

Teaching English Literature and Interdisciplinarity

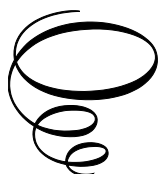
Teaching English Literature and Interdisciplinarity:

*Exploring the Unexplored
and Broadening Horizons*

Edited by

Md Abu Shahid Abdullah

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES AND ENGLISH LITERATURE— PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

MD ABU SHAHID ABDULLAH

The interdisciplinary approach plays a crucial role in higher education, as it requires educators to possess knowledge across multiple disciplines while fostering students' intrinsic motivation to explore innovative learning methods. According to Salnaia et al. (2021, p. 1337), "The use of an interdisciplinary approach in the learning process in higher educational institutions allows the formation and development of both scientific and professional thinking of students, and contributes to the formation of interdisciplinary knowledge that is necessary to solve complex scientific and technical problems". Furthermore, it is vital to incorporate social issues into this framework, recognising that students are integral to society and that polytechnic institutions and faculties aim to prepare them for active social participation and contribution.

The term interdisciplinary is not problematic, as humanity encompasses a vast field of study. The inquiry at hand, regarding the significance of studying a novel, involves examining how and why we categorise it as an interdisciplinary subject or approach. Human beings, driven by an innate curiosity, have made significant strides in their quest for new and diverse knowledge. In this era characterised by advancements in science and technology, along with continuous innovations and experiments, our inquisitive nature compels us to explore and unravel the mysteries concealed within the Earth. Consequently, this behaviour has led to remarkable transformations across various fields, not just in science and technology but in all academic disciplines. The breadth of humanity is evident when considering its relation to psychology, sociology, philosophy,

economics, and gender studies, as it encompasses nearly all aspects of human experience. Furthermore, globalisation, spurred by advancements in science and technology, has instigated profound changes across all levels and disciplines.

The advancement of knowledge has intensified numerous issues and challenges, making it imperative to explore the interdisciplinary dimensions of the humanities. The analysis of novels, for instance, reveals that the issues encountered are not confined to a single discipline but span multiple fields. Consequently, contemporary research, innovations, and discoveries are increasingly interdisciplinary in nature, reflecting the current necessity for such an approach. Researchers, while specialising in a specific area, must also engage with other disciplines; for example, literature intersects significantly with philosophy and psychology, and many theoretical frameworks we employ are derived from sociology. This interdisciplinary interaction fosters collaboration and support across various fields. In today's context, the challenge of comprehension has emerged as one of the most pertinent issues.

The determination of understanding is fundamentally linked to our cognitive processes, specifically the activities involved in thought and the interpretation of verbal texts. This connection extends to our comprehension of others during communication, both in situational contexts and within textual frameworks. To grasp the essence of understanding, an interdisciplinary approach is essential. In the humanities, research predominantly focuses on textual studies, qualitative analyses, and close readings, which are crucial for examining specific subjects, themes, or novels from a research-oriented perspective. Analysing text comprehension through an interdisciplinary lens necessitates a thorough investigation grounded in various scientific principles, including cognitive linguistics, cognitive psychology, social psychology, psycholinguistics, text linguistics, social linguistics, and pragmatics. This approach integrates significant topics from both social sciences and linguistics, forming a comprehensive paradigm for understanding texts. It is vital to recognise the role of understanding as a cognitive and interpretative activity that contributes to the meaning of a text. Cognitive linguistics, which pertains to thought processes and the science of language, alongside philosophical hermeneutics that addresses pre-understanding, pragmatics that conveys practical knowledge, and the presuppositions inherent in cognitive linguistics, sociolinguistics, and text linguistics, all play a crucial role in our textual observations. This encompasses the description of texts as discourse, including dialogue and conversational dynamics, as well as the conditions of interaction among

communicants, as explored in social psychology. These multifaceted aspects are integral to conducting textual analyses within the humanities.

Literature vividly illustrates concepts, enabling us to witness diverse values and worldviews in action. It provides a platform for examining the implications of various beliefs and perspectives, allowing us to critically assess our own assumptions in relation to those of others. By transcending cultural boundaries, literature fulfills its essential role in both writing and reading. Consequently, it expands our understanding and broadens our horizons, which is why we advocate for an interdisciplinary approach. Cross-cultural literary studies equip individuals with the skills to read and interpret intricate texts, craft compelling analyses, and apply theoretical frameworks for literary and cultural interpretation.

The study of literature and its integration with various disciplines emphasises the significance of comprehending imaginative works within their cultural and historical frameworks. Analysing the literary traditions of diverse cultures globally enhances one's insight into how literature reflects the values and perspectives of its people. Specialised courses provide a comprehensive examination of various groups of authors, historical periods, nations, cultures, and writing styles, which is why the study of humanity is now regarded as an interdisciplinary field. This encompasses multiple dimensions, including medical humanities, digital humanities, comic writing, and graphic novels, among others. What advantages does the study of novelists offer? It fosters a sense of community within the classroom. Captivating characters and narratives maintain student engagement in reading, enhance vocabulary and decoding abilities, promote stamina, improve fluency, and boost comprehension. Additionally, it exposes students to a range of emotions, experiences, and environments, thereby cultivating compassion and background knowledge while refining writing skills through the analysis of the author's techniques.

So, literature is art! Just as paint and musical notes are medium used for deep and beautiful expression, so are words. Some individuals excel in working with clay to create sculptures, while others possess the talent to wield a paintbrush or produce music. Additionally, there are those who are adept with words, crafting our literary works. Consequently, English classes provide an opportunity to explore novels through an interdisciplinary lens. Furthermore, literature embodies culture, as education—including the examination of novels in English classes—facilitates the transmission of a cultural group's collective knowledge and ideas to subsequent generations. This knowledge is often acquired through significant effort.

Literature enriches our understanding and provides insight into the world. In his book, *Literature in our Lives*, esteemed educator and author Richard Jacobs illustrates that engaging with English literature—through reading, contemplation, and discussion—deeply involves each of us. Literary texts communicate with us in a personal and pressing manner, prompting us to respond and influencing our lives. Therefore, cultivating a reading habit as a foundational step will enable us to connect literature with other significant developments in our technologically advanced society, ultimately fostering a robust research framework.

For an interdisciplinary literature unit to achieve success, several key factors must be considered. Initially, educators must grasp the fundamental attributes of interdisciplinary studies, which are essentially thematic explorations encompassing various subtopics that integrate concepts from traditional academic disciplines, while also extending beyond them. This indicates that educators should focus on broader academic ideas rather than merely on specific content. Furthermore, meticulous planning is crucial; this involves selecting a central theme and determining how diverse content concepts and skills can be developed and interwoven throughout the instructional period. Additionally, the community can act as a valuable resource for enhancing the theme, with special events such as museum exhibitions, art displays, or cultural festivals serving to broaden the thematic studies. Local businesses and experts can also contribute, thereby enriching both instruction and the classroom atmosphere. Moreover, it may be necessary to adjust schedules to accommodate group activities that emerge as part of the unit, as not every day will allow for traditional instruction. For example, a day may prioritise an extensive math project at the expense of science instruction, while another day may adhere to a conventional format. Lastly, given that interdisciplinary literature units are typically student-centred and interactive, educators must acknowledge that the classroom environment will embody this active learning approach, characterised by increased movement, frequent library visits, and potentially more spontaneous laughter and verbal exchanges.

Chapter 2 titled “Post-Feministic Narratology of the Constitutional Dictum of Barbie Land” by Deb Proshad Halder congregates ideas on the issues of how a female’s search for self-identity establishes a society of disharmony, where matriarchy superimposes against patriarchy and how any dogma, like matriarchy, establishes a deformed reality of the universe through self-eulogizing and male castigating. *Barbie*, an American fantasy comedy film, galvanises the fight between feminine narratives and the post-feminine aspect of female identity in society. Barbie, the protagonist of the fantasy

film, settles into a new realisation of identity creation through the intertwined presence of genders in a harmonious society. In his paper, Mr. Halder has used a narrative approach to find out the post-feministic feature against the backdrop of a feministic attitude toward the world through an analysis of speeches, events, and choreography of the film. Here, the post-feministic theory of gender polity has added the framework for the selection of the topic, post-feministic narratology, where the new look of binary disposition of the characters and their impending and essential presence in the societal terrain has led to establishing a post-feministic outlook of society. Again, the paper used ‘Iconic Analysis’ to interpret images and attires of the casts to dig out the visual clues that led to cross-checking the issues of legal providence of gender normativity in establishing a gender-sensitive state.

Chapter 3 deals with Mehenaz Sultana Tisha’s “Feminist Storytelling and Narrative Empathy: The Parallels between Saad’s *Rehana Maryam Noor* and Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*”. Ms. Tisha shows the way in both the film and the novel, the lack of social empathy towards women perpetuates gender-based violence which limits the liberty and empowerment of women in a patriarchal system. Utilising narrative and empathy theories as a framework, this paper aims to explore how narratives dedicated to focusing on women’s struggles can psychologically imply social empathy and function as a tool for improving the prevalent system from the core. It proceeds to find the parallels between Bangladeshi society and Atwood’s Republic of Gilead to acknowledge the universality of the struggles of women in a male-dominated society. With the help of feminist and psychoanalytic theories, it also explores both society’s tendency to be unsupportive, and even antagonistic towards women to establish the urgency of this study. Finally, the paper concludes with a remark on how such treatment of male chauvinism creates setbacks for women, and as a result, female empowerment is far from being achieved.

Chapter 4 contains Mst. Fahmida Sultana’s “Shadows of Colonisation in Gendered Democracy: Elif Shafak’s *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*” which focuses on the practiced deformed democracies of the world that perpetuate gender colonisation in different naturalised forms. Elif Shafak’s *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* offers a good scope for investigating the apparently *normal* present world where gender violence is an indispensable part of the professed democracies. Shafak depicts how *strange* this world appears through the lens of a female prostitute and her friends who are outcast in every society. Ms. Sultana shows how they are marginalised, oppressed, unheard and silenced within

the border of democracy. Ms. Fahimda opines that this long oppressive mechanism is so embedded in both male and female psyche that it further contributes to the perpetuation of the hierarchical structure. One needs to recognise that gender discrimination and ensuing violence is not an exclusively feminist topic of study rather it has undeniable psychological, sociological, economic and political dimensions to it. Finally, this paper explores the hegemonic power relation in male-centric societies from the perspective of cultural studies as identification and resistance to these issues are imperative for generating true democratic values in the long-established democracies.

Chapter 5 includes Md Abu Shahid Abdullah's "Highlighting Female Mobility and Establishing National Identity in Henry Rider Haggard's *Benita: An African Romance*". Mr. Abdullah focused on late Victorian romance fiction author Henry Rider Haggard who wrote books that addressed the interactions between white males and indigenous people, indigenous customs, and the African landscape and how colonial rulers envisioned it. This paper contends that Haggard's 1906 novel *Benita: An African Romance* substitutes the representation of a female traveller for this idea of masculine mobility. Therefore, this paper examines Haggard's novel within the broader Victorian framework of political, philosophical, and racial ideologies and look at how female travellers contributed to the formation of national identity. By analysing the female mobility in Haggard's novel—which entails traveling across borders and nations, between the metropole and the colony—this paper also offers a fresh viewpoint on Haggard's scholarship. In doing so, it challenges the conventional understanding of gender roles. Through her two maritime voyages, Benita's mobility as a female traveller from England to South Africa and her travels between the colony and the metropole help to establish English national identity in this new in-between world.

Chapter 6 deals with Kaniz Tahera's "The Paradigm of Cultural Anxiety: Going Deep into Arif Anwar's *The Storm*". Cultural transit in the diasporic space manifests in the individual as cultural anxiety, which in turn complicates the process by which culturally displaced individuals locate their new identity. On the basis of cultural identity, diaspora posits an individual in the vortex of a complex plurality, conceptualising the postmodern definition of self as an incoherent, fragmented and hybrid subject. This paper discusses how Anwar showcased the sense of exile and the angst of culturally displaced subjects in his novel, which sheds light on the inherent struggle of the postmodern subject to cope up with their hybridity. Again, the polysemic nature of identity and its connection with

the sense of displacement are explored in this paper to show their relevance to the development of the novel's characters who relentlessly suffer from cultural anxiety.

Chapter 7 focuses on Md Abu Shahid Abdullah's "Surveillance Capitalism in Huxley's *Brave New World* and Westerfeld's *Uglies*" which explores the predictions regarding the rise of surveillance technology and its potential implications for human suffering as depicted in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies*. Mr. Abdullah aims to examine how technology increasingly envelops everyday human activities in a surveillance framework. This practice aligns with Michel Foucault's concept of the 'weak body' which is unable to resist authority, as well as Shoshana Zuboff's notion of fostering an environment conducive to the growth of capitalist surveillance industries. *Brave New World* presents a distinctive form of surveillance that begins at the embryonic stage and persists throughout an individual's life. In this society, familial connections are dismantled, leading to isolation and compliance with surveillance. Conversely, *Uglies* illustrates how excessive dependence on technology for establishing human identity renders individuals vulnerable to surveillance. The individual in this context relies heavily on technology for all aspects of life, resulting in their activities being monitored and regulated by authorities through various technological means. To illustrate the validity of these assertions, this paper refers to the television series *You* which demonstrates how contemporary life is already subjected to surveillance due to an excessive fixation on social media.

In chapter 8, "Students' Psychology in Applying Composition Writing Skills in Tertiary Level Literature Courses in Bangladesh", Monisha Biswas and Kaniz Fatema examined Bangladeshi tertiary level students' psychology in applying composition skills in writing academic answers of literature courses. The authors used purposive sampling to select fifty-nine students of the English department of a private university in Bangladesh and conducted a survey on them to investigate possible correlation between various psychological factors and the students' performances in composition writing skills in literature courses. Moreover, they conducted structured written interviews on nine literature-course instructors of the same department to understand teachers' perspectives on the matter. The findings revealed significant differences ($p=0.016$) between the high achievers and low achievers when it came to the influence of positive psychological factors like high motivation, confidence, self-satisfaction, and expectations on composition writing skills. The study also found a connection between the instructors' instructions and the writing styles of the students. This study

suggests students to develop skills and strategies to write organised content-focused answers in literature courses. It also suggests that course instructors should include more academic writing practices, provide clear instructions, and positive feedback in literature courses.

Chapter 9, “Global Englishes in Classrooms: A Systematic Review and Critical Study”, by Anowara Rayhan Arusha, Nazia Pervin Shefa and Rohini Zakaria Oishee critically examines the key changes of pedagogical research carried out within similar topics of Global Englishes to present significant recommendations for reforms in language instruction. The authors adopted the methodology of a systematic review and shortlisted eight (8) empirical articles published between 2010-2020, of which 4 were given an in-depth critical review and contextualised within a wider body of literature. They conducted interviews with the English teachers of a renowned private university in Bangladesh to find out what inside and outside-classroom English speaking, listening and writing activities were employed to promote the use of Global Englishes. Findings revealed that globally, Global Englishes are widely used and practiced in classrooms, including in Bangladesh. However, there is very little systematic research on these practices in Bangladesh and further research should be conducted to make Bangladeshi classrooms more inclusive in this research area.

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CHAPTER 2

POST-FEMINISTIC NARRATOLOGY OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL DICTUM OF BARBIE LAND

DEB PROSHAD HALDER

1. Introduction

The feminist movement enters the literary arena, embracing diversified narratives and multi-layered deviations (Obst 2024). This emergent movement has spread its roots to all the directional branches, from diminutive societal awareness to ostentatious political prominence, that the core of petty feminine consciousness loses the vibe and emerging motto, turning to a flabby mass upsurge (Swank and Fahs 2017, 7). Consequently, this mammoth upheaval leads to the general outlook against this multi-layered feminism due to its all-engulfing nature of gender reality. It began with social consciousness and glided into body politics (Bhandari 2024, 3–4). The trendy outfit of this movement declares its presence by misrepresenting or fabricating physiological determinants and the emergence of the sexes endowed with parental reality. The thought of fabricated physiological roles, which overtly secular ideologists in the guise of preaching feminist causes term gender roles, wages criticism against the commodious and clamorous movement of females, those who loved to be called feminists. It is brandished unnecessarily to the point that it has reached now because the world tends to sustain the statically dynamic balance through the selected gender roles culminated through biological evolution. The alternatives to these natural entitlements foster chaos in the ecology inhabited by living organisms (Serdar, Öztürk, and Nygren 2023, 6–7). Considering this view as the guiding principle for contemporary gender activists (Bhandari 2024, 9), they tend to dignify their concept of gendering issues as the aftermath of feminism or post-feminism. Yet, it is an unlikely and uncompromisingly antagonising stance against unnecessary suicidal acts of abolishing binary construction and unaccepting physiological determinants of masculinity and femininity. Therefore, there are a few addressable critical issues that are (a)

what are the performing dictum of the genders in the feminine spaces, (b) what are the interlaying challenging issues in this gender performativity, and (c) what are the alternative narratives of the constitutional provision in the feminine spaces that bring about a resolution to the challenging issues.

I have considered *Barbie* (Gerwig 2023) as the guiding evidence to resolve the contradictory conceptions vis-à-vis the borderline of feminine-occupied land and the constitution of that feminist land in consort with the alternative narrative by revising constitutional provision for gender harmony (Anderson 2022), which I tend to envisage through the post-feminism lens. The search for these critical issues is objective driven. The constitutional provision of the feminist outfits in Barbie Land provokes chaos and misunderstanding due to the misrepresentation of gender dynamics in the alternatively represented gender. Hence, I have addressed this movie to bring out the perceptual gap in the Barbies concerning the extent of feminism as practice and the essential borderline of check and balance in the exposition of fanaticism, endowed with feminine fancy, to ensure the equilibrium of gendering issues where they live beside their male counterparts. This paper tends to underscore a new narrative of gender balance, which emerges through the phraseology of post-feminist narratology, delimiting overindulgences of both patriarchy and matriarchy as none of them can ensure peaceful settlement of disputed gendering issues in regard to power politics, societal constructed gender roles, and gender roles ordained by default. *Barbie* (Gerwig 2023) works with three versions of constitutions for Barbie Land to dig out interlaying faults and strengths by emphasising the inoperability of mono polarity. It draws a blueprint of a bi-polar land by revising and forming a constitution for the Barbie Land without having a sharp north and declining south (Zhang and Chen 2022, 2–3), which tends to accomplish the circle through decentralisation of gender prominence. Zhang and Chen (2022, 4) have noted this integration between these two distinctive gender paradigms as holism from the ecological perspective. Thus, the wholeness embracing equilibrium with societal prominence tends to ensure an inhabited land with the harmonised East and West that *Barbie* envisions. However, it is emergent to underscore the consciousness that Barbie, as an influencer, upholds the legal provision of Barbie land that empowers her and other Barbies to validate my search garnered in the research questions.

1.1 An Overview of Feminist Consciousness

The feminist awareness invoked socio-politically deep-rooted self-consciousness from the part of the women, who appeared culturally marginalised due to gender politics in the form of gender stigmatisation (Moallef et al. 2022). Feminist consciousness began with establishing a female as an equal entity in society who should gain equal treatment in the societal context alongside their male counterparts, suggesting a period of enlightenment that invoked the question of dignity from the humanistic point of view, in which Barbie positioned females at the helm of all-doers in a single self (Byrnes, Loreck, and May 2024, 2). The familial awareness, the problem of equity, and veiled deprivation of women being female, underscoring through the lens of societal justice in Mary Wollstonecraft (Coffee 2021; Taylor 2003), an Avant-Garde conscience, aligns with Eurocentric and western feminism that engulfs Barbies in the Barbie land (Byrnes, Loreck, and May 2024, 3). The conflicting iteration that Merry Shelly (Ginn 2013) and even John Milton posed concerning the feminine spaces preserved in theology (McGrath 2013, 73–74), the iconoclast Barbie solved by altering the doll fetishism by the baby girls (Byrnes, Loreck, and May 2024, 3) as if this attitude were agalmatophilia. However, Barbie attacked the unconscious psyche of the baby child that led them rip off the dolls, and snatch their childhood in place, galvanizing the depravity in the cognition exposed by the fascist and feminazi Barbie (2024, 5). Then, the feministic consciousness experienced continuing modification in cognition, resulting in the changed course of movement towards legal provision, being the citizen of a state (Yakali 2023). Thus, feminist consciousness transformed into a political characterisation (Tildesley, La Barbera, and Lombardo 2023), though the political strife imposed a psychological or emotional burden, leading the feminine agency to feel marginalised due to the masculine presence at the forefronts illustrating their reclamation of positions in every societal sphere (Yakali 2023, 201–2). Consequently, the emergence of Marxist Feminism (Haug, Colley, and Tepe-Belfrage 2023) became imminent, which aggravated the feminist political movement. These socio-political and economic perspectives of feminist consciousness strived to address the need to revise gender knowledge grounded on socio-politico narratives. This traditional feminism (Allen 2023) reviews the feminist movement to alter the societal narratives against gender issues. Barbie begins with the conception of the changed narratives, though they identify a gap of balance between the real world and Barbie land, leading to body shaming experienced by the leader Barbie (Naylor 2023, 1). However, the path to reconciliation, which Barbie brought about from the real world, could not explain the intricacies of the legal dictum of the state, undermining

the manliness in the society (2023, 2), amalgamating resistance from the radical right wings, branding *Barbie* a tacit conspiracy against all men. However, the third-wave feminist movement questioned the conventionality of gender roles, branding the roles as socially constructed, which Judith Butler amplified in the term ‘gender performativity’ (Maclaran 2017). This wave of consciousness emancipates women from the politics of the womb, and the womb and the subjugation based on physiological determinants, which Barbie reverberates by announcing that she possessed no genitalia (Smits 2023). Barbie’s mission of establishing a sex-neutral society was over-ambitious, and it imposed a burden of existential crisis on Ken, who was introduced as having no sex-determinant sign. However, the aftermath of this imposed attrition turned bitter for Barbie and her dreamy land, implying flaws in the feminine consciousness that Barbie owns.

1.2 Legal Provision of Female Citizenship

Gender awareness, an inevitably socio-economised movement, turns out to be an essentially considerable undertaking after ages by the states. The state embraces gendering issues, creating scope as legal provision and constitutional privilege. A report states that 84% of countries had adopted provisions for gender issues and gender equality in specific terms by 2000 (Chilton and Versteeg 2021, 1). Though the constitutional provision leveraged ‘HGEI’ (Historical Gender Equality Index) scores from 61 before 1946 to 69 in 2000 (Chilton and Versteeg 2021, 2), it cannot ensure that only constitutional inclusion pays back. The government ensures constitutional law, and no external factors are ordained to vigil against government insincerity in imposing those constitutional laws. However, the contemporary move in favour of gender justice inclines toward eco-feminism and the protection of nature by the side of the victimised portion of the state population. Thus, the unescapable stance of any movement that emerges out of gendering issues seeks to galvanise to be embedded into the state policy. The radical Leninist Marxism, from this legal perspective, suffers across the globe for attainment, though another debatable issue of LGBTQ or LGBTQIA gains momentum through legal adornment. The salient frivolity in those unbecoming dictums lies in the incapacity of acquiring a legal framework in the national legal procedures. Barbie has established a state, reigning over the motto of fitspiration and thinspiration (Simpson and Mazzeo 2017). Nevertheless, something is wrong with this land, with Barbie (Rome 2024, 3). Rome has indicted Barbie’s idea of faulty body image and her ineptness concerning the resolution of the clue of

misogynistic behaviour (2024, 2–3). However, it fails to assist with a concrete revision of the problem Barbies face with abstract reasoning.

A feminist movements or gendering issues display a less persistent and consistent state of affair in the aspiration of attainment, waging changes of courses, demands, the scope of rights, and privileges (Tildesley, La Barbera, and Lombardo 2023, 2001). Hence, a new narrative indeed emerges out of the trend of gender perspective under the purview of legalisation, though the discreet status quo of a feminist utopia enumerates at least two shortfalls; it lacks valid and pure agency to implement the legal provisions *de facto*, and the choice-feminist forerunners tend to establish their ideal state at the backdrop of vacuum patriarchy, which culminates to the de-establishment of a feigned glamorised land, like Barbie land in *Barbie* (Temel 2024). The Barbies, who reign over their utopian rosy land, establish a ruling administration without considering the diversified entities living in a state. Instead, they tend to preach stereotypical femininity, disallowing normative values of essentially existing diversified sexes *per se*. Temal (2024) leverages to indict the Barbies for the destabilisation of Barbie land due to their femininity by choice without self-reflection out of stereotypical fashioning of gender responses. Temal (2024) could have underscored the probable suppression of kens by the Barbies, like the manipulator autocratic regime, underscoring the reign of prey-predator attitude in developing a binary relationship like a bipartisan state. They lack a harmonious equilibrium in power politics, culminating in essentially belligerent aesthetic lands- Barbiland and Kendom. The Barbies create a state out of their stereotypical whim – a feminine identity illustrating the nullification of masculine identity by their side – which they circulate as the way of a new narrative of successful Barbies (Yakalı 2024). The negligence to ameliorate the inciting issues of toxic masculinity or hyperactive masculinity by the Barbies counteracted and conventional masculine structure returned at the absence of Barbie in the pink city, the colour preferred by the Barbies as the representational of feminine superimposition over blue or black favouring masculinity. The illustration of postfeminist masculinity by Yakalı (2024) seeks to delve into individual identity creation at the backlash of gender performativity (Butler 1990). However, establishing a state like Barbie Land and Kendom encompasses collective will force, underpinning the tacit consent of the masses living in the community. The subsequent critical point is how an individual whim, privileged with the dicta by a hegemonic superpower under the cloak of capital gain, succeeds in congregating mass support to establish a reign.

2. Methods

I have incorporated a multimethod approach in this analytical approach of the document. I used a narrative (Butina 2015) and an iconic analysis approach to find out the post-feministic feature incorporated in *Barbie* against the backdrop of the feministic attitude of the world. The narrative approach paves the way for finding out the research questions' answers by digging out the implied meaning of the actions, speeches, and thoughts of persons, characters, and entities in the stories and narratives (Butina 2015, 191). The type of my content, a movie, and the quality of the research questions highlight the necessity of using a narrative approach as the method. After all, Hoshmand (2005) states that interviews, observation, and document analysis are popular data collection techniques in this approach. My content, *Barbie*, claims observation as the means of watching the video content to observe and locate the speeches and actions that comply with the research questions. I also used the audio transcribed text to analyse the document, incorporating the salient components of a narrative approach (Clandinin 2007). It aims to point out the constitutional providence of the land, dwelt by Barbie or Barbies, as a common name for the girls.

Again, the paper used 'Iconic Analysis' that lays out iconological and iconographic *modus operandi*, whereby we explore the aesthetic essence of the images rather than the historical context and the implication, which they reflect in the understanding of the work of art (Godzic 1981, 153) to interpret images and attires of the casts, which help decode the meaning about signs and symbols (Sobchack 1987). Again, the iconic analysis puts semiotic understanding of verbal and non-verbal communications (Danesi 2006) into practice. Though semiology emerges in linguistic interpretation, the film study encompasses an iconological-iconographical method with semiotics concerning multidisciplinary research. Accordingly, the paper triangulated two dynamic and popular methods—narrative and iconic approach—to relate a film study with the study of a work of art, like any literary text, in the light of the post-feministic theoretical framework. Purposively, this design tended to introduce a counter-narrative of feminism, which creates an imposed ideal that the feminists feel endowed to follow for their emancipation, though falling into a crater of losing self-expression and individualism and inviting anarchism. This critical description reached the height of exposing the impending strife between patriarchy and matriarchy posited through the constitutional provision, a feministic rendition of Barbie Land; alongside, it oriented the post-feministic constitutional providence for a harmonic state and instituted a bi-

gendered conception of egalitarianism achieved through the duly placement of genders for a balanced society.

2.1 The Post-Feminism as a Theoretical Framework

The cataloguing of post-feminism encompasses varied illustrations (Gill 2017). However, this broad conception does not have the generalised sense of a trend originating against the backdrop of the ebbing edge of feminism. Instead, it is an approach that tends to critique the feministic approach on the grounds of gender neutrality in realisation through gender parity. However, this approach never illustrates that gender neutrality stands for gender suppression or delimiting the references of gender sensitivities in the societal, political, and economic process. Rather, gender performances encompass positivity, having the space for self-expression, underscoring a revived sensibility regarding gender parity and gender spaces in an individualistic fashion (Gill 2017, 607). It invites an opposing stance against the feministic approach to gender rights and privileges. Hence, the post-feministic approach combines anti-feministic and gender balance attitudes toward reviewing the contemporary trends in the feminine paradigm. Yakali (2023) has pointed out that the critique, what we call a post-feministic approach to criticism, gained motion upon the prime time of second-wave feminism, which tended to liberate females from any conjoining of masculine entity as masculinity to them, was toxic and heterogenic. The post-feminism approach translates to feminist entities trying to create an agency that supports and prioritises feminine causes. Consequently, it had dug out a gender vacuum through the feministic narratives. The vacuum about the ideation between masculinity and femininity aggravates biases, mistrust, and misjudgment along with misrepresentation of gender in political and social spheres. The post-feminism approach bridges these conceptual gaps in vertical and horizontal gender studies (Dabiriyani Tehrani and Yamini 2022). It claims that the post-feminism approach considers gender segregation in two of the professional levels as the attainment of gender parity lies in the positive attitude towards gender-based workspaces and job satisfaction for the other genders, who belong to the lower levels in the vertical distribution of service (Longarela 2017, 866). The post-feminist approach establishes women at the leadership level, who become the change agents and can produce policies (Ernst, Pagot, and Prá 2024, 4–5). Thus, the narrative envisions neoliberal economics securing effective and impactful space at the top tier of the cross-section of vertical and horizontal lines speculated through the vertical and horizontal gender segregation mapping (Dabiriyani Tehrani and Yamini 2022). However, the

post-feminist narrative reviews gender issues in the neoliberal contexts, illustrating the provision of spaces for self-assertiveness, subjectified objectivity in emotional and psychological expression, and gaining leadership sphere to establish an equilibrium status quo.

3. Discussion

I have organised the discussion on four dimensions—the prevalence of autocracy in the guise of the democratic vein when only matriarchy or patriarchy reigns, the imposed individuality devoid of self-exploration and expression, the prevailing gap between the parochial legal provisions, and the necessary imposition of agencies to establish gender balance and harmony. The critical analysis underscoring these four dimensions tends to expose how post-feminism experiences gender sensitivity and how it balances entangled strife between the tenets of matriarchy in consort with patriarchy.

3.1 An Emblematic Autocracy

Barbie, the animated revolutionary edifice of Barbie land, necessitates the compelling and impactful existence of all the girls who have the height of exploring potentialities and professional attainment. They transcend the stereotypical gender roles of bearing an issue and enjoying motherhood; they possess worth, which they have strived for ages. They establish a self-directed agency, which they categorise as the expression of democracy, where they tend to disband any possibility of rising rightwing faction (Heuvel 2023); however, their political ideology seems convoluted, indulging in a lethal policy of genital-free nationality, minimalising the probability of increasing factional groups against them through procreation and progression. Barbie establishes a land of Barbiesm, the capital city of which alludes to pandemonium, crafted by the best craftsman in the universe. Moreover, the intricacy emerges out of the restriction of the expression of primordial urge, though the clues of lesbianism are visible. Men exist to beach off; they sustain themselves in swimming suits and surfing boards, pleasing the eyes and gaining favour from Barbie being a beach man. Barbie, an epitome of a redeemer for subjugated femininity, stands out at the razor's edge of flawed excitement of gender justice (Heuvel 2023). The dreamhouse, inhabited by Barbie, offers limited access to commoners like Ken, an edifice of pleasure boy, stands out as a power station, programmed at the whim of Barbie that epitomises the ultimate fate of capitalism, having all essential components distant at a step deserved and

experienced by the chosen few, who can control them all in the name of feigned glory of endurance with dignity and performativity (Hurley 2015) beyond the notion of stereotypical bondage due to deformity. Barbie retains sexualised capitalism, garnering consumerism by creating a fabricated physical idealism that she, together with her creators, reigns overall, and the collapse of this intertwined enterprise of profitism levels with death. Hence, Barbie necessitates the thought of death against dying for dancing (00:13:37). When Barbie encounters weird Barbie and Sasha, she complements herself as a stereotypical Barbie; the potentiality that she prides in is her ephemeral enchantment of mesmerising her fellow women to make believe about their worth in this potential universe, as they are what they think. Thus, Barbie created an imaginary body ideal and imposed it on them. Their attainment, they achieved by rejecting the normative worldview, is a part of the complete cycle of human existence with bliss and perfection, which Barbie tended to conceal as she wished to reign over them. Thus, her stride to the house of weird Barbie and the natural world translates to reclaiming her physical ideal so that her rule and ideal govern for eternity in Barbie Land. Quintessentially, Barbie shapes a polity where all the Barbies are her edifice of the exploration of capital gains, and all the Kens remain marginalised, losing their self-identity. Here, the loss of identity expedites due to the insufficiency of space that Barbie never permeated to them. However, this altered reality creates a politically problematic paradigm (Xu 2017), inculcating a fabricated political consciousness. Consequently, the absence of Barbie led to Barbie Land collapsing while Kendom reigned, followed by Ken's dictum of patriarchy. Barbie denied sublime masculinity and refused the universal expression of female sexuality, leading to a society upside down. She publicised democracy de jure but prioritised fascism de facto; at least, Sasha thinks so (00:41:11).

3.2 An Objectified Subjectivity

The feminist narrative tends to rectify the cognition concerning the objectifying male gaze for liberating a woman from self-objectification (Baldissarri et al. 2019). However, *Barbie* illustrates a society free from sexual objectification. Deplorably, this turned out counterproductive; females had their free will at the sacrifice of genitalia by Barbie and Ken, which Barbie publicises. They ameliorated the objectification blame game by self-effacement, an orientation of manipulative subjectivity, where Barbie misconceived gender sexuality. Ken suppressed it due to the developed societal structure of sexuality nullification. However, the preference for sexuality suppression encompasses a weak relationship with

sexual behaviour, alias gender neutrality gaze (Bareket et al. 2019), which Barbie tends to establish. Here, the problem lies in the cognition of Barbie at the primary level and the grand design of monopartite statehood at the ultimate level. Barbie illustrates the zenith of elitism by bringing about glaring examples of social high-ups, encompassing accessories, dreamhouse, money and cars. The pink, representing “Preety, Intelligent, Never Sad and Cool”, that fits her, as she thinks, is her signature colour, representing her self-esteem, positivity and glamour. This illustration is part of a grand design of commodification and hands-on gain (Boesenberg 2024). Surprisingly, all the Barbies feel that they belong to this choice ordained by Barbie. Here, Barbie and the other girls act as programmed droids; they embrace the ideology and acquisitively express the will of supreme power of capitalization (Byrnes, Loreck, and May 2024, 4). Hence, Barbie’s self-expression does not result from experiences; it is instead mandated by the superpower, which commodifies Barbie and retains this process of commodification in the rearranged sweet land to all the inhabitants, including Barbies and Kens. The CEO of Mattel negates Barbie’s stride around the real world, which is governed by common law and unbiased concerning gender preferences, capitalism, gender expression, and profitism (Li 2024). She is supposed to be in the Barbie Land; even, Ken is not mandated to rule that land. Barbie’s dreamhouse is sexualised, encompassing the components of an ideal pleasurable Cleopatra’s Barge (Johnston 2015). The grafting of this house epitomises the win over the strife of suppressed phallic expression. Hence, Ken assures Barbie that her dream house is a ‘phallic building’, Mojo Dojo Casa House. Indeed, the standardisation of women’s beauty brings out the conception of the male gaze (Bareket et al. 2019), which misleads a woman’s conscience to stand out against the femininity being an irritable burden to bear, as Sasha fell victim to this irritable burden and stayed against Gloria, her mother, and Barbie, though experiencing a gradual development and recovery from this psychic burden (Li 2024, 36) emerged through the perilous design of objectification engulfing Barbie.

Barbie is stated well with the pink colour, having conventionality to expose stereotypic femininity, more like girlish associated with Barbie pink. It is a researchable issue to settle whether a woman naturally tends to choose colour. Instead, there remains a power politics behind this imposition (Steele 2018) and Mattel embraced this power issue of developing their market strategy with the pink colour injecting femininity in the girls through Barbie dolls; even the Dreamhouse project established this policy as a brand statement to be adoptable and adaptable for interior decoration apart from its superficial use (Tarajko-Kowalska and Kowalski 2023, 12–14). To

Barbie, pink tends to be ideal, which other Barbies tore up as a garment covering their frail statue of Barbiesm. Her shield against toxic masculinity is destabilised by Ken, which she upholds until the transformation into Barbara Handler, a baptised woman owing to the encounter of realities behind Barbiesm endowed with Barbic pink and luxuriant commodities in return for protecting imposed beauty standards and virginity.

3.3 A Chasm in the Constitutional Provision

Barbie Land is endowed with political fear and favour. Barbie establishes Barbiesm through legalised procedures that involve manipulating Kens. The dictum of ownership, the dignity of belongingness, and the spirit of nationalism suffer; the state patronises only elitism. Matriarchy and patriarchy are two lethal weapons, the powerhouses for ensuring a comfortable, privileged status quo enjoyed by the elites. The parties revolve through a cyclic order of prey-predator relationship (Diz-Pita and Otero-Espinar 2021); one victimises the other, and vice versa. Consequently, Kendom supersedes Barbie Land, and Dreamhouse succumbs to Dojo Mojo Casa House. In contrast, these two alterations bring about no qualitative changes from the perspectives of equity and peaceful co-existence. The constitutional proviso of Kendom translates the innuendos of gender subjugation and prioritises gender-based service disparity. Kendom replaces only the agents, and Barbies are replaced with Kens. This state reigns over a complicated bipartisan presence in the inexplicably faithless and uncompromising coalition (Flegenheimer and Tracy 2023). The thriving of all, gender expression and harmonious co-habitation are trickery in the light of political gravitation, and the design of a disguised coup to reclaim Dreamhouse uncovers the frivolity, fickleness and rudeness dormant in the self-expression of the statehood, Barbie Land and Kendom exemplify this stance of hegemony in the guise of nationalism.

Reviewing whether Ken demands impunity for what and how he altered in Barbie Land is imperative. Ken's action is evidently derived from his new realisation of freedom, which he learnt while wandering in the real world (Kain 2024). Nevertheless, Ken indulges in profitability while selecting what he needs to learn. Barbie also went through the identical process of exploring the real world. However, she felt it compulsory to retain her beauty standard as she reigns over her land, infusing the beauty standard in the Barbies and Kens. The opposite of it aligns with disaster. Barbie possesses an obsession with the reclining of Ken's impulsion as the covert acceptance of stereotypical gender roles of being a wife, a housewife and ultimately a mother. Otherwise, Ken's sublime masculinity desires Barbie's

feminine gestures, and the oppressive attitude of Barbie on this point leads Ken to search for the source of Barbie's power and dismantle it, resulting in the amendments of the constitution, certifying the patriarchy, beaoning toxicity in masculinity.

Magically or magnanimously, Barbie solves the “problems of feminism and equal rights” (Byrnes, Loreck, and May 2024) and establishes a state run by Barbies and a constitution prioritising the cause of every woman to draw an example regarding the settlement of pregnant Midge, discontinued by Mattel, in the Barbies, who are supposed to be mutilated or fear to express their desire, suspecting the doubt of marital imprisonment that Midge endures. Alternatively, Century City offers knowledge to Ken on how men rule the world, leading him to come out of the shell of MPDB (Manic Pixie Dream Boy) (Altiock 2024). For the first time, he realised the charm of ruling the world and nourished the desire to rule Barbie Land. The books, ‘Why Men Rule’, ‘Men and Wars’, ‘The Origin of the Patriarchy’ and ‘Horses’- Ken was oriented with the impression of police riding on the horses that he translated as the men on the horses looked confident and assertive due to the horses - chosen selectively delivered him with the knowledge to rule a land by formulating its constitution. Ken converts to ‘Mister Ken President Prime Minister’, a misarticulated head of the state who cannot rule the world for no degrees like an MBA, medical degree, or swimming training, which the real world demands. Turning back to their dreamland, the Kens vote for the change of the constitution upholding the government *‘for the Kens, of the Kens and by the Kens’* (01:03:34). Thus, every constitution made and institutionalised by Barbies and Kens prioritises the vested quarters. Hence, the aftermath of the dreamland is the collapse of the state.

3.4 Harmonisation of Agencies

Barbie's fate is entrapped with double-fold bandages, one in the pink plastic mirage of Barbie Land and another in the profiteering consumeristic manacles of the real world, where PINK can translate “pain, I am scared, nauseous, and death”. The dreamhouse, money, car, and pinkish world illustrate her bondage to the corporate pariah polity (Eli 2024). Barbie, who considers herself an agent of change, realises that her prominence in Barbie Land benefits capitalism in order to thrive in the real world; her presence in that world beacons the collapse of business. She comes to a new realisation that Barbie in cowboy dress illuminates only the melodramatic scenes, full of superficiality and lack in depth of emotion. Barbie's land is also distracted by Kens, another shadow of unfurnished masculinity. The destabilisation of Barbeism to secure Kenism benefitted Barbie and Ken.

They are failing due to the lack of realisation of their worth, internalisation, and self-exploration. Ruth and Gloria enlightened Barbie, and Barbie enlightened Ken. President Barbie learns the mantra of self-exploration, which tends to brighten the darker sides of Barbiesm and Kenism. Hence, she confirms the new roles of them to the call of Mattel CEO concerning the retreat to the past vain glory of Barbie Land, *“I don’t think that things should go back to the way they were. No Barbie or Ken should be living in the shadows”* (01:38:06). Barbie’s internalisation process completed upon the second confrontation with Ruth Handler, the inventor of Barbie, who is discovered reverse in the light of Barbie’s physical beauty standard, a slim, thin, and skinny lady having no nipples, no vagina, and slender hips, high heels (Boesenberg 2024; Simili and Souza 2015). Alternatively, Ruth, “a five-foot-nothing grandma”, catches up with the revelation before Barbies that she had a “double mastectomy”. Barbie, a torturous soul engulfed with the feeling of existential crisis, now satiates herself as she feels, for the first time, *“I don’t really feel like Barbie anymore”* (01:41:03). Barbie, with the realisation of selfhood, gets expiation and relief from the imposed frame in plasticity.

Again, Ruth, the inventor of pinkish ‘everyone in Barbie, Barbie in everyone’, counterbalanced with Barbie in her navy-blue garments and overcoat during every encounter, implying the actual narrative of Mattel that colour states individualism, not the community. Though various cultures and observances embrace various colours to underscore a motif behind this selection, it has no universality in these preferences (Steele 2018; Tarajko-Kowalska and Kowalski 2023). Sasha has embraced Barbie pink, not to transform into a programmable pink doll, but rather to embrace a new look into the world, an excavated reality underneath the superficiality of mere patriarchy and patriarchy that led Barbie to turn into Barbra Handler. Barbie Land is saved from the clutches of patriarchy, an edifice of toxic masculinity; Ken is now a human with individuality. Allan thinks as goes with his mental aptitude, as does Ken covered with a written message on the t-shirt, “I am Kenough”, underlying the emergence of individual Ken out of stereotypical Kens, who tended to regularise their sustenance to ask for sensual favour only from Barbie. Ken and Barbie are part of the people, though all are neither Ken nor Barbie.

4. Conclusion

The dichotomous constitutional provision cracks a species into two sides, blooming through Barbie Land and Kendom. One gendered group beams

with their executed body standard, while the other relaxes by imposing hegemonic masculinity over stereotypical femininity, resulting in an imbalance in gender normativity. No regime can incorporate individual expression, which tends to congregate to a community belief. Alternatively, Barbie and Ken lead without considering whether they “squash other people’s ideas” (01:14:33). Thus, it is a fragile belief that the legal settlement of gender prevalence in a de jure state resolves gender debate. Alternatively, the laws embedded with individual expressions and aspirations of gender sensitivities, without crippling and annihilating specialised gender identities, construct gender-neutral societies and ensure individual identities based on their performativity principles, rejecting the establishment of toxic masculinity or radical masculinity. The frailty in Barbie Land and Kendom lies in the myopic perception of establishing gender equilibrium. Hence, the constitution alteration changes the agencies to lead and follow, without any qualitative change against gender crisis. Both have ransacked the ideologies they determined to establish. The Barbies exported expressions out of a grand design, and the Kens intentionally put their acquired knowledge in Barbie Land to establish a space where their unheard voice. Notwithstanding, Mattel and City Centre, what they propose through their slogans – ‘Barbie in Pink, Pink in Barbie,’ and ‘Men rule the world’- put gender norms at a critical juncture. The only way out of this strait that Ruth Handler paves as a redeemer relies on the prioritising the evolution of self and ability to express their individual experiences.

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