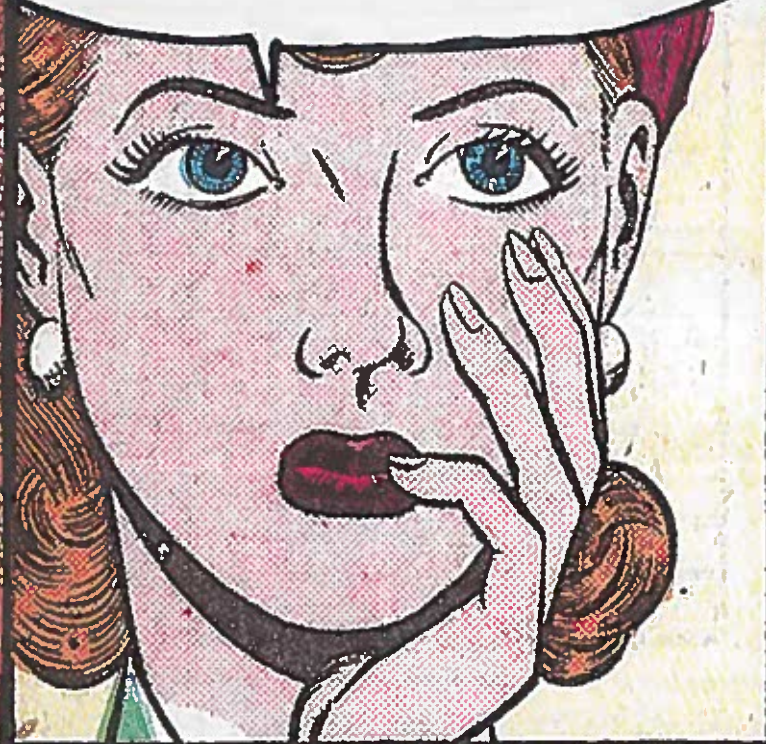


Barbie

and

NEW AMAZONIA



BY CATHERINE, JACOB, & POPPY

SPECIAL THANKS
TO
TWO SPECIAL LADIES:



BARBIE



ELIZABETH BURGOYNE

CORBETT

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Q. How many ken heads can you spot?

EXT. KEN'S MOJO DOJO CASA HOUSE - DAY. (DELETED SCENE)

Ken Ryan Gosling shows Augustus Fitz-Musicus around his Mojo Dojo Casa House. Augustus is still wearing his tweed jacket and monocle, but he somehow fits in with the Kens. Maybe because of his mustache.

KEN RYAN GOSLING

Here's the mini-fridge. Do you want a brewski beer, bro?

Ken chucks a can of brewski beer at Augustus. The can flies into Augustus Fitz-Musicus' chest with a thud. His monocle falls off as he catches it.

AUGUSTUS FITZ-MUSICUS

Oh thank heavens! Yes, thank you very much. It was a confounded nuisance not to be able to drink in New Amazonia! I was desperate for a bottle of Moet and Chandon! Beer will do just this once-even though it's for the common people!

Ken nods, a bit confused.

KEN RYAN GOSLING

No worries, bro. So, this is where we hang with the bro-homies.

Ken gestures at the TVs playing horse footage, the Mini basketball hoops & the chin-up bars. Augustus squints, the horse paintings look like they're moving. He shakes his head, looking for his eyeglass.

AUGUSTUS FITZ-MUSICUS

So, where are the ladies?

Augustus suddenly looks very frightened. He is afraid Hilda or Agnes might come bounding round a corner.

KEN RYAN GOSLING

This is Ken Land now. The Barbies listen to us. They're just our bride-wives or long-term-low-commitment-distance girlfriends.

AUGUSTUS FITZ-MUSICUS (V.O.)

I think Ken means Men in this land! Oh, how wonderful!

Augustus starts excitedly hopping around.



AUGUSTUS FITZ-MUSICUS
Splendid. I can finally take an obedient and done wife! I insist on having one of my own Mojo Casa Houses where I can make my 'bride-wife' feel that I am lord and master in it!

KEN RYAN GOSLING

Sublime! Men and horses rule the world. Patriarchy rules!

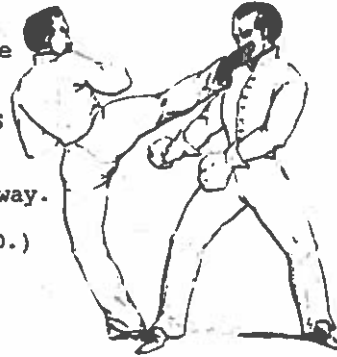
AUGUSTUS FITZ-MUSICUS

Huzzah!

Ken looks at Augustus weirdly and turns away.

KEN RYAN GOSLING (V.O.)

I miss Barbie.



Gender Relations

A utopian attitude towards gender relations unites Elizabeth Burgoyne Corbett's *New Amazonia: A Foretaste of the Future* (1889) and Greta Gerwig's *Barbie* (2023). Lucy Sargisson contends that feminism has utopian potential as a body of thought because it seeks to fundamentally change the way in which we think about gender, meaning it has a transgressive function. Both Corbett and Gerwig attempt to critique real world patriarchies—Corbett in 19th century England, Gerwig in 21st century America—by subverting gender relations in their utopian worlds: New Amazonia and Barbie Land.

However, both of these fictional societies simply recreate gender inequality, but with women as the 'dominant' sex rather than men. Sargisson criticises feminism that simply reconstructs the 'hierarchical domination of one [gender] over the other' as regressive and naive rather than actually transgressive or utopian (Sargisson, p.21). *Barbie* and *New Amazonia* unfortunately fall into this category as they fail to propose a truly radical and alternative way of thinking about gender. Instead, they maintain gender discrimination based on biological differences, but towards men rather than women.

In New Amazonia and Barbie Land, women hold all positions of authority. In New Amazonia, all the chief Governmental officers are women, as well as their leader, Principal Grey (p.66). Barbie Land is also completely

Thanks to Barbie all problems of feminism and equal rights have been solved!

run by women: 'they hold every kind of job' and their Supreme Court and President are all women. In both worlds, gender equality has supposedly been achieved but men lack any power. In *New Amazonia*, 'the sexes stand on an equal footing' but men are punished more harshly for adultery and are excluded from all leadership positions (p.67). In *Barbie Land*, men are peripheral: 'there is the occasional Ken, but mostly it's Barbie'.

Gerwig pokes fun at this form of feminism in the film: 'all problems of feminism and equal rights have been solved! ... at least that's what the Barbies think' (p.2). But even at the end of the film when she claims equality is on the way to being achieved, the unequal gender dynamics of the real world are replicated: 'the Kens will have as much power and influence in Barbie Land as women have in the real world' (p.108). Both texts simply replace the patriarchy with a matriarchy, rather than actually coming up with radical ways of thinking about gender.

Biological differences between men and women are also upheld in both Barbie Land and *New Amazonia*, as there is a direct correlation between physical strength and the right to rule. Especially in the 19th century, scientific rhetoric was used to solidify a male-dominated society by arguing that women were the physically and mentally 'undeveloped, inferior' sex (Rose, p.8). Corbett was very critical of science being

Barbie Margot and Barbie Ana lift Ken up.
KEN RYAN GOSLING
Wow you are so strong!



NOTES
FOR
WOMEN



All the Kens have to start somewhere. And one day the Kens will have as much power and influence in Barbie Land as women have in the real world.

WOMAN

misused to maintain the patriarchy, but she still replicated this way of thinking in *New Amazonia*.

Augustus Fitz-Musicus is presented as the embodiment of 19th century English men, but he is immediately characterised as non-threatening. He is 'five foot three' and shorter than the narrator, and the Giantesses call him a 'little man' and a 'boy', which emasculates and infantilises him (p.13).

Also, within the population of New Amazonia itself, 'boys succumb more easily to infantile disorders than girls' (p.72). The women are naturally stronger than both Fitz-Musicus and the New Amazonian men which suggests that biological strength is directly linked to their authority. Similarly, in *Barbie*, the Kens are physically weaker than the Barbies. Ken is in awe of the strength of the Barbies and even screams when Barbie punches a man in the face. This non-threatening version of masculinity seems to be crucial in both of the texts which suggests that biological differences between men and women is what constitutes who is in authority.

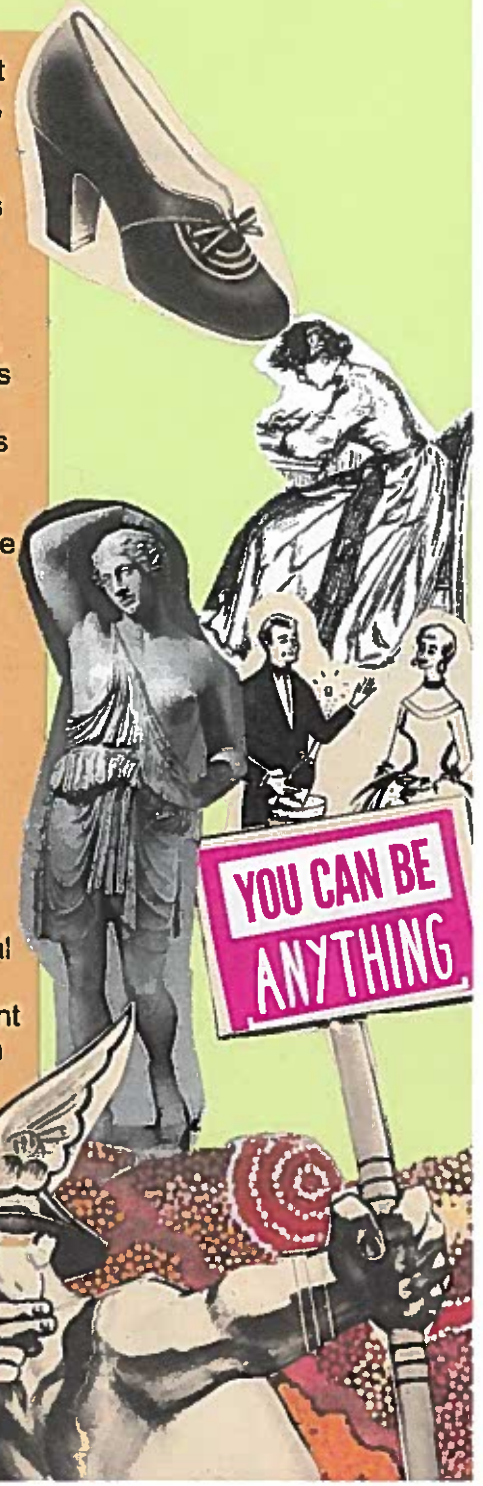
Christina Lake argues that 'the main assumption of difference between the two genders in *New Amazonia* is that of women's moral superiority over men' (Lake, p.1285). Indeed, men in both of the texts are depicted as incompetent and even infantile.

A gaggle of Kens approach, excited.



In *New Amazonia*, President Grey argues that 'the male biped is the same all the world over, a conglomeration of conceit and arrogance' (p.19). As Duangrudi Suksang puts it, 'in the New Amazonian women's view, men possess a weak moral constitution and, therefore, cannot be trusted' (Suksang, p.78). Men as a 'sex are generalised as unfit to be in authority because of their moral and mental capacities. This simply reinforces the discriminatory ideas that the patriarchy used to justify excluding women from the government. The exact ideas that Corbett was rebelling against.

In *Barbie*, all the dolls are supposed to behave like children, but the Kens are especially immature. Ken says, 'I hate it when people think I'm so bored' while Barbie is having complex, philosophical thoughts in the real world (p.33). Even at the end of the film, the Kens are still far more juvenile than the Barbies. They seem to be mentally less evolved and thus unfit to be in positions of authority. 'Madame President, please could the Kens get one Supreme Court justice?' 'Whoa whoa, I can't do that' (p.108). Therefore, both of the texts maintain essential biological differences between men and women, which justifies women being dominant over men. According to Sargisson's definition of feminism, this means that neither of the texts are actually transgressive or utopian in their ideas, as they fail to propose revolutionary advancements in gender relations.



A Comparison of Outfits

Barbie



If you think you can move around in that...

Striped bodysuit

[1959, original Barbie]

NEW AMAZONIA



'silver embroidered velvet cap'

Gosh that's obscene!
Disembody her!!

'wimson sash'

'Modification of the divided skirt [...] a little below the knee'

Laced boots
'serving to heighten [...] their owner's beautiful symmetry'

HEALTH, BEAUTY, AND THE ARTIFICIAL in - NEW AMAZONIA -

In *Utopian Bodies and the Politics of Transgression*, Lucy Sargisson recognises a problem with the blueprint model of utopia, which aims at a level of fixity and perfection that is not often applicable to many contemporary feminist, as well as historical, utopias. In response to this problem, she defines Transgressive Utopian thought as breaking rules and confronting boundaries, challenging paradigms, and creating new conceptual and political spaces. (p. 4)

New Amazonia certainly breaks rules; however, it is a society that is highly framed by the idea of perfection. Looking at physical beauty and perfection often seems to, whether consciously or not, reaffirm existing paradigms and, thus, fails to create a radically new space. While it offers a utopia, the text fails to be transgressively Utopian in Sargisson's sense.

The New Amazonians see the natural as an unnecessary evil, something that may be and often is rejected in order to make way for perfection. Beauty is heralded as an indication of their progressive society.

The initial effect is comical:

'Wrinkles are not necessary evils [...] We prefer to do without them, and seldom see them in real life' (p. 59)

'she looked at the sketch with horror and repulsion'. (p. 59)

Ageing is described as a 'hideous mockery of life. To watch the gradual decay of all physical beauty must be an almost unendurable pain'. (p. 59)

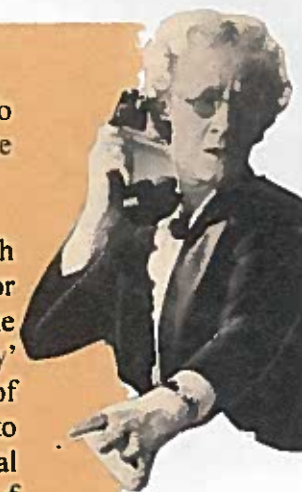
However, the consequences of these attitudes are much darker. We are informed earlier that 'no crippled or malformed infants were permitted to live.' (P. 40) and the New Amazonian notes how she would 'disembody' herself were she to grow old (p. 60). The use of ambiguous and vague language, such as 'permitted to live' and 'disembody', removes the reality and potential violence of these acts. It distances what is the murder of disabled children and suicide for people who are growing old, and so it seems more acceptable if not scrutinised.

The descriptions of the setting up of the society further suggest a dark exclusivity describing the 'swarms of women who clamoured to become members of the new republic' (p. 36) pre-empting the kind of rhetoric used by politicians in the 21st century to describe refugees.

With its negative attitude towards ageing and disability, *New Amazonia* reproduces misogynistic beauty standards for women. At the same time, it makes them acceptable because the standard is easily attainable and everyone within the society is beautiful.

Rather than rethinking such oppressive standards it does away with the oppressive element, by excluding all those who do not conform. This is hardly the transgressive Utopianism that Sargisson puts forward. Furthermore, living in a place that employs the same exclusionary and problematic rhetoric of certain politicians, does not make New Amazonia seem a particularly inviting place.

* 2015, David Cameron described migrants in Calais as a 'swarm'.



NO SWARMS
OF UGLY OLD
WOMEN HERE
!!



*



BARBIE & CLIMATE CHANGE

Barbieland is all plastic with the natural world featuring only as a plastic recreation. While having a totally artificial Barbieland is in keeping with the toys themselves, the dolls, their various add ons and homes being made of plastic, Barbieland could have had some real grass - It is a fantasy after all! One could imagine Barbieland including the natural world as perfectly preened and cultivated to the nth degree - perfectly mown lawns, beautiful white sand, clear sea. But no, it's all plastic and it's no wonder...

According to Time Magazine, the global entertainment industry produces millions of metric tons of CO2 a year, and films like *Barbie* are estimated to produce around 3,370 metric tons of CO2 (+CO2e). Mattel is worse: selling around 60 million Barbies a year, they produce around 39,000 +CO2e and with sales growing 16% between July and September after *Barbie* was released, Mattel's earnings were higher than even Wall Street predicted. Despite CEO of Mattel Ynon Kreis saying that the movie was 'not about selling toys, it certainly hasn't hurt their sales, and as CEO of a multi-billion-dollar corporation, of course sales are considered, even if in an indirect roundabout way.

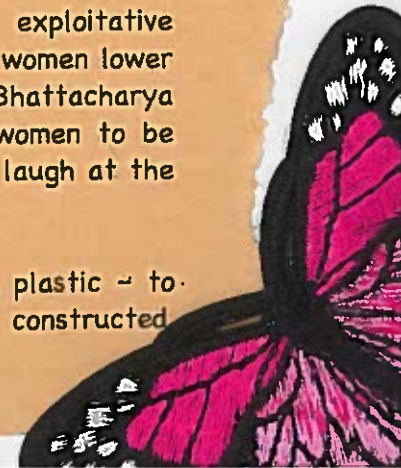
Recent studies into climate change, have begun to show how it disproportionately affects women. Both the UNFCC and UN Women have noted the ways in which climate change has a greater impact on women than men: women, who in many societies are

responsible for food, energy, water, will experience an increased burden as these things are impacted by climate change.

A discussion of climate change, then, must be included in the fight women's rights and in constructing a feminist utopia. *Barbie* criticises the patriarchy, but it does so from a very simplistic perspective: the connection between climate change and patriarchy is completely avoided (along with other issues such as class and race). Alexis Norman, co-founder of Greenly, a company concerned with carbon management, states, 'While the new *Barbie* movie makes a good case for overturning the values previously associated with the plastic doll, namely the fight against patriarchy and associated prejudice, it's still an ode to overconsumption. Apparently, in *Barbie's* world, climate change doesn't exist either'.

Barbie suggests that men being dominant in industry is the cause of sexism, and that placing women in positions of power will eliminate it. It fails to address how women may reproduce exploitative systems that are actually harmful to women lower down the corporate ladder. As Tithi Bhattacharya writes, 'Mattel, unsurprisingly, asks women to be bosses, not to fight them. We get to laugh at the patriarchy but not fear corporations.'

It makes sense that Barbieland is all plastic - to have it be natural, even if heavily constructed



might invite comparison with the real world (when they go there, we only really see the highly built-up city, insides of buildings, and roads). Climate change does not exist in Barbieland, but it definitely does in the real world. To address this, to create a Barbieland that sees humans in harmony with nature, might invite scrutiny where Mattel does not want it. To offer a critique of patriarchy that includes the ways in which climate change disproportionately impacts women, might not encourage the increasing production and sales of plastic toys.

Life in plastic
it is not
FANTASTIC!

HELEN MIRREN (V.O.)
So Barbie left behind the pastels
and plastic of Barbie Land for the
pastels and plastic of Los Angeles.

You mean a woman can open it?

Barbie

KEN

It's nice to have a girl around the house.

...and met a little lady, our hero didn't have to fire a
...her hair. After the look of his Mr. Leggs slacks, she
...ly to have him walk all over her! That really stings
...grilles the lounge hours! If you'd like your own doll to
...dill carrying. Meet up a pair of these to men Mr. Leggs
...slacks. Such as our new automatic wash wear brand of 60%
..."Dacron"™ and 35% nylon—Incomparably™ available everywhere.
About \$12.95 at plush-corporated stores.

Dacron

McLaren

feminini **St**

'Feminists have long criticised the institution of marriage. Historically, it has been a fundamental site of women's oppression, with married women having few independent rights in law' states Clare Chambers in the intro to her paper on Feminism, Liberalism and Marriage. Both Corbett's *New Amazonia* and Gerwig's *Barbie* (2023) seem to take this position; in particular, *New Amazonia* assigns different status to married and unmarried women whilst *Barbie's* fundamental message is one of individuality and independence.

New Amazonia creates a very distinct hierarchy between the married and the unmarried: they 'permit no one to be elected for State offices' who has ever been married; nor are important professional posts accessible by them' (p.50). This establishes a binary system; the use of the phrase 'who has ever been married' (p.50) creates a strong line in the sand, with marriage being the boundary. Furthermore, the naming of two positions – 'State officials' (p.50) and 'important professional posts' (p.50) makes it incredibly clear that marriage is the glass ceiling; in order to achieve anything professionally, career-wise, marriage and relationships must be forsaken. In this way, Corbett not only supports a particular feminist view that, put simply by Chambers, 'traditional marriage is bad because it oppresses women' (p.2) but also support a view put forward by Matthew



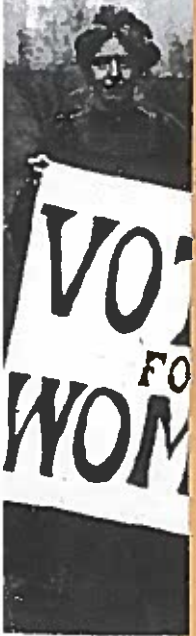
UTOPIAS AND INDEPENDENCE

Beaumont in his article on the interaction between the 'New Woman' and Utopia that *New Amazonia* 'is finally individualistic in its outlook'.

Whilst *New Amazonia* does exist as a matriarchal community, it is called 'the most perfect, the most prosperous, and then most moral community' (p.34), led by 'the Mother' (p.38), its valuation of single individuals over married individuals reinforces that, ultimately, Corbett's utopia is, as Beaumont puts it, 'individualistic in its outlook' (p.216). The Amazonian's:

Believe that perfect clearness of brain, and the ability to devote oneself exclusively to intellectual topics, are inseparable from the celibate state, and we adhere rigidly to the rules established in connection. (p.51)





This section creates a semantic field of impeccability; the words 'perfect', 'clearness', 'devote', and 'exclusively' (p.51) create an image of the perfect woman, and one that, most importantly, is 'inseparable from the celibate state' (p.51). Here lies the paradoxical crux of New Amazonia's feminist utopia; relationships and sex are seen as a barrier to being the perfect woman and thus stunting a woman's career and intellectual development. Whilst this could be seen to reinforce the matriarchal nature of New Amazonia, with women rejecting sexual

partners for career development and holding the top jobs, with 'the Chief governmental offices are all appropriated by women' (p.50), it could also, paradoxically, be seen as reproducing the misogynistic notion that women cannot balance employment with a relationship/family.

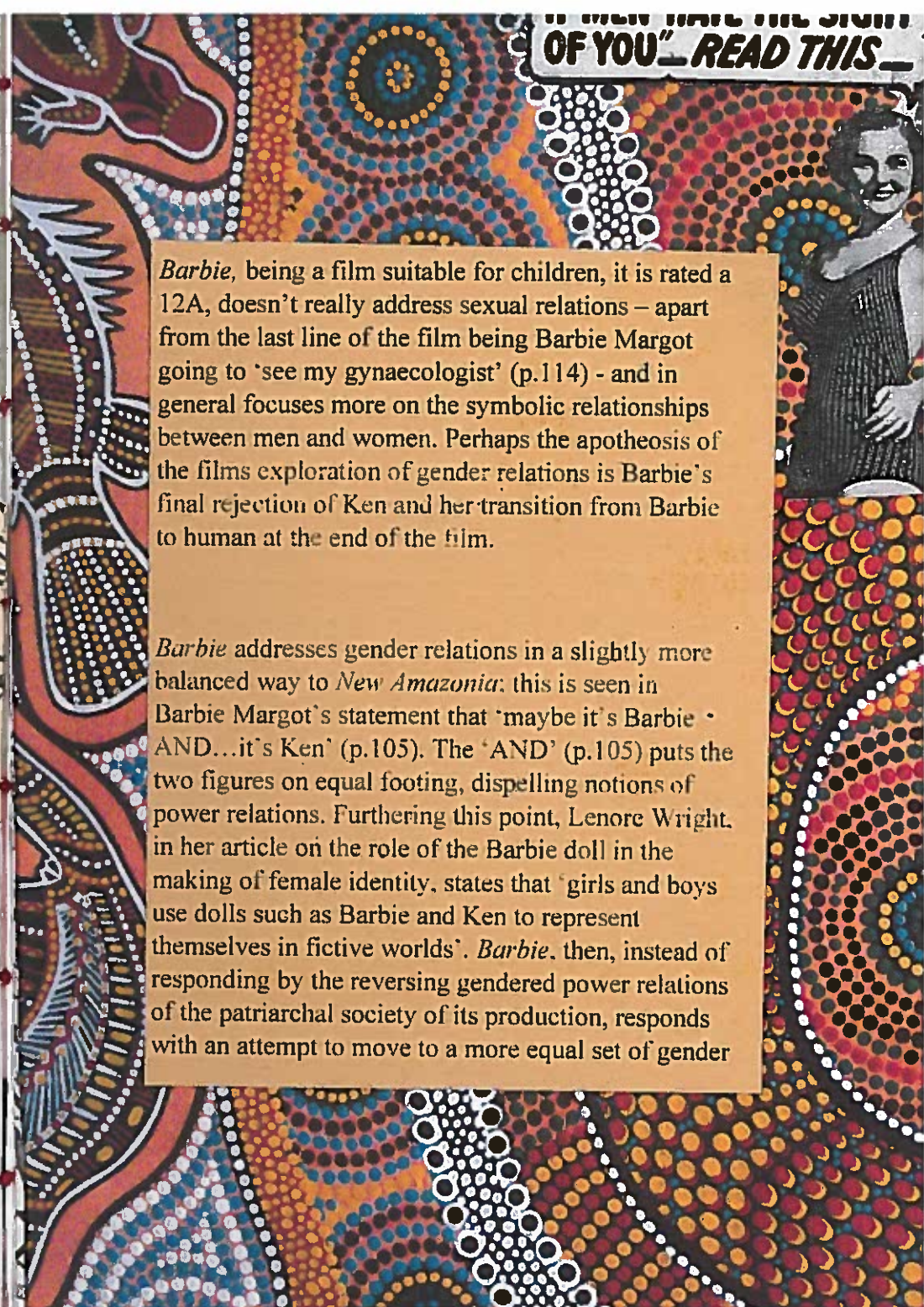
As aforementioned, this rejection of relationships reinforces the ultimate individualism of Amazonia; by limiting women to lower jobs when married. *New Amazonia* implies that it is impossible for women to balance having a relationship with having a career. Moreover, it also implies the patriarchally rooted idea that 'the celibate state' (p.51) is associated with a better, more 'clear' (p.51), and pure woman: Fatima Mernissi argues in her article on the connection between virginity and patriarchy that 'virginity is the manifestation of a purely male preoccupation'. Corbett's utopia is thus strongly rooted in the beliefs of the time it is produced it, patriarchal beliefs. *New Amazonia*, then, is perhaps not as straightforward as it may at first seem; whilst it does extoll the values of a gynocratic community, it is also infused with the patriarchy and individualism of the time it was produced in.



"IF MEN HATE THE SIGHT OF YOU" - READ THIS -

Barbie, being a film suitable for children, it is rated a 12A, doesn't really address sexual relations – apart from the last line of the film being Barbie Margot going to 'see my gynaecologist' (p.114) - and in general focuses more on the symbolic relationships between men and women. Perhaps the apotheosis of the film's exploration of gender relations is Barbie's final rejection of Ken and her transition from Barbie to human at the end of the film.

Barbie addresses gender relations in a slightly more balanced way to *New Amazonia*: this is seen in Barbie Margot's statement that 'maybe it's Barbie AND...it's Ken' (p.105). The 'AND' (p.105) puts the two figures on equal footing, dispelling notions of power relations. Furthering this point, Lenore Wright, in her article on the role of the Barbie doll in the making of female identity, states that 'girls and boys use dolls such as Barbie and Ken to represent themselves in fictive worlds'. *Barbie*, then, instead of responding by the reversing gendered power relations of the patriarchal society of its production, responds with an attempt to move to a more equal set of gender





relations, rather than the institutionally hierarchical patriarchy of *New Amazonia*.

However, whilst *Barbie* moves towards a more equal set of gender relations, it fully embraces that liberation, particularly for women, is inextricably intertwined with individualism. To start, there is never any real chance that Barbie has a relationship with Ken: she is categorically 'not in love with Ken' (p.109). This is a rejection of both a relationship and assured gender relations, yet what is more telling in regards to individualism is Barbie Margot's rejection of the supposed utopian community of Barbie Land. In the opening directions of the script, in fact, it states 'everything is perfect' (p.7): Barbie Land, thus, could not be any more utopic. Barbie Margot, however, rejects Barbie Land saying, 'I, I don't know... I'm not really sure where I belong anymore. I don't think I have an ending' (p.109) and that 'I don't feel like Barbie though, not anymore' (p.110). The repeated use of the singular personal pronoun 'I' (p.110) affirms the individuality of her actions – she is rejecting the Barbie community to move in her own independent direction. The fact that she doesn't feel like Barbie' (p.110) reinforces this. Barbie is both a singular personal pronoun and a plural pronoun: she is divorcing herself from the plural, the idea of Barbie and its associated community, and moving beyond it.



freedom



I believe



discovery, *Barbie* is a groundbreaking one that ultimately posits the theory that development is an individual process.

This is, finally, backed up by the last scene of the film; Barbie Margot does get support from her adopted family, Sasha saying 'I'm so proud of you' (p.114), but it is her entry into the gynaecologist's office alone, the fact that she is individual and independent as 'she walks from the car into a big building' (p.114) that is the key ending note of the film. Female liberation, then, is inextricable from individualism and independence; community is to be rejected and individualism embraced in order for there to be a happy ending.

Both texts, then, explore the interaction between feminist liberation and individuality; *New Amazonia* revolves its individualism around women rejecting any sort of relationship, but in the process establishes a gendered hierarchy responding to the patriarchy of its production. *Barbie*, however, ties ultimate female liberation to individuality; perhaps this is due to *Barbie*'s position as an American consumer product, developed out of a capitalist market that values individual success and the American dream, or perhaps Gerwig's film is adopting a specific strand of feminism which places female individuality at the forefront. Either way, each of the texts explores, in their own ways, the interaction of individuality and feminist utopias.

HELEN MIRREN (V.O.)
She has her own money, her own house, her own car, her own career. Because Barbie can be anything, women can be anything.



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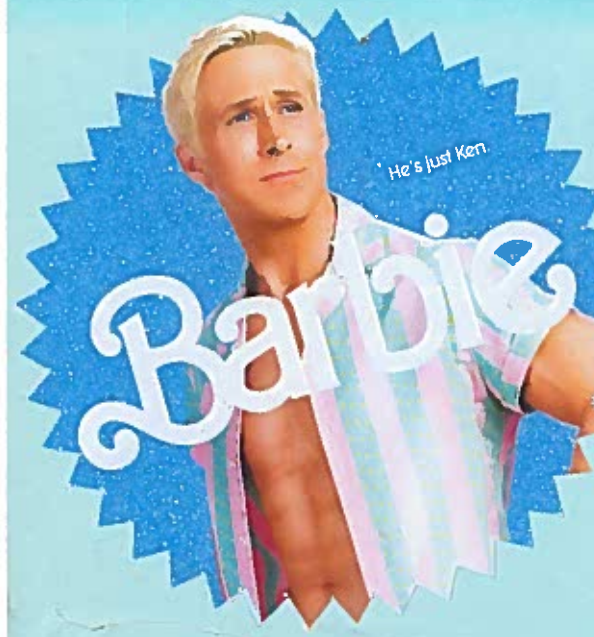
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He's just Ken

Barbie



HE'S A DOLLI



I'm Just Augustus/ Lyrics

Cause I'm just Augustus, anywhere else I'd be a ten
s it my destiny to live and die a life of blonde fragility?

I'm just Augustus

Where I see love, the giantess sees a friend

What will it take for her to see the man behind the monocle and fight for

ne?

