

FULLA'S AND BARBIE'S IMAGES IN RELATION TO WOMEN'S BEAUTY AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

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Abstract

Most people know Barbie, a doll that conveys some values about culture and about the concept of women's beauty. However, Barbie only represents one specific culture, which is Western culture. Different with Western culture, Eastern culture needs a doll who can represent their values. Then, Fulla appears as the representative of Eastern beauty. Fulla conveys some values about Eastern culture and about the new concept of women's beauty which are different from Barbie. Fulla's appearance here is thought can emphasize the cultural differences among the society, but it can give another choice to shape people's new thought about the beauty of Eastern culture. Using Said's orientalism will help the writer to support the arguments about Eastern culture that can be an equal competitor to Western culture nowadays.

Keywords

Barbie, Fulla, concept of beauty, cultural differences, orientalism

INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this paper is to analyze the differences between Fulla and Barbie dolls in relation to women's beauty, and how those differences can further emphasize the cultural differences between east and west. The thought that western culture is more modern and better still exist nowadays. As we know, Fulla and Barbie are different, but actually both offer some ideas of beauty. Barbie gives the description of beauty with a thin body, long legs, blond hair, and fair skin. In contrast, Fulla shows that a girl with a veil and darker skin and hair can also be categorized as beautiful. Those dolls represent their own cultures, one representing the eastern culture and the other the western one. The writer will take a deeper look into Fulla's and Barbie's characteristics. Then, the writer will relate them to the thought which is influenced by post-colonialism that think western culture is better than eastern. Fulla as a representation of the eastern culture offers an equal quality of beauty that provide an alternative to Barbie's dominant concept of beauty. This research will situate Fulla's concept of beauty and find out if it can represent the beauty of eastern girls.

Barbie is a fashion doll that first appeared on March 9th 1959. Barbie is manufactured by Mattel, Inc¹. It is popular because of its appearance and packaging that convey a concept of ideal beauty. Barbie has a boyfriend named Ken. She likes to go to parties and beaches. Unlike Barbie, Fulla is a veiled doll. It looks like Barbie, but when we look at it carefully, Fulla is different from Barbie. Fulla first appeared in late 2003. Fulla was created by a manufacturer in Dubai named Newboy FZCO². It becomes a rolemodel for Moslem girls because Fulla wears hijab, likes to pray, and takes care of her brother and sister.

A doll like Barbie or Fulla can be a role model to children. Barbie can be a trendsetter for children who like to play with it. Children can follow the way Barbie dresses or how she lives. In fact, Barbie just represents one specific culture, which is western culture. The value that Barbie brings can be unsuitable for people who deal with eastern culture. Before Fulla came, Barbie conveys one dominant concept of beauty. Beauty is like Barbie, having many beautiful dresses, shoes, bags, cars, and also having handsome boyfriend. The dominance of Barbie is because there is no equal competitor for Barbie and the impact of post-colonialism. As we know, post-colonialism leads us to the thought that western countries as the colonial are more powerful and dominant than the colonized countries. After Fulla's coming, this can be one way to show that eastern culture is not subordinate anymore. What the writer is going to show is how Fulla can be an equal competitor for Barbie to convey the concept of ideal beauty.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

A doll that represents one specific culture can be a model to children who play with it. It can serve as a role model to the children by introducing and promoting the values of a specific culture. Most children in this world know Barbie. Barbie is like a rolemodel of ideal beauty, but in fact Barbie just represents one specific culture, which is western culture. Barbie does not fit in the eastern culture. According to Lind in Dixon (2011), feminist critique of Barbie is that Barbie as a doll conveys a message about a particular concept of beauty that brings western values with it. On the contrary, Fulla is made as a veiled Barbie. Fulla looks like Barbie, but apparently it is different from Barbie in terms of its characteristics. Fulla as a veiled Barbie offers a different concept of beauty that represents the eastern culture. Even though the emergence of Fulla can emphasize the cultural differences of this world, it can also offer a new and equal concept of beauty that represents the values of the eastern culture. It seems that Barbie as the representative

¹ Mattel Inc first produced Barbie in 1966. It was a product of U.S but made in Japan. The first Barbie appeared as a beautiful that very similar to a perfect young woman.

² Newboy FZCO first created Fulla in Dubai. It is under the UAE manufacturer. Fulla is a role model for Moslem people. Although there are many other dolls wearing hijab, Fulla is more famous than the others.

of western culture has the equal competitor.

Children who play Barbie tend to see Barbie as a trendsetter³. They try to follow Barbie when they grow up. They want to be beautiful like Barbie. Barbie's body becomes the ideal body for beautiful girls. Girls who play Barbie since they were kids may adopt the concept of beauty in which to be beautiful is to have skinny legs, long blonde hair, fair skin, blue eyes, small hips, and also sexy breast. For that reason, Barbie as a representation of western culture dominates the concept of ideal beauty in this world that makes many girls want to have a body like her. The body can be an important part of human's beauty, and Barbie succeeds in making the concept of ideal body correspond to the concept of ideal beauty. However, this concept just represents one culture and not all people in this world can fully accept that concept.

It is known that post-colonialism gives impact to the stereotype about east and west until nowadays. People often see that the west is more powerful than east. It is because mostly eastern countries are colonized by western countries. Western countries are thought as the dominant countries in this world. In this context, the writer relates that impact of post-colonialism's impact to Barbie and Fulla that become representative of their own culture. Many people have known that Barbie has dominated the value of beauty of the world since 1959. This doll can be a role model that represents the only western culture. The domination of Barbie shapes people's thought that beauty is like Barbie. The writer sees that when Fulla first appeared, it gave people more choice to think about the concept of beauty. Fulla's appearance is look like Barbie, but in fact they are different. Fulla can be the doll that breaks the stereotype of east and west. The writer thinks that Fulla has an equal power to compete with Barbie in conveying a concept of beauty.

Based to Reischer and Koo (2004), many girls think that body is an important part of beauty. When those girls look at Barbie, they think that Barbie's body is perfect. This is easier to Fulla to compete Barbie because Fulla also has a good body but covered in Abaya (Middle East Moslem clothes).

THEORY AND METHOD

This research will be based on the theory of Orientalism by Edward Said. Said's Orientalism is a study how western power could dominate eastern countries such as North African and Middle East. According to Said (1978), the West has created a dichotomy, between the reality of the East and the romantic notion of the "Orient". McLeod (2000) also said, The Orient is frequently described in a series of negative terms that serve to buttress a sense of the West's superiority and strength.

The theory of orientalism by Edward Said was also related to theory of post-

³ A social learning theories which stated that children tend to learn something by imitating adults or other media including a doll.

colonialism. People's thought of east and west is also shaped by the stereotype that comes after colonialism. However, colonialism forms the perspective that western countries are the more powerful countries in this world because they could dominate and colonize other subordinate countries which are eastern countries. The theory of orientalism and post-colonialism become two basic theories to analyze Fulla and Barbie in relation to the difference of eastern and western culture.

Fulla is an equal competitor for Barbie in conveying the new concept of beauty that represents the beauty of the eastern culture. The writer thinks that Fulla as a doll is strongly enough to represent eastern culture and convey new positive thought about ideal beauty. Fulla can convey values like what Barbie has done before. The word 'value' here means everything about a culture that can shape people's thought, especially the children who play with Barbie and Fulla dolls.

The stereotypes about west and east still exist until nowadays. Many people still think that east is subordinate while west is more powerful and more modern. This kind of thought is also represented by Barbie. Barbie conveys many values that can shape people's thought about western culture. Then, Fulla appears as an equal competitor to be the representative of eastern culture that is ready to show alternative values which can shape new thought in people's minds.

The method that is used by the writer is observation method. The writer will observe the materials, which are Fulla and Barbie dolls. Fulla and Barbie are examined carefully based on their appearances, packagings, advertisings, and also their habits. In general, Fulla's appearances and packaging are almost the same with Barbie's, but when we see the advertising and habit, we can see many differences that could clarify the differences between east and west. From the observation, the writer will show the comparison between the two. The writer chose Fulla as a comparison for Barbie because Fulla nowadays becomes well-known. Fulla also has a beautiful appearance that represents eastern culture. The writer assumed that Fulla's coming is like breaking the stereotype that eastern culture is subordinate and conveying a new concept of beauty. After that, the writer will collect secondary data about Barbie's and Fulla's acceptance in many countries in the world to support the result of the observation.

ANALYSIS

In this world, there are so many different cultures from different countries, but in general there are two different cultures which are eastern and western culture. Those cultures exist because they are influenced by post-colonialism. Many people noticed that long time ago there were some countries which colonized other countries. Most western culture went to other countries to find their gold, glory, and gospel. That is why they colonized other countries. Most countries that are colonized are eastern countries. That situation can influence people's thought that Western countries are more dominant and

powerful than eastern countries. Eastern countries are thought as subordinate and less modern. Until nowadays many people still think that western countries and eastern countries are different and unequal.

It is believed that people will be sure about the differences between eastern and western culture if they compare Fulla to Barbie. As the doll which conveys a concept of ideal beauty, Barbie succeeded enough to represent western beauty as the concept. Based from the appearance, Barbie has long blonde hair, blue eyes, fair skin, sexy lips, sexy breasts, slim body, slim waist, and also long legs. Barbie's face is also beautiful. Her beautiful appearance is also supported by her pretty clothes. She has many kinds of beautiful dresses, bikinis, shoes, bags, and accessories. Then, we compare it to Fulla. The writer here said Fulla as the representative of Eastern culture is because Fulla represents the Eastern beauty. Not only by her veil, but also by her appearances. As the Moslem doll, Fulla comes and conveys new idea of ideal beauty. Fulla also has long hair, but it is dark brown. Fulla has brown eyes, colored skin, slim body, and also long legs. The other differences of Fulla from Barbie are her breasts and waist. Fulla's breasts are smaller than Barbie, but Barbie's waist is smaller than Fulla's. Fulla comes not as a sexy doll. Her clothes are different from Barbie. Fulla wears veil and also Abaya (traditional Moslem clothes in the Middle East). She also has Mukena (clothes for praying), Prayer Mat and also Koran.

If we compare Fulla and Barbie from their daily life, we can see those differences represent their own culture and habits. In her story, Barbie has many friends and has one boyfriend named Ken. Barbie loves party and also hang out with Ken. Her habit is a common thing in western culture. Unlike Barbie, the story of Fulla tells that Fulla has one brother and one sister. She likes to stay at home, praying and taking care of her siblings. Fulla does not have any boyfriend. Fulla's habit represents eastern culture. People can see that these differences really exist in this reality, and nowadays no one can say which one is right and wrong without strong evidences. In a stereotype about Eastern culture, it is known that most people who live in Middle East countries are Moslem. They live in Eastern culture that is thought as the opposition to Western culture. That is why Fulla's coming is said as the equal competitor to Barbie. Even though Fulla appears different to Barbie, but those differences represent many people who are in eastern culture.

The writer also takes a look at some advertisements of Fulla and Barbie. We can also see the difference of those cultures in the advertisements. Barbie's advertisement is quite attractive. It shows Barbie's life such as party, hang out, kiss her boyfriend, dance, and many more. It likes strengthen the stereotype of western habits which like to have fun. In one advertisement, Barbie uses the famous theme song "Barbie Girl". We can hear the lyrics "You can brush my hair, undress me everywhere".⁴ The lyrics can

⁴ Part of "Barbie Girl" lyrics. This song was released in 1997. This song became famous and then was used by Barbie's advertisement theme songs. The lyrics represents how Barbie looks like and how Barbie lives.

represent Barbie's daily life which is only suitable for western culture. Different from Barbie, Fulla's advertisement uses songs that represent Middle East songs that use Arabic language. Fulla is seen as the true Moslem doll. She prays and takes care of her siblings. The writer also found some themes on Fulla's advertisements, such as Fasting Fulla, Praying Fulla, and Fulla's wudhu (washing hands and feet before praying). Overall, those advertisements seem similar if we just take a look at the appearance of both Barbie and Fulla, but Fulla is just like the other type of Barbie.

The other comparison is the logo. The logos or symbols of Barbie and Fulla are quite similar with domination of pink color. The shape of the words is also quite similar. These logos are dominated with pink color and pink flower that convey the idea of a stereotype about girls. Girls are symbolized by pink color and many girls love it. This color can support the idea of beauty that is conveyed by them. As we know, beauty is strongly related to women or girls. About this similar logo, Fulla is thought as the equal competitor for Barbie. The logos or symbol makes Fulla is easier to be accepted by people because people will notice that Fulla is another type of Barbie. People can think that Fulla is made to be another option of people especially parents who want their children to get the value that is suitable with their culture.

Fulla's and Barbie's packagings are also quite similar. If we look at them carefully, we can see the difference, but if we just have a glance at them, we will see it almost the same. The shape and the color composition are quite similar, with pink as the dominant color. In addition, it is like the symbols of Fulla and Barbie that suitable with the packagings. Fulla also uses the similar packagings to Barbie to strengthen her position as the equal competitor to Barbie. So people will easily accept Fulla's coming as another option for people to choose which doll can represent their culture most.



Fulla



Barbie

Barbie has become the ideal beauty of a woman. Barbie could convey the value to shape how people think about the ideal beauty. In fact, Barbie has looked like a beautiful western woman. Barbie is successful enough to show the true beauty of a woman. Many women even girls think that a beautiful creature looks like Barbie, having a beautiful face, fair skin, and the perfect body. Barbie as a symbol of woman's beauty is actually only represent a particular culture, the culture of Western culture. For so many years, Barbie has dominated the concept of beauty and many people still buy Barbie for their children to play because there is no other choice. It is true that Barbie has many themes like President Barbie, Princess Barbie, Christmas Barbie, Holiday Barbie, Rapunzel, and many more, but it has no Muslimah Barbie yet. It becomes the good opportunity to introduce something like Barbie but in Moslem clothes and veil.

Basically, Barbie can not be used as a standard concept of beauty, but since Barbie has been presented in the community through the physical and life which are almost perfect, most people consider that Barbie is the ideal figure, even though she only represents one culture. Barbie's image can stick in many people's minds because it is acceptable for them to see that concept of women's beauty. Then from there came Fulla which provide resistance to Barbie. Fulla comes with a new beauty concept ala eastern culture. In fact, Fulla looks like Barbie, but there are still differences that differentiate Fulla from Barbie. Maybe many people think that Fulla is produced by the same industry like Barbie. Fulla is just like another theme of Barbie, but then we know that Fulla is produced by a different factory.

Fulla came and convey the other concept of beauty. Fulla's coming can be reviewed further by the various aspects that have been discussed previously. Fulla which almost resembles Barbie that has many assertions that east and west are different. Fulla is not only to complement the concept of beauty of Western culture but also wanted to convey a new idea of beauty. Indirectly, Fulla appeared to win the hearts of the Moslem people in order to show that they should not follow the lifestyle and the concept of beauty from Barbie. The new concept of beauty here is from Fulla. Fulla appears as something new, but after further review, Fulla is not really new. Fulla still uses the basic concepts of beauty of Barbie, but with little polished to resemble eastern society. Basically, they are not much different, so it does not seem to shift the concept of beauty of Barbie, it just adds a variation to a woman's beauty.

Fulla said to just add a variation of a woman's beauty because physically, Fulla as if it wants to be the figure of Barbie with a slender body, flawless skin, long hair, legs, and beautiful eyes. Although they look different, but the real difference they have is other than physically. Their differences located in the carried values that they convey, about their daily life and habits. The life Fulla and Barbie are very different and they are actually getting an effect of the values they receive. This is where we see that as Fulla grew up in an eastern culture, but Barbie grew up in western cultures that thought to be

more modern. Fulla and Barbie dress styles can also be regarded as a complement to the symbol of beauty in both. Fulla comes with a new beauty concept that introduce Moslem fashion. Through the terms of clothing, Fulla only offers another model of dress that is not inferior to Barbie's western-style.

According to an article by Zoepf (2005) "Bestseller in Mideast: Barbie With a Prayer Mat" (2005) says that now Fulla has become the answer to the most Moslem people to introduce the concept of beauty that can represent eastern culture although there are some people who do not feel special to its appearance. As a doll that like really like human beings, Fulla and Barbie indirectly can teach some value to many children who play with them. Children like to imitate what they learned from their favorite things, so many parents very concern in choosing the best toys for their children. Fulla can be the answer for many Moslem people in choosing a doll when they do not feel suitable with the value that is conveyed by Barbie.

Most people realize that in this world there are two general differences of culture, eastern and western culture. Based on the theory of orientalism by Edward Said, the eastern is thought as the subordinate ones while western culture can dominate the world, but if we see from Fulla and Barbie, we can see that Fulla can be the equal competitor for Barbie. Barbie was successful to dominate the concept of ideal beauty, but the Fulla came in 2003 to convey another concept. Fulla's concept of beauty is also accepted in many countries, especially in the Middle East. That makes Fulla can be said as the equal competitor for Barbie, so Barbie cannot dominate the world in the concept of ideal beauty that only represent one specific culture only.

Fulla's appearance also affirms that western culture and eastern culture are really different, like many people think. Besides the appearance, Fulla also affirms the differences of western culture and eastern culture from many sides, such as daily life and habits. These differences seem to be contradicting, based on how people think about it. For many western people, they can see that eastern culture is less modern, conservative, and old. If eastern people see western culture, they can think that western culture just knows to have fun and freedom. The assumption like this can appear if the difference is seen from a different point of view, but it is believed that is no right or wrong from this difference.

Fulla's first appearance is around 2003, which is much newer than Barbie's first appearance. This factor can also be the reason that Barbie is more famous than Fulla. Barbie becomes well-known by most people in the world. Even though Barbie has many types of friend, her friends are also looking like so American. Here, the words "so American" means that Barbie's friends just represent the multiculturalism in America. The writer says this because we can see from their appearances and habits that represent the western culture only. For many years, Barbie, her friends and boyfriend could dominate the world as the human-like dolls that can convey some values about life. This interesting doll is very successful in conveying some values. We can see that Barbie can survive in many markets

in the world. The producer also makes many innovations for Barbie, so many children in the world become addicted to collect many types or themes from Barbie.

Barbie's success is also seen from the well-known brand "Barbie" as many other products. Barbie also becomes the brand of clothes, stationary, bags, shoes, and many more. This can support Barbie's position in the worldwide. Barbie is easy to be noticed and known. That is why Barbie also has many fans that make her become an idol. Children who make Barbie as their idol are tend to imitate what Barbie has and what Barbie does. This can make Barbie as the trendsetter in fashion or in daily life for many children. Even though Barbie only convey western value, while there is no other competitor, Barbie still dominate the people's mind about the concept of ideal beauty that is conveyed by Barbie.

Said's Orientalism also said that there is another exotic thing in this world which exist in eastern culture. Fulla can be the one that proves it. The beauty of eastern women is now represented by Fulla doll. Fulla nowadays also becomes a famous brand, especially in Middle East countries. Brand "Fulla" becomes the brand of stationary and also food like cereals. This phenomenon can support the existence of Fulla to become the equal competitor for Barbie. Since there are many people especially Moslem can accept Fulla's appearance, Fulla also can survive in many markets in the world to compete with Barbie. Fulla can be the equal competitor to balance Barbie's domination before. The writer sees that even though Fulla is not as famous as Barbie, but Fulla has successfully enough to convey another concept of ideal beauty in this world, which is the beauty of eastern women.

Fulla can be interpreted in many ways. Fulla can be said as an intertextuality or another form of Barbie⁵. Fulla also can be said to break the stereotype about western culture and eastern culture. In this topic, we can see Fulla as the representative of eastern beauty can convey new ideas of ideal beauty and also can bold the differences of eastern culture and western culture. On one side, Fulla makes the differences between western and eastern culture seems true. In the other side, Fulla can break the stereotype about which culture is more dominant and more modern. Fulla's appearance is acceptable and it can replace Barbie in many countries in the world, especially in the Middle East. If we imagine Fulla and Barbie, it is more like an equal competitor that conveys the different concept of beauty and culture. It's just like giving a choice which one is more suitable to the people who choose them, not which one is better.

We now more notice that there are some real differences in this world that cannot be represented by only one representative. If there is only one representative that represent the culture in this world, that is not enough. Many other people can not feel

⁵ The theory of intertextuality is a theory about how signs derives their meaning in a structure of a text. (Kristeva,1966).

being represented by that one. So, this happens to Barbie and Fulla that they can offer two general differences of cultural differences in this world equally⁶. People can choose the most suitable doll to be played with.

CONCLUSION

From this article, the writer tries to compare between Fulla and Barbie as the doll that conveys a concept of ideal beauty. Barbie, which appears earlier than Fulla could convey a concept of ideal beauty that only represents the beauty of western women. This western concept of beauty seems like dominating the world. Then Fulla appeared around 2003 and convey another concept of ideal beauty. Fulla represents the beauty of Eastern women. Manufactured by a different factory from Barbie, Fulla is the equal competitor for Barbie to convey another concept of ideal beauty. The writer then takes a deeper look on Barbie's and Fulla's characteristics to compare them from many aspects. Their comparison emphasizes the true differences between Western culture and Eastern culture. The differences are though as unequal differences that many people still thought that Eastern culture is subordinate while Western culture is more modern and powerful.

After comparing both of the dolls, the writer found that Fulla and Barbie is not really the same, but they can convey their own cultures. Fulla as the representative of Eastern beauty is strong enough to compete with Barbie as the representative of Western beauty. Fulla also emphasizes the cultural differences in this world, but in this modern age, those differences become the choices for people to choose where they are. Fulla is also accepted in many countries especially in Middle East countries because the value that is embodied in Fulla is more suitable to the people there rather than Barbie's value of beauty.

This research is based on the analysis of Fulla's and Barbie's characteristics that are thought as the equal representative to her own culture in conveying the concept of women's beauty. The writer aims this research to be useful in study about stereotype and also cultural difference. It also can give information about another doll beside Barbie that can convey some values to about culture. Then the people in this world can more notice that there are cultural differences here, but these differences are equal, which are West and East. Fulla and Barbie are now the representatives for their own culture and ready to be equal competitor for each other.

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⁶ This is like breaking the stereotype that thought Western countries are more powerful than Eastern countries because in the past, Eastern countries were colonized by Western countries.

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