



# EPISODE 14: UMBRA BARBIE

**Barbie treats Ken in ECNC way because  
Barbieworld is ECNC because  
The Patriarchy and Capitalism are ECNC**

# ROUGH OUTLINE OF "THE POINT"



In this essay I will demonstrate how Barbieworld in the 2023 movie Barbie illustrates how you can be a “good person” and still be causing to harm to other people because you are operating Under The Umbra

Barbieworld Inception:

Capitalism (played by Mattel) and The Patriarchy (played by Hollywood execs) are ECNC systems

>> Ruth Handler existing as a woman with hints of ECNC creates a doll in the late 1960s with rigid ECNC rules

>> Greta Gerwig & Noah Baumbach write (and direct) a movie criticising C+P yet operate within/pander to C+P *as well as* RH’s ECNC response to C+P a.k.a. Replicating and upholding the Umbra

>> Margot Robbie’s Stereotypical (St) Barbie goes on a masc monomyth journey and enacts Human Being injury on the Human Giver Syndrome avatar Ryan Gosling’s Mad Beach (MB) Ken because she is literally contractually not allowed to do differently.

>> and 2nd thru 3rd Wave Mashup Barbieworld disrupts the intersectional (Outside the Umbra) methods of community-based recovery by adhering to C+P Umbra rather than the execs/writers/brand management fully committing to the avatar, leaving many people desperately clinging to *Kenough!* but also somewhat dissatisfied or threatened

# CAPITALISM (PLAYED BY MATTEL) AND THE PATRIARCHY (PLAYED BY HOLLYWOOD EXECS) (AND THE SHADOWY KYRIARCHY LOOMING BEHIND THEM)

This part is rather obvious?



Corporate Capitalism and Patriarchy are inextricable from the Empathy-Challenged Non-Collaborative systems that also include

- Protestant Work Ethic
- Values of White Supremacy
- meta-national legal-financial systems of Empire where you just outrun your externalities and find the next frontier to exploit

# 2ND WAVE FEMINISM: ANYTHING YOU CAN DO, I CAN DO BETTER AND I'LL SHOW YOU HOW IT FEELS...!



## Ruth Handler's Rules

*Barbie can be anything, even if actual women can't yet*

*Barbie will never be married because "I never want Barbie to be limited by marriage"/by the roles of wife and mother*

*Ken is and will always be an accessory*

*Ken is her on-again off-again boyfriend*

Signs that Ruth Handler has some ECNC tendencies:

Empathy challenged:

- named the dolls after her daughter (Barbara), son (Ken), and son-in-law (Allan) regardless of evidence and feedback of how that affected their lives
- Discontinues Allan avatar when actual daughter Barbara divorced him (supportive of Barbara or protective of Ruth?)

Non-Collaborative:

- Zero qualms about outright stealing (then retroactively buying off) doll design
- marriage is intrinsically limiting rather than mutually enriching;
- simply switched who is in dominant role while maintaining oppressor/oppressed binary: (Ken is an *accessory* like a purse or shoes; Ken's relationship is on-again off-again as determined by Barbie)
- Ousted from leadership of Mattel because of tax evasion

SOURCE OF BARBIE RULES: "BLAME IT ON BARBIE WITH ENTERTAINMENT JOURNALIST BJ COLANGELO" AMERICAN HYSTERIA PODCAST, AND

[HTTPS://WWW.SLASHFILM.COM/1341484/AN-EXHAUSTIVE-GUIDE-TO-BARBIE-LORE/](https://www.slashfilm.com/1341484/an-exhaustive-guide-to-barbie-lore/)

# 2ND WAVE FEMINISM: ANYTHING YOU CAN DO, I CAN DO BETTER AND I'LL SHOW YOU HOW IT FEELS...! BRIEF DISCUSSION OF "WAVES" OF FEMINISM



Howe Electra models feminism: Waves of Feminism don't occur in *time*, they occur in stages of exposure to Feminism and divestment from Patriarchy/Kyriarchy.

**First Wave Feminism:** Women like me are people and citizens, like men are. (Sojourner Truth waves Hi)

**Second Wave Feminism:** Women can do anything men can do, and also, women want to do what men do, but also, men, stop doing that to women. (Angela Davis and James Baldwin are like, Wassup?)

**Third Wave Feminism:** I'm just one of the lads, I can keep up with the sex and drinking; but also being girly and femme is super empowering! (Kimberle Crenshaw does important legal work)

**Fourth Wave / Intersectional Feminism:** Oh Hey did you notice our liberation is linked to all liberation?! It turns out people of color, queer people, physically & developmentally disabled people, mad people, and fat people exist and are also oppressed by the same white men as we are! In fact, some of them are also women or femme! And they've been doing this anti-oppression work WAAAAAY longer than the white feminists have! Whoa! What?!

People right now can be First Wave Feminists as they leave an Evangelical Christian Church, or Second Wave Feminist as they work in a corporate job in finance. It's more about "where" you started from with your family and community of origin and got to through experience, learning, growth, than it is the year we collectively live in.

(I FORGOT WHERE I LEARNED THIS CONCEPT. I JUST CHECKED WHAT I THOUGHT WAS THE SOURCE AND I'M INCORRECT.)

# HOW (NOT) TO CRITICIZE YOUR FUNDERS AND HANDLERS (HA HA DID YOU SEE WHAT I DID THERE?)



Greta Gerwig had to go to Barbie Bootcamp to use the licensed brand material in her movie (source: American Hysteria)

The response to being allowed to step outside the role of Mother (babydolls) to the role of adult human female is... violent infanticide???

(oppressors fear of giving up power is that oppressed will enact violent, reverse oppression)

Patriarchy is briefly explored as bad for everyone in Ken-in-lobby scene BUT is quickly dismantled by manipulating the traits actually attributed to femmes in a patriarchal society and ultimately “defeated” with masc strategies

C&P are portrayed as hollow and whimsical, a sourceless menace, by Will Ferrell & entourage and the Kens (well articulated in quick [Instagram/Twitter-X thread by Devon Price PhD](#) (see speaker notes)

“The barbie movie...can’t actually acknowledge the role that capitalism and white supremacy play in the patriarchal system [it criticises]” Patriarchy is a belief system with no force, agent or system upholding it, just an insidious menacing feeling with a bumbling, farcical face.

# HUMAN BEING MONOMYTH VERSUS HUMAN GIVER MADNESS: THE HUMAN BEING



Witch, Please! Book 1, Ep. 1 does a good job of exploring why relying on Campbell's masc Monomyth for main protagonist arc loses a lot of variety available for telling story, but it's extremely palatable to C+P publishing/cinema.

Life is normal → disruption of normal → enter underworld; it's uncomfortable → gain tool / learn skill → return to disruption and defeat disruption → *restore normalcy*.

A major problem with Joseph Campbell is that he was only interested in men's stories. He responded to his student Maureen Murdock: "Women don't need to make the journey. In the whole mythological journey, the woman is there. All she has to do is realize that she's the place that people are trying to get to."

The femme/intersectional story arc is America Ferrera's Gloria in which a person lives life successfully according to Normal rules, realizes they are unsatisfied and unrealized, learns and grows and gains community and finds wholeness, and releases themselves from oppression. In fact, Gloria undergoes Murdock's model (described in The Heroine's Journey: Woman's Quest for Wholeness) (see same article as Campbell quote for an outline/diagram)

*But that was a B plot.*

St Barbie goes on a very classic self-focused male Monomyth journey. And it's sort of boring.

# HUMAN BEING MONOMYTH VERSUS HUMAN GIVER MADNESS: KENOUGH IS NOT ENOUGH

Human Giver Syndrome and the Mad Woman in the Attic (Burnout by Nagoski sisters)

**Human Beings** get to self-actualize and use whatever resources they need to do so

**Human Givers** must at all times be Pretty, Happy, Calm, Generous, and Attentive to the needs of others, and if they or someone else notices they aren't, they must be punished.

The Mad Woman In the Attic is the internalized voice that notices that chasm between achieving Human Giver demands and being a real person, and staring into that chasm makes one Mad, and either self-punishing or wildly rebellious

The Madness of being Under the Umbra - see next slide



Ryan Gosling's MB Ken vs Simu Liu's ECNC Beach Ken

Mad response to being the Human Giver to Barbie's Human Being (he is unable to be Happy, Calm, Generous, and Attentive because he is always precarious)

Versus

ECNC-B Ken response a.k.a. Replicate the umbra: competitive, hostile, flexing and dominant, controlling narrative, still seen as desirable and pleasing by Barbies and by MB Ken & their friends *"He's so cool" sotto voice*

Both feel insecurity and distress in the Umbra a.k.a. Both feel represented by "Push" (see source notes for alternate arrangement of lyrics)



# HUMAN BEING MONOMYTH VERSUS HUMAN GIVER MADNESS: KEN'S JOURNEY



BarbieWorld is a mash-up of 2nd ~ 4th Wave Feminism: still supremacist and capitalist, just reverse-sexist (more on this later)

MB Ken is utterly dependent on St Barbie's attention and care (it's the rules) as avatar for women under patriarchy

But also is punished (shame and bullying, ostracization, neglect) for responding in Mad ways to being oppressed (neither Human Giver nor ECNC)

In Barbie's monomyth underworld, he discovers the alluring toxicity of Patriarchy: I am owed Being On The Top but I nevertheless am not qualified for any actual dominance, and somehow this is "winning" (it's not satisfying, capitalism and other supremacy is still invisible)

MB Ken brings "pAtRiArChY" back to BarbieWorld so that he can be On Top (replicating [Empire of Nation-States](#)), and continues to replicate ECNC structures though he SEEKS recognition from and connection with Barbie

# HUMAN BEING MONOMYTH VERSUS HUMAN GIVER MADNESS: KEN'S JOURNEY



The Kens' collective appropriate insecurity is easily manipulated into escalated competitiveness with each other (avatar for women under patriarchy but also rendered ridiculous)

Nascent healing via community support (I'm just Ken!) is weaponized as a distraction

Extant supremacist group wields the laws written by them against briefly-dominant oppressed group (litigation abuse),

which undermines the burgeoning desire to continue community-based growth (even as Barbie achieved her goals via community support), AND

After the Barbies undermine the Kens' solidarity and as St Barbie abandons MB Ken to complete her monomyth,

she inadvertently gaslights him into believing he can, via toxic individuality rather than solidarity, solve his Madness through the same "understanding" that enacted and dismantled "pAtRiArChY" a.k.a. that he is Kenough

The most "loving" and empowered thing she does is explicitly acknowledge that she is utterly uninterested in responding to his needs (in adherence to RH's rules) rather than just passively expressing it

He is an avatar for the experience of women within patriarchy, but he is judged by the diegetic co-residents of Barbieworld and the Real World, and by the non-diegetic audience and critics, according to masc/ableist standards for behavior, and he is abandoned according to ECNC behaviors, required to heal himself without support, and told this is a triumph and exciting, in order to maintain Hollywood's access to Mattel's brand material.

# EXTRA THOUGHTS: WHY IS YT FEMINISM SO SIMULTANEOUSLY UNSATISFYING AND THREATENING?

Intersectionality with two parameters only please.

Black Barbie, Fat Barbie, Wheelchair User Barbie, Trans Barbie, Vitiligo Barbie  
[the "Barbie Fashionistas" line now boasts dolls with 35 skin tones, 97 hairstyles, nine body types, and counting](#)

But is there a Fat Black Barbie?

A Trans Wheelchair User Barbie?

Nope. Barbieworld Barbies must be cis, straight, young, thin, symmetrical, lovely, white, tall, 1 or 2A hair type, able-bodied, clear-skinned, non-fertile and blond, and you are allowed to change a single parameter (or grouped parameters e.g. Black with 3C hair type) to create your variation for Intersectionality purposes

And of course, the entire movie plays into the fears of the Oppressors that if the Oppressed are given power, they will simply switch Oppressor/Oppressed roles and will maintain hierarchy. I am not surprised that so many Men were threatened by it. The movie undermines every attempt to restructure an imaginary, aspirational world as egalitarian and based on empathy, collaboration, and mutual support... because it depends on approval from Capitalism/Mattel and Patriarchy/Hollywood to exist.

And that includes experiencing “emotions” as OK...

but not madness, in anyone, neither our female avatar who behaves masc (Monomyth protagonist) nor our male avatar behaving femme (MB Ken)



Red-haired Fat Barbie in intro song has a line about being able to express her emotions, but very quickly in the dance party scene, St Barbie’s ruminations about death shut everything down. Later, her response to realizing she is ineffectual on her own is trivialized via the “special line” of Barbies showing MDD and ED behavior showing actual “mental illness” responses to living in a supremacist world as being divergent and shameful/ridiculous.

And of course, MB Ken’s wild and immature emotions undermine his valid pain, his normal needs, and his attempts to connect and communicate/collaborate. “No, you failed me” is depicted as a cruel statement that further damages Barbie’s self identity, rather than a bid for repair through accountability