and appearance. Some studies have shown that early exposure to Barbie dolls is likely to make girls have a greater desire for thin bodies. The participants were 160 girls (5-8 years old) from Adelaide, South Australia[4]. They were randomly assigned to one of three states of interaction with Barbie (physical participation, physical observation, print observation). The results showed that exposure to Barbie in any form led to higher internalization of the skinny ideal in girls compared to the control group. But in fact, excessive emaciated figure is not conducive to the healthy growth of the young girls, early to contact Barbie dolls which have unrealistic thin body would damage the girl's body image, leading to increased risk for eating disorders and body weight cycle. This is also the most intuitive reason why many people dislike Barbie, as her appearance provides an impossible standard of beauty. The essence of the female appearance she presents is to satisfy men's gaze at women's appearance. Many people say she is too thin; She always wears makeup; She is like a beautiful clothes hanger, often changing clothes, and looks too passive to become a role model for modern girls.

In fact, society's stereotype of women is not only reflected in Barbie's too thin, perfect figure, but also reflected in the Barbie series of movies, in which the heroine always has an endless addiction and pursuit of love. In our society, love seems to be naturally seen as a weapon and ability for women. Women can acquire many things through beauty and love, and those things seem to require no effort[5]. For example, we always see young women in movies dressed in fashion, living in luxurious houses, and owning a gorgeous car. Their luxurious lives seem to have only consumption and a lack of labor. This middle-class imagination undoubtedly reflects the film's neglect of the value of women's labor. In fact, the image of Barbie in American culture has always been a typical projection of patriarchy on the image of women: a beautiful woman who harvests both love and career. This image not only obscures the practical difficulties faced by women, but also encourages us to continuously internalize the standards of "what is a woman" established by capitalism and patriarchy. In fact, there is no inevitable binding relationship between women and love. Even without love and men, women are independent individuals who can work, have wisdom, and value, with their own pursuits and ambitions. In fact, love narrative has always been a romantic imagination instilled in women by patriarchy. Therefore, while reflecting on patriarchy, we must also criticize the narrative of love.

In addition, our current society places too much emphasis on the importance of the family in women's lives. A successful woman must become a mother and have the ability to educate excellent children, which is also a huge pressure exerted on women invisibly. Nurturing is not the responsibility of a woman alone, but society instills this concept in women in their early years. When they were young, most of the girls' toys were baby dolls that could be used to play the role of mothers in the

"family", sleeping, breastfeeding and changing diapers. Compared to boys' pistols, trucks, and rockets, they were vastly different. In film and television works, the roles that women can portray also have great limitations, as they can only play five professions: nurse, teacher, secretary, clerk, mother or wife[6].

4. Show women's subjectivity and independence

However, the appearance of Barbie is not only negative, in a sense, it also shows a certain degree of female subjectivity and independence. For example, Barbie has also broken through many career ceilings that bind women. Based on the historical background of Barbie's emergence, we can analyze the breakthroughs and limitations represented by Barbie.

The first batch of Barbie dolls were manufactured in Japan and first exposed at the 1959 International Toy Fair in the United States under the name "Barbie - Role Models for Girls". Barbie, a plump figure with a height of 11 and a half inches, appeared wearing a zebra striped black and white swimsuit and a beach ponytail, with slender and beautiful limbs. In the American market at that time, Barbie was the first doll to have an independent career. She was beautiful, fashionable, and lived a happy life, becoming a self projection of American girls. American economist Michael McComb said, "Barbie is the embodiment of a girl from the late capitalist era."

And Barbie's founder Ruth Handler once said that her original intention in creating Barbie was to prove, "A girl can become anyone she wants to be by playing Barbie, which means that girls also have the right to choose[7]." And Lisa McKnight, the current head of Mattel's doll business, also said, "We hope to expand Barbie's positioning as someone who advocates for girl empowerment. She has an open attitude towards change and is also striving to reflect the world in which girls live. "

From this perspective, Barbie actually broke the most primitive discipline of women in traditional patriarchal society - before Barbie, young girls were given doll toys, forcing them to imbue themselves with maternal instincts from a very young age, thus perpetuating the so-called tireless inheritance of female parenting work. But Barbie is an adult with her own life and work agenda, no longer a baby doll to meet the needs of feeding and care. For countless children, Barbie dolls provide their earliest impressions of adult women outside of their loved ones, embodying their fantasies about their own image as adults.

However, due to the limitations of the times, early Barbie's excessively thin appearance and pursuit of love did provide an impossible beauty model for women, weaving a sugarcoated dream, reducing women's sensitivity to power and status, as well as their understanding of the cruelty and seriousness of real society. This is mainly reflected in the fact that many girls in their twenties still have unrealistic fantasies about society and the opposite sex. They lack independence and hope that someone can unconditionally provide them with a comfortable life, lacking subjective initiative. At the same time, they have an almost pathological pursuit of beauty, dieting in order to become thinner, and choosing plastic surgery in order to have a more perfect face. Due to some insignificant flaws in their appearance and figure, they are constantly anxious day and night. The endless pursuit of beauty will undoubtedly increase their psychological and physiological burden. In fact, beauty is just an additional item in our lives. Striving to improve our various abilities, In a sense, is much more important than just having a perfect appearance.

But at the same time, Barbie's appearance at that time was undoubtedly a breakthrough, and to this day, Barbie is still adapting to the times, making more diverse and inclusive changes, such as Barbie wearing prosthetics, Barbie in a wheelchair, Barbie with Down syndrome. Through continuous improvement and breakthroughs in body shapes and styles, Barbie is also leading by example, making our society become more inclusive of female images.

Although there are many controversies over the success and development of Barbie dolls, two facts should not be ignored: Barbie has attracted attention to women's issues, and Barbie has also become an important cultural idol; Barbie provides an impossible model of beauty for women, but Barbie is also telling all girls that you can become whoever you want to be.

5. Conclusion

Overall, Barbie represents a continuous struggle for women to gain freedom from stereotypes and expectations. After reading the article "Barbie Has Never Been a Great Symbol, But She's an Excellent Mirror", I am deeply aware of the widespread stereotype of women everywhere. Barbie is a mirror that reflects the current situation of women in society, but it is also a symbol of women's aspirations. Barbie is based on reality and transcends reality, representing ideal female models from different periods. Is Barbie's evolutionary history not the evolutionary history of female status? There are still many stereotypes targeting women in our society, and these stereotypes are not facts. Girls possess logical thinking and problem-solving abilities that are no less than those of boys. My outstanding achievements in mathematics have also successfully awakened my mother. At the same time, every girl should be a living embodiment of Barbie dolls, living in the present, confident and generous, and determined to break all stereotypes and become anything they are determined to do! Barbie can do anything, and girls can also do anything.

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