

***Visual semiotic and cultural messages in Barbie movie poster 2023***

Hana Achour

University of Batna1 (Algeria), hana.achour@univ-batna.dz

Received: 03 / 02 / 2026

Accepted: 11 / 05 / 2026

Published: 30 / 05 / 2026

Abstract:

Movie posters are considered one of the most powerful marketing tools for movies, with a strong focus on their design to provide the audience with a summary in order to attract them to see the movie in theaters. To achieve this goal, necessary and effective visual semiotics are used, which always carry hidden cultural messages.

From this perspective, the Barbie movie 2023 was chosen because of the discussions it sparked due to its content and the messages it conveys, we felt that it was a suitable sample for analyzing its poster through a semiotic analysis that addressed visual and verbal aspects. This study concluded that the poster reinforced the movie's content by promoting feminism at the expense of masculinity and deepening the debate on this topic.

Keywords: *Cultural messages; Movie; Poster; Semiotic; Visual aspects; Verbal aspects.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The intersection of visual semiotics and cultural representation in media has long been a topic of interest and critical analysis. Semiotics, the study of signs and symbols and their uses or interpretations, provides an insightful lens through which we can decode the multiple meanings inherent in visual artifacts. One such artifact that invites a rich semiotic and cultural analysis is the Barbie movie poster. This movie is considered one of the most successful movies of 2023, having grossed over \$1.4 billion worldwide. This is indicative of the massive audience that watched it, which led us to choose its poster for semiotic analysis.

Barbie is a cultural icon, transcending her origins as a children's toy to become a symbol of femininity, beauty standards, consumerism, and even feminist discourse. As a visual text, the movie poster is an entry point for understanding not only the narrative and aesthetic choices of the movie, but also the broader cultural messages it seeks to convey or discuss.

The Barbie movie poster 2023 is a carefully crafted visual composition designed to communicate specific ideas and evoke specific emotions. The poster functions as a multimedia text, combining visual elements such as color, typography, imagery, and composition with cultural connotations and intertextual cues. Each element of the poster acts as a semiotic marker, contributing to the overall meaning-building process. Beyond its visual aesthetics, the poster is also a cultural artifact that reflects and engages with societal values, norms, and debates. As a cultural icon, Barbie has been both celebrated and critiqued for her role in shaping beauty ideals, gender roles, and consumer culture. Therefore, the movie poster is not merely a promotional tool; it is a platform for cultural negotiation, visually illustrating the tensions between tradition and progress, fantasy and reality, and individualism and conformity.

By examining the poster through the lens of semiotics, we can discover the ways in which it conveys these complex cultural messages, often through subtle or implicit means. Furthermore, the Barbie 2023 movie poster falls within a broader textual framework inspired by the cultural contexts of the Barbie brand. This intertextuality enriches the poster's meaning, inviting viewers to draw on their prior knowledge and associations in their interpretation of the visual text.

As we delve into the visual significance and cultural messages of the Barbie movie poster 2023, it is essential to consider the interplay between the explicit and the implicit, the intended and the unintended. A poster is not a static or neutral object; it is a dynamic text that interacts with its audience, inviting them to decode its signals and construct meaning. Hence, the idea of this research paper was to investigate the visual and verbal cues embedded in the poster and the hidden cultural messages, all by posing the following questions:

- ✓ **What are the different semiotic signs included in the Barbie movie poster 2023?**
- ✓ **What are the hidden cultural messages founded in the Barbie movie poster 2023?**

1. Methodological aspect:

1.1 Aim of the research:

Each study has specific goals that the researcher seek to reach and this study entitled "Visual semiotic and cultural messages in Barbie movie poster 2023" aims to:

- Detect the different semiotic signs (visual and verbal) that are included in the Barbie movie poster 2023.
- Expose the hidden cultural messages that are founded in the Barbie movie poster 2023.

1.2 The significance of the research:

The importance of this research paper lies in the topic it addresses and its relevance to many aspects, as movie posters are very important for promoting movies because the poster acts as a logo for the movie itself. Each poster includes two aspects, the visual and the verbal, and each of them has its own impact on the audience.

In this study, through the analyze of Barbie movie poster 2023, we will reveal these two aspects. Not only that, we will try to expose the various cultural messages included in the poster, all of which express the director's vision that he would like to convey to the movie's viewers.

1.3 Previous studies :

Previous research lays the knowledge foundation for scientific research, it identifies knowledge gaps and justifies the feasibility of the study. Reviewing current literature ensures methodological accuracy and prevents duplication. This process is indispensable for cumulative progress in this field. Therefore, we have decided to include in this research paper some previous studies that we consider important and relevant to our topic, as follows :

1.3.1 Rosyta Pua Wa Ode :Analysis of visual elements in Barbie movie posters, 2023:

This study seeks to analyze the visual elements of the Barbie movie poster, such as typography, visual elements, color, and design, to determine their impact on promotion and communication. This study relies on qualitative research methods with descriptive analysis, and data collection primarily through observation and recording techniques. It is noteworthy that the researcher relied on semiotics and visual composition theory for the theoretical framework of the analysis.

Key findings of this study can be summarized as follows:

- a. Regarding typography:** The use of the Bartix font was noted, characterized by its thick, handwritten style, which conveys a sense of playfulness and elegance, in line with the characteristics of Barbie's character in the movie.
- b. Regarding visual elements:** The main visual elements are Barbie and Ken. Barbie is depicted driving a pink car, symbolizing the excitement of her adventures, while Ken sits in the back seat, demonstrating his loyalty to Barbie.
- c. Regarding color:** Blue and pink are the dominant colors in the movie poster, with blue symbolizing loyalty and trust, reflecting Barbie's loyal character and Ken's loyalty and love for her. The color pink is used for its association with Barbie and also represents feminism.
- d. Regarding design:** A symmetrical design was adopted, distributing visual weight equally across the horizontal, vertical, and radial axes, demonstrating the harmonious balance between the two main characters. (Ode, 2023)

1.3.2 Dini Anggraheni, Anandha Anandha , Adiprana Yogatama: Semiotic Analysis of Barbie Movie Poster, 2024

This study addresses multiple semiotic aspects using content analysis methodology, based on multiple theories, to reveal the complex interaction between signs, symbols, and meanings. The results of the analysis addressed the importance of visual and verbal aspects. cues in conveying narratives and engaging audiences, providing profound insights into the complex semiotic techniques used in semiotic movie marketing.

The following are the questions that guided this research paper:

- What are the semiotic signs present in the "Barbie" movie poster?
- What insights can be drawn from a semiotic examination of the visual and symbolic aspects of the "Barbie" movie poster?

The analysis of the "Barbie" movie poster was divided into two aspects: verbal and visual.

- a. Verbal aspects and messages:** represented by the names of the film's protagonists and the phrase "She's everything. He's just Ken." This phrase disrupts traditional gender roles,

portraying Barbie as possessing many qualities, while Ken is reduced to a humorous and limited role.

b. Barbie: The film's title is written in large, clear, white font to attract attention, while familiarizing the audience with the title without conveying a specific thematic message.

c. Colors: Blue, pink, green, brown, and white. Blue is associated with fantasy and pink, Barbie's signature color.

d. Models: Barbie, Ken, and the coconut tree are identified. The coconut tree suggests a beachy atmosphere.

e. Background: Pink is the dominant color, reflecting Barbie's importance.

In conclusion, a semiotic analysis of the "Barbie" film poster reveals the importance of visual and verbal cues in film marketing to convey narrative and engage audiences. (Anggraheni, Anandha, & Yogatama, 2024)

1.3.3 Nelly K. Abdelwahed Beyond Pink and Plastic: A Critical Analysis of Barbie (2023) Through the Lens of Gender Performativity, Intersectionality, and Diverse Cultural Perspectives, 2025:

This study addressed various discussions about the film in relation to gender and identity, but the approach was representative of the West only. The results indicate that the film effectively critiques systemic inequalities and empowers women, but at the same time ignores overlapping and diverse life experiences.. This analysis emphasizes the importance of feminist media in bridging cultural gaps and engaging authentically with global audiences. The study aims to fill a gap in research on the film "Barbie" (2023) within feminist media criticism, emphasizing the need for inclusivity and representation in feminist narratives.

The study methodology relied on qualitative research through surveys and interviews with six university students, mostly middle- and upper-class Egyptians, to gain in-depth perspectives on the film. Interviewees' responses revealed mixed opinions about the film's intentions. Some viewed it as a positive portrayal of women and feminism, while others viewed it as a commercial product. Many felt it made young women feel visible, but others felt it failed to address deeper systemic issues or have a transformative impact. The film was largely seen as challenging negative societal perceptions of gender roles, particularly through its use of role reversal and the exaggeration of gender roles in "Barbie land." Among the most prominent criticisms of the film was its limited global resonance due to its Western narrative and lack of diverse representation.

In conclusion, Barbie has sparked important discussions about gender and identity, but new ways of promoting her must be found to truly resonate with a diverse global audience. (Abdelwahed, 2025)

1.3.4 Lulu Chen, Feminist Perspectives in Multi-Modal Discourse, Analysis: The Case of the Barbie Film Poster , 2025:

This study analyzes the Barbie movie poster, concluding that its visual elements present Barbie as an empowered central character, in line with the film's feminist themes. The successful use of colors changed the prevailing concept of the role of each gender, as Barbie was portrayed as an independent character.

Key aspects of the analysis include:

a. Representational meaning:

Action and interaction are employed to convey the narrative in the movie poster. Ken's gaze toward Barbie emphasizes her as the central character of the film, and the slogan "She's

everything. It's only Ken" highlights her power and Ken's secondary role. The vibrant use of pink, traditionally associated with femininity, is reinterpreted to convey power, control, and independence.

b. Interactional meaning:

Barbie's direct gaze and smile create a sense of "demand," actively engaging the viewer and inviting them into the narrative. Ken's gaze toward Barbie also serves as a focal point of interaction. The poster is positioned in a medium shot, creating a sense of familiarity and accessibility while maintaining the iconic characters' status. The frontal viewpoint enhances a sense of equality and connection between the viewer and the characters. The colors blend fantasy and social commentary.

c. Compositional meaning:

Barbie appears on the left, representing the "given" information, suggesting her familiarity as an iconic character. Ken, on the right (a "new" pose), hints at a new portrayal of his personality or relationship with Barbie.

The study concludes that the poster design intentionally challenges traditional gender roles and promotes a narrative of women's empowerment, in line with contemporary feminist discourse. (Chen, 2025)

1.4 Research methodology and theory:

This research paper adopts qualitative research methods with descriptive analysis. Visual semiotics was chosen to explore the levels of meaning in the Barbie 2023 movie poster, as this research explores the cultural contexts and semiotic symbols that constitute the overall expressive power of the poster through an in-depth study of its visual components, symbols, and references.

Since this research aims to reveal the visual semiotics and various cultural messages embedded in the Barbie 2023 movie poster, we find that there are several theories that will aid in the analysis process. However, we have chosen Roland Barthes' theory of semiotics, because we believe that Barthes' theory of semiotics provides a systematic approach (Barus , Aisyah, Siregar , & Risnawaty , 2025) to uncovering the layers of meaning inherent in the movie poster, as this theory will help us understand how signs and symbols are used in the Barbie 2023 movie poster to convey messages and meanings, by enabling us to analyze colors, images, texts, and other elements as signs, as well as to identify the nature of the cultural messages contained in this poster.

1.5 Data analysis :

The data for this research, as indicated in the title, is represented by the Barbie movie poster that was published in June 2023 in the official website of the movie <https://www.barbie-themovie.net/> , but the movie released in the Cinema by 20 July 2023 in United States of America and in the below all the other details:

Table (1): Barbie movie 2023 technical sheet

Genre:	Fantasy Comedy
Running Time:	114 Minutes
Language:	English
Budget:	145

Box Office:	1,446 Billion
Director:	Greta Gerwig
Writer:	Greta Gerwig, Noah Baumbac
Producer:	David Heyman, Margot Robbie, Tom Ackerley, Robbie Brenner
Production Companies:	Heyday Films, Mattel Films, LuckyChap Entertainment, NB, GC Pictures
Distributed by:	Warner Bro
Cinematography:	Rodrigo Prieto
Main Actors:	Margot Robbie, Ryan Gosling

The source: By the author, 2025

II. Theoretical aspects :

1- The origin of the movie poster :

Posters are an important textual promotional material in the cinematic field. They have the ability to pique the audience's interest and attract them to watch the movie by providing some details about the events of the movie, by employing certain marketing elements such as the use of images, colors and texts and creating a special combination of the movie's basic elements. (Bogdanou , 2024)

A movie poster can be considered both an advertisement and a work of art, expressing the movie in an image. It is considered a visual communication between the movie and its audience, used to influence the audience by providing them with the necessary information about the movie. As for the content of the poster, it usually includes a picture or pictures from the movie, or the main characters.

French artist Jules Chéret was a pioneer in using lithography to produce vibrant paintings in the 1890s., multicolored prints, whose sole function was to advertise the date and location of a movie screening.

The French short movie L'Arroseur Arrosé (The Waterer Watered) from 1895 is considered the first movie to have a movie poster designed for it, in the form of a lithograph depicting a scene from the movie and drawn by hand. After that, posters with simple designs appeared, relying solely on text and resembling newspaper advertisements. (Cerutti, 2023)

If we were to summarize the stages of the emergence and development of movie posters, they would be divided into five basic stages, as follows:

- **The silent era (1890-1920):** Posters at this stage were simple and hand-drawn, containing the movie title and pictures of the actors.

- **The Golden Age of Hollywood (1930-1950):** During this period, movie stars began to appear on movie posters, but they were luxurious movie posters such as Marilyn Monroe.
- **New Hollywood (1960s and 1970s):** Movie posters evolved during this period, becoming characterized by an eye-catching and unconventional visual style.
- **Blockbuster era (1980s and 1990s):** Movie posters from this period were characterized by designs featuring provocative images with strong typography.
- **The modern era (2000 to present):** Movie posters have evolved greatly in this era in terms of diversity. This evolution mirrors the evolution of the global movie industry, especially with the emergence of streaming platforms that have attracted audiences. (Cerutti, 2023)

Today, movie posters are an important element in marketing a movie and, consequently, its success and popularity.

2. Visual codes and cultural context in movie posters:

Visual codes are the elements within a movie poster that communicate meaning, genre, and narrative cues to the audience. These codes are carefully selected to ensure the poster captures attention and conveys essential information about the movie. **Common visual codes include:**

2.1 Main image and iconography:

- a. **Main character(s):** The central location of the movie's protagonists immediately identifies who or what the story is about. Their expressions, clothing, and poses indicate the type of movie: horror, romantic, comedy, etc.
- b. **Iconography:** This refers to the visual symbols available on the movie poster in the form of shapes, colors, and elements, all of which serve the movie's story. (Ode, 2023)

2.2 Color scheme:

- a. **Genre indicators:** The color used in a movie poster can be considered a strong indicator of the genre of the movie. Romance movie posters tend to feature light colors, while horror movie posters tend to feature dark colors. Comedy movies tend to feature vibrant colors.
- b. **Emotional tone:** This element is closely related to the previous one, because the type of movie plays an important role in choosing the colors used in the poster to evoke certain feelings. For example, the color red in a movie poster will necessarily refer to danger or love. The full meaning here is completed by correctly reading the movie title and the character features used in it. The feelings that the poster creates in the audience through the colors used are capable of attracting them to watch the movie. (Wang, Wang, & Xue, 2023)
- c. **Cultural significance:** Color choices may reflect cultural meanings, such as white symbolizing mourning in Chinese culture, so the cultural context in which the movie poster was designed must be taken into account in order to arrive at a correct analysis of the poster's elements.

2.3 Lighting:

- a. **Lighting:** Lighting plays a major role in creating the desired mood for the audience. For example, dim lighting suggests warmth or horror, while bright lighting creates suspense and is used in action or drama movies. (Tao, 2022)

2.4 Typography :

- a. **Font style:** The font type used for the title and logo reflects the type of movie. For example, curvy fonts are usually used for horror movies, and sharp fonts are used for action movies.
- b. **Hierarchy:** The position and size of the title determine its importance. (Ode, 2023)

2.5 Layout and structure:

- a. **Structure:** The rule of thirds, symmetry, and focal points direct the viewer's attention. Central placement indicates importance; therefore, poor use or disregard of these rules may create discomfort among the audience, which may affect their desire to watch the movie.
- b. **Balance:** Symmetrical layouts in posters reflect stability, while asymmetrical layouts may suggest chaos or conflict, which influences the audience's decision to watch the movie. (Pooranalingam, 2024)

The cultural context is defined as the prevailing and commonly accepted beliefs, values, norms, and artistic traditions of the society in which a movie is produced and consumed. Naturally, this context has a profound influence on the design, interpretation, and analysis of movie poster content:

- a. **Cultural symbols:** It makes sense that movie posters would feature symbols, colors, or images that resonate with the local audience familiar with them.
- b. **Historical and social themes:** Movie posters are a product of the social and political conditions and even historical events of a particular period of time.
- c. **Symbolic language:** The effectiveness and success of a poster depends on the extent to which its symbolic language is compatible with the target culture, because incompatibility leads to confusion or reduces the intended impact of the poster design. (Tao, 2022)

3. The core marketing functions of movie poster:

Movie posters are a common form of advertising that has been used in the movie industry for a long time. The idea of the poster has always been associated with movie culture, due to its ability to convey basic information to the audience in order to attract their attention in a purely visual way. Below, we will try to outline the most important marketing functions of the movie poster.

- 3.1 **Promotion and awareness:** Of course, the primary role of a movie poster is to promote the movie, to inform the public about the release of a new movie while providing enough hints to pique the audience's curiosity to go to the cinema and buy a ticket to see the movie.
- 3.2 **Target audience interaction:** To ensure the desired interaction from the audience towards the movie poster, their expectations must be taken into account. (Nare, Adak , & Chattopadhyay , 2023) . Therefore, when designing the poster, caution must be exercised when using visual tools such as colors, images, and other visual elements mentioned earlier in this article, which we have already pointed out as important in attracting the audience to watch the movie.
- 3.3 **Emotional impact and persuasion:** One of the most important marketing functions of a movie poster is to arouse curiosity among the audience, convince them of the quality of the movie, and encourage them to watch it in theaters. To achieve this difficult goal, it is necessary to use the visual elements of the movie poster intelligently and correctly, such as the appropriate use of colors that match the type of movie, the use of fonts that express the type of movie, and the other elements mentioned above, which, when combined, produce a distinctive and memorable poster.
- 3.4 **Providing information:** One of the expected functions of a movie poster is to provide all necessary information about the movie, such as the title, cast, and release date, all of which encourage the audience to decide to watch the movie.
- 3.5 **Visual narrative:** Visually, the movie poster provides a concise overview of the movie's events and genre through the effective use of images and symbols that pique the audience's curiosity. (Yang, 2023)

III. Analytical framework:

1. Resume of the movie :

Barbie (Margot Robbie) lives in **Barbie Land**, a vibrant, perfect world where every day is fantastic, and all the Barbies and Kens coexist in harmony. However, Barbie begins to

experience strange changes, she starts thinking about death, her feet go flat, and she develops cellulite. Disturbed by these imperfections, she seeks advice from **Weird Barbie** (Kate McKinnon), who tells her that she must travel to the **real world** to find the child playing with her and resolve her existential crisis.

Ken (Ryan Gosling) insists on joining her, and together they leave Barbie Land. In the real world, Barbie is shocked to discover that life isn't as perfect as she imagined. She meets **Gloria** (America Ferrera), a Mattel employee, and her daughter **Sasha**, who challenge Barbie's idealized view of herself and the world. Meanwhile, Ken becomes fascinated with the concept of **patriarchy**, which he believes will give him the power and recognition he lacks in Barbie Land.

When Barbie and Ken return to Barbie Land, they find it transformed. Ken has brought patriarchy to Barbie Land, turning it into "**Kendom**," where the Kens now dominate, and the Barbies are subservient. Barbie teams up with Gloria, Sasha, and the other Barbies to reclaim their world. Through clever strategies and empowering speeches, they restore balance to Barbie Land, teaching the Kens (and themselves) about equality and self-worth.

In the end, Barbie decides to leave Barbie Land permanently, choosing to become human and embrace the imperfections and complexities of real life. The movie concludes with her taking her first steps into the real world, ready to live authentically.

2. Description of the poster contents:

To apply the semiotic method to find visual semiotic and cultural messages, we chose the principle poster that the movie got announced with, we took it from the official website of the movie <https://www.barbie-themovie.net/> and in the below the poster that we chose :

Figure (1) : Barbie movie poster 2023



The source: (Barbie, 2025)

When you see the poster, the first thing you notice is the character of Barbie, represented by the actress Margot Robbie, riding a pink car. She appears with white skin and long blond hair, smiling, wearing a pink dress with accessories and glasses of the same color, with her hand on the steering wheel. Behind her sits actor Ryan Gosling, who plays the role of Ken, who also with white skin and blond hair. He appears smiling, looking at Barbie, wearing an open green and pink shirt.

Above them is the title of the movie, “Barbie,” written in large letters. At the top left of the poster is Margot Robbie, and on the right is Ryan Gosling. Below their names is the phrase, “She's everything. He's just Ken.”

The name of the movie's distributor, “WARNER BROS.,” is written in very small letters at the bottom right of the poster. In the middle of the poster, the movie's release date, July 20, 2023, is written in large pink letters, and on the left, in very small letters, is written Atlantic Records/WaterTower Music, which produced the movie's soundtrack.

VI. Analysis and discussion :

Roland Barthes revolutionized image analysis by applying semiotic theory to visual media. His concepts of signifier and signified are fundamental to how we “read” images and uncover their layers of meaning, and movie posters are, after all, images.

To analyze the poster for Barbie 2023, we chose our data collection by following several steps. First, the movie poster was downloaded from the official website of the movie. Next, the visual elements of the poster, including color, shape, and background, were carefully observed. Finally, the verbal message conveyed through the text on the movie poster was analyzed.

The analysis is divided on two aspects the visual and the verbal one:

1 - Visual aspects :

In this section we will analyze the visual elements that appear in the Barbie movie poster 2023 such as:

1.1 Characters:

There are many characters in the Barbie movie, but there are two main heroes who appear in the poster:

a. Margot Elise Robbie:

She was born on July 2, 1990, in Dalby, Queensland, Australia, to Scottish parents. Her family consists of four members: her mother, Sari Kessler, a physiotherapist; her father, Doug Robey; two brothers; and one sister. (Margot Robbie, 2023) Among her most successful movies are Mary Queen of Scots (2019), Bombshell (2019), Barbie (2023). (Margot Robbie Biographie, 2025)

She did the role of Barbie in the movie Barbie 2023, which is the main character, Margot Robbie's portrayal of Barbie transcends the traditional plastic icon to reveal a character rich in depth and complexity. Initially appearing as a symbol of perfection, the movie unfolds as she embarks on a transformative journey of self-discovery, shedding layers of vulnerability and introspection. Robbie brings a delicate balance of humor and emotional depth to the character, challenging established beauty standards and societal expectations, inviting audiences to reimagine identity beyond superficial ideals. This fresh interpretation not only revitalizes an iconic character but also highlights the timeless importance of embracing your authentic self amid evolving cultural norms. (Bauer & Editors, 2025)

Barbie sits in the driver's seat, a central position, especially with the seat next to her empty, giving her a visually dominant position in the poster. This conveys leadership and independence, concepts that run counter to the prevailing stereotype of women in the media.

b. Ryan Gosling:

He was born on November 12, 1980 in Ontario, Canada. He is an actor and producer. He is known for Blue Valentine (2010), La La Land (2016) and Drive (2011). He is married to Eva Mendes. He and Eva Mendes have two children. (Ryan Gosling Biographie, 2025)

His first success came in 1993 with The All New Mickey Mouse Club. He then starred in the hit movie The Notebook in 2004 and received his first Oscar nomination two years later for Half Nelson. (Editors & Piccotti, 2024)

Ryan Gosling portrays Ken, the iconic counterpart to Barbie. Gosling's performance of Ken is humorous and heartfelt, showcasing his comedic timing and charisma. The movie explores themes of identity, gender roles, and self-discovery, with Ken's journey being a central part of the story. At the beginning of the movie, Ken is defined by his devotion to Barbie and his lack of personal identity. He embarks on a journey of self-discovery after realizing his dependence on Barbie for validation. Gosling's performance was widely praised for its vibrancy, charm, and depth, adding a unique dimension to the movie's sarcastic and emotional tone. Gosling's Ken is a standout character, blending humor with a poignant exploration of masculinity and purpose.

Ken's position in the poster, sitting behind Barbie and looking at her as her supporter, indicates that his role in the movie is secondary, which subverts traditional gender roles in the media and reinforces the feminist themes in the movie.

1.2 Colors:

Color is a form of communication that carries predefined meanings. Therefore, color plays an important role in movie posters, as it is one of the visual elements that the poster provides and that has a visual impact on the audience. For this reason, the color scheme in movie posters is evaluated, which is what we will do in the poster for the movie Barbie 2023.

From the first glance at the Barbie movie poster 2023, we notice that three colors dominate: **pink, blue and white**, so for **the pink**, this color has always been associated with the toy Barbie, as it is a color that indicates innocence and femininity. The pink color is associated with the female gender, so we find that the actress Margot Robbie relied on it in her dress and accessories, even her glasses, in pink, and this indicates that she is full of femininity. We also find that the car that Barbie drives is pink, meaning it is her own car. The strong presence of pink in the poster is evidence of feminism, as it conveys a sense of confidence, imagination, fun, and optimism.

As for the **blue color**, we notice that it is present in the upper half of the poster, representing the sky, as the pink car is flying in the sky. What confirms this idea is the presence of the **white color**, represented by the clouds, and therefore all of this symbolizes that the movie contains a lot of imagination, and we can refer use of the blue color in the poster represents also masculinity.

These **three prominent colors** in the Barbie movie poster 2023 are comfortable colors for the eye, pink and blue have always been two contrasting colors, each representing a specific gender, female and male, and this indicates that the movie contains a story that combines a female and a male, namely Barbie and Ken, behind all this is the eternal struggle between feminism and masculinity.

1.3 Shapes :

This section examines the form and structure of the Barbie movie poster 2023, it is noted that the poster is **unusually vertical**, divided in color into two parts, the upper part is blue and the lower part is pink, which is an indication that the movie's story revolves around two female and male heroes. This was explained through the image of actress Margot Robbie and actor Ryan Gosling. They were in a pink car, driven by Barbie, and she appeared happy and excited, and behind her sat Ken, looking at her smiling, an indication that he was happy with his adventurous journey with her in this imaginary world, because the car appeared as if it was flying in the sky due to the presence of clouds at the level of the car.

1.3 Background:

The pink and blue colors appear in equal intensity in the movie poster, which gives the impression that the movie's story revolves around the conflict between the female and male genders. However, the large size of the word "Barbie", which represents the movie's title, changes the initial impression of the movie's content, so we conclude that the movie's events revolve more around the female character in the movie, represented by the character of Barbie.

2- Verbal aspects:

In this section we will analyze the verbal elements that appear in the Barbie movie poster 2023 such as:

2.1 She's everything. He just Ken:

It is obvious from this tagline that there is a clear bias towards Barbie at the expense of Ken, that is, the female gender over the male gender, by giving a high value to Barbie, considering that she is everything, while Ken is just Ken, meaning that he does not represent anything of value, and that is provocative to the audience, especially the male audience.

This gives a pre-impression of what will be in the movie by giving strength and value to Barbie, while clarifying the limits of the character of Ken, and this indicates that Barbie is the main character around whom the events of the movie revolve, and the dwarfing of Ken's character is an attempt to dwarf the role of masculinity at the expense of feminism.

The word Barbie represents the title of the movie. The title was summarized in one word, which is the name of the heroine. The character of Barbie is an old and well-known character, so much so that the way she was written was as was previously known in white and pink, as written on Barbie toy boxes. This indicates that the movie's events revolve around this character.

2.2 Only in Cinema July 20:

A simple statement that indicates when and where the movie will be shown for the first time.

2.3 Warner bros:

Warner Bros. Discovery is one of the world's most powerful companies in media and entertainment production, producing and distributing a diverse and comprehensive range of audiovisual content and brands. It is the distributor of the 2023 Barbie movie. (Discovery, 2025)

2.4 WaterTower Music:

Water Tower Music, the soundtrack to the 2023 Barbie movie, is an American record label owned by Time Warner and operating as a division of Warner Bros. Entertainment. It is best known for its movie soundtrack releases. Founded in January 2010, the label is the successor to Warner Sunset Records and New Line Records. Its name is inspired by the water tower at Warner Bros. Studios. Originally founded to release movie soundtracks, the label has transcended this initial goal, developing a roster of indie rock bands such as The Sounds, Ovs, and others. (WaterTower Music, 2025)

V- Results :

After a semiotic analysis of the Barbie movie poster 2023, this study concluded the following:

- The visual connotations through the image are dominant in the poster, as the two main characters in the movie occupy the largest space.
- The predominance of pink and blue in the poster emphasizes the ongoing conflict between feminism and masculinity.
- The importance of women is exaggerated while the role of men is diminished through the use of the tagline « She's everything. He's just Ken », that emphasizes the importance of women as everything, while men, in contrast, are only themselves.
- The poster contains all the information necessary for the audience.
- The poster is attractive due to its successful blending of all visual and verbal semiotic connotations.

- The movie poster explicitly encourages feminism, selfishness, idealism, and belittling others.
- The movie poster gave new meaning to the color pink, making it a symbol of strength and independence.

VI- Conclusion:

The Barbie 2023 movie poster is a multifaceted cultural masterpiece, skillfully combining stunning aesthetic appeal with a sophisticated network of symbols and meanings. This carefully crafted visual rhetoric has succeeded in generating widespread commercial interest, while also serving as rich material for critical analysis. It powerfully illustrates how mainstream visual media can serve as an effective tool for cultural expression and sharp social commentary. Through the deliberate interplay of colors and multi-layered iconic and symbolic forms, the poster encapsulates the tensions and nuanced conversations within contemporary identity politics, while consciously engaging with and subverting established cultural myths.

A comprehensive exploration of its visual, semiotic, and cultural dimensions reveals that this seemingly simple promotional product is in fact a complex discourse that transcends its commercial purpose to provoke meaningful reflection on entrenched societal values, particularly in relation to gender, autonomy, and self-definition. Ultimately, we conclude that the poster acts as a mirror and a catalyst, highlighting the evolving role of popular media in shaping our collective consciousness around themes of feminism, masculinity, constrained femininity, idealized freedom, and the restoration of what is often disparagingly considered “selfishness.” Thus, it confirms that in the realm of popular culture, even a movie poster can be an important site for ideological negotiation and cultural critique.

– **Referrals and references:**

- Abdelwahed, N. K. (2025). Beyond Pink and Plastic: A Critical Analysis of Barbie (2023) Through the Lens of Gender Performativity, Intersectionality, and Diverse Cultural Perspectives. *The Undergraduate Research Journal*, 10.
- Anggraheni, D., Anandha, A., & Yogatama, A. (2024). Semiotic Analysis of Barbie Movie Poster. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Cultural Studies*.
- Barbie. (2025, 02 07). Récupéré sur www.barbie-themovie.net: <https://is.gd/KNtfDi>
- Barus , E., Aisyah, A., Siregar , E., & Risnawaty , R. (2025). An Analysis of Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory: Focusing on Denotation, Connotation, and Myth. *International Journal of Educational Research Excellence (IJERE)*, 04.
- Bauer , P., & Editors, B. (2025). *Margot Robbie*. Récupéré sur [britannica: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Margot-Robbie](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Margot-Robbie)
- Bogdanou , N.-M. (2024). *Film Posters and Trailers Are your expectations met?* . Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication , Erasmus University Rotterdam .
- Cerutti, M. (2023). Collecting movie posters: Changes in the digital age. *Punctum. International Journal of Semiotics*, 09, 31-51.
- Chen, L. (2025). Feminist Perspectives in Multi-Modal Discourse Analysis: The Case of the Barbie Film Poster. *Open Access Library Journal*, 12.
- Discovery, W. B. (2025). *Our company*. Récupéré sur Warner Bros Discovery: <https://www.wbd.com/>
- Editors, B., & Piccotti, T. (2024). *Ryan Gosling*. Récupéré sur [biography: https://www.biography.com/actors/ryan-gosling](https://www.biography.com/actors/ryan-gosling)
- Margot Robbie Biographie*. (2025). Récupéré sur [imdb: https://www.imdb.com/fr/name/nm3053338/bio/?ref_=nm_ov_bio_sm](https://www.imdb.com/fr/name/nm3053338/bio/?ref_=nm_ov_bio_sm)
- Nare, U., Adak , C., & Chattopadhyay , S. (2023). Demystifying Visual Features of Movie Posters for Multilabel Genre Identification. *IEEE Transactions on Computational Social Systems*, 12, 2120-2129.
- Ode, R. P. (2023). Analysis of visual elements in Barbie movie posters. *COMMICAST*, 04, 51-60.
- Pooranalingam, S. (2024). Film Poster Design: Understanding Film Poster Designs and the Compositional Similarities within specific genres. *Spectrum*.
- Ryan Gosling Biographie*. (2025). Récupéré sur [imdb: https://www.imdb.com/fr/name/nm0331516/bio/?ref_=nm_ov_bio_sm](https://www.imdb.com/fr/name/nm0331516/bio/?ref_=nm_ov_bio_sm)
- Tao, Y. (2022). On the Multi-dimensional Relationship of Visual Symbols in Film Posters. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research.*, 379- 382.
- Wang, R., Wang, L., & Xue, Y. (2023). On Meta-Functional Characteristics of Movie Posters for Multilingual Films: A Multimodal Contrastive Analysis. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*.
- WaterTower Music*. (2025). Récupéré sur [fandom: https://gravitymovie.fandom.com/wiki/WaterTower_Music](https://gravitymovie.fandom.com/wiki/WaterTower_Music)

Yang, S. (2023). Analysis of top box office film poster marketing scheme based on data mining and deep learning in the context of film marketing. *PLOS ONE*, 18.