Call for Proposals Barbie in the Media: The Cultural Impact of Mattel’s Celebrity Doll

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Call for Chapter Proposals

Barbie in the Media: The Cultural Impact of Mattel’s Celebrity Doll
Edited by Emily R. Aguiló-Pérez and Rebecca C. Hains

Abstracts invited by May 1, 2023

Since her creation in 1959, Barbie has become a ubiquitous global presence and a touchstone of cultural consciousness. Those who have studied Barbie note that no other toy has generated so much sustained media and scholarly interest.

Much of the scholarship on Barbie focuses on the representation of and interactions with the 11.5-inch doll. In contrast, the scholarship on Barbie-related media and other texts is more limited. Some studies have examined Barbie comics, board games, trading cards (Mitchell and Reid-Walsh, 1997), computer games including Barbie (Cassell and Jenkins, 2000), and straight-to-DVD movies (Vered and Maizonniaux, 2017). Yet, as a transmedia phenomenon, Barbie is inescapably everywhere: in books and magazines, on TV, on social media, in computer games, and in animated movies. These media and their implications merit their own study.

The proposed volume aims to bring together interdisciplinary perspectives to study the rise, development, and current status of Barbie media and Barbie’s role in various media platforms. We invite proposals from a range of disciplines and perspectives, including cultural studies, literary and textual studies, art, fashion, media and communication studies, music, education, gender studies, marketing, and critical reception, among others.
The collection of essays will examine official Barbie media created by Mattel such as books, comics, music, and TV shows, as well as the ways in which Barbie’s image appears in unofficial media, including fan-created texts, parodies, and social media accounts. By giving Mattel’s Barbie brand the same level of critical treatment as other comparably major brands, such as Disney (Giroux & Pollock, 1999; Hains, 2014) and LEGO (Hains & Mazzarella, 2019), this volume will enrich our understanding of Barbie as a cultural phenomenon that transcends children’s toys.

Ideas for possible chapter topics include but are not limited to:

- Historical overview of Barbie beyond the toy(s)
- Textual/content analysis of Barbie media
- (Mis)Representations of gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality
- How Barbie media tackles topics related to social justice
- Marketing perspectives, such as analysis of Barbie advertising
- Applications for education
- Moral panics about Barbie media
- Barbie advertisements
- Barbie media partnerships (e.g., *Sports Illustrated* cover)
- Narratives of children using or interacting with Barbie media
- Children’s perspectives on Barbie-related media
- Adult people’s personal narratives/oral histories of Barbie media
- Representations or the role of Barbie’s friends in media (e.g. Teresa, Ken, Christie, etc.)
- Barbie’s many roles/jobs
- Mediated conversations (press, social media) about Barbie “goodwashing” initiatives, such as sponsoring Take Our Daughters to Work Day
- Presence or absence of cross-cultural Barbies in media texts
- Translations or texts in languages other than English
- Synergy and cross marketing
- Use or creation of Barbie media for various purposes (e.g. activism, entertainment, education)
- Analyses of the audience for selected media
- Interviews with members of Barbie/media industry
- Barbie in other popular media (e.g. songs like Aqua’s “Barbie Girl” or Dolly Parton’s “Backwoods Barbie;” movies like Pixar’s *Toy Story)*

Contributors are invited to examine media such as, but not limited to:

- Movies, TV shows, books, magazines, comics, TV or printed advertisements, *YouTube* channels/videos/Vlogs (official or fan-created), Twitter/Instagram (official
by Mattel or fan accounts), board games, video/computer/phone games, trading cards, music videos/cassettes/CDs, and music or video parodies.

Some examples of Barbie (in the) media include, but are not limited to:

OFFICIAL

Advertisements
Print
TV
Online

Movies and Straight-to-Video Programming
Barbie and the Rockers: Out of This World (1987)
Dance! Workout with Barbie (1990s)
Barbie straight-to-DVD movies

TV and YouTube
Barbie Dreamhouse Adventures
Barbie Vlog (YouTube)
Barbie Dreamtopia

Social Media and Games
Barbie IG and Twitter (Barbie and Barbie Style)
Barbie’s Official YouTube
Computer games
Board games
Trading cards

Written
Comic books
Chapter books/series
Picture books/series

UNOFFICIAL
Anything But Ordinary! *YouTube* series by RockinBarbie
EverythingDolls *YouTube*
CoupleThing *YouTube* channel
Barbie’s Travel Diary (IG @travelingwithbarbie)
@ignathedoll (IG)
Toy review / unboxing channels extensively featuring Barbie

PARODIES
*Barbie Unbound: A Parody of the Barbie Obsession* (1997)
A Barbie parody in stop motion *FOR MATURE AUDIENCES* (Sam and Mickey *YouTube* channel)
The Most Popular Girl (*YouTube*)

ACTIVISM
ArtActivistBarbie (@Barbie Reports, Twitter)
DUE DATES:

Prospective contributors are invited to submit proposals consisting of a 500-word abstract (including an overview of the methodology) and a 150-word bio by **May 1, 2023** to the editors at barbieinmedia@gmail.com with the subject line “Barbie in the Media.”

The editors will notify prospective authors of their decisions by June 1, 2023.

Full chapters (7,000 words) will be due by **September 15, 2023**, with revisions due in January 2024.

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