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ANALYSIS OF BARBIE'S IMPACT IN MEXICO THROUGH A COLORIST LENS: CHALLENGING THE PERSISTENCE OF A STEREOTYPED PINK SOCIETY

ANÁLISIS DEL IMPACTO DE BARBIE EN MÉXICO A TRAVÉS DE UN LENTE COLORISTA: DESAFIANDO LA PERSISTENCIA DE UNA SOCIEDAD ESTEREOTIPADAMENTE ROSA

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Analysis of Barbie's Impact in Mexico through a Colorist Lens: Challenging the Persistence of a Stereotyped Pink Society

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ABSTRACT

This article delves into the intricate and layered concept of Mexican pink, a color with deep historical and cultural roots. It commences by tracing the colonial origins of this vibrant hue, highlighting its association with colorism as depicted in caste paintings. These artworks, serving as portraiture, often reinforced social hierarchies based on skin color. From this historical perspective, Mexican pink has transitioned to symbolize femininity and feminist resistance against gender violence. In the 1940s, Mexican pink gained prominence, largely due to the innovative fashion designer Ramón Valdiosera. His pioneering work played a pivotal role in bringing this color to the forefront of the fashion industry, making it a significant representation of Mexican identity. However, the narrative around Mexican pink has continued to evolve, particularly recently. Feminist groups have increasingly adopted this color as a powerful tool to raise awareness about feminicide. This dual use underscores the complexity of the color, which serves as both a symbol of national identity in Mexico and a rallying cry for justice. The article also addresses the tensions arising from the commercialization of pink, mainly when used for feminist purposes. This commercialization can dilute the original meaning and importance of color, leading to debates about the authenticity and commodification of feminist ideals. In conclusion, I analyze the potential impact of Greta Gerwig's Barbie 2023 film on the feminist movement in Mexico. With its significant social media presence, the film has sparked much debate. Four influential Mexican TikTok creators, who became the most followed on the platform between June and August 2023, have been instrumental. Their content, which primarily appeals to young women interested in fashion, makeup, and feminism, creates a unique intersection, further highlighting Mexican pink's ongoing relevance in contemporary culture. This article examines the relationship between the content produced by these influencers and the representation of Barbie pink, which closely resembles Mexican pink. By analyzing this connection, we aim to understand if it is possible to forge a link between the two that can enhance the feminist struggle. Given that Gerwig's film has been framed as a feminist statement, exploring three different, yet similar, shades of pink reveal how they can integrate narratives of consumption with those of feminist activism, ultimately enriching the discourse around both color and the movement it represents.

Keywords: Mexican pink, Mexican feminism, colorism, feminicide, consumerism

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Análisis del Impacto de Barbie en México a través de un Lente Colorista: Desafiando la Persistencia de una Sociedad Estereotipadamente Rosa

RESUMEN

Este artículo explora el complejo y multifacético concepto del rosa mexicano, que tiene un importante significado histórico y cultural. Comienza rastreando los orígenes coloniales de este tono vibrante, enfatizando su asociación con el colorismo, como se representa en las pinturas de castas. Estas obras de arte sirvieron como retratos, ilustrando individuos de raza mixta y, a menudo, reforzando jerarquías sociales basadas en el color de la piel. A través de esta perspectiva histórica, sostengo que el rosa mexicano ha evolucionado para simbolizar la feminidad y la resistencia feminista contra la violencia de genero. En la década de 1940, el color ganó protagonismo gracias al innovador diseñador de moda Ramón Valdiosera, decisivo para popularizarlo en la industria de la moda. Sus contribuciones pusieron el rosa mexicano en el centro de atención, haciéndolo significativo en la representación de la identidad mexicana. Sin embargo, la narrativa en torno al rosa mexicano ha seguido evolucionando, en especial recientemente. Los grupos feministas han adoptado cada vez más este color como una poderosa herramienta para crear conciencia sobre el feminicidio. Este doble uso subraya la complejidad del color, que sirve como símbolo de identidad nacional en México y como grito de guerra por la justicia. El artículo también aborda las tensiones derivadas de la comercialización del rosa, principalmente cuando se utiliza con fines feministas. Esta comercialización puede diluir el significado original y la importancia del color, dando lugar a debates sobre la autenticidad y la mercantilización de los ideales feministas. En conclusión, analizo el impacto potencial de la película Barbie 2023 de Greta Gerwig en el movimiento feminista en México. A partir de la película de Barbie se observó su efecto a través de la presencia en las redes sociales de cuatro influyentes creadoras mexicanas de TikTok que, entre junio y agosto de 2023, se convirtieron en las más seguidos en la plataforma. Su contenido atrae principalmente a mujeres jóvenes interesadas en la moda, el maquillaje y el feminismo, creando una intersección única de estos temas. Este artículo examina la relación entre el contenido producido por estas influencers y la representación del rosa de Barbie, que se parece mucho al rosa mexicano. Al analizar esta conexión, pretendemos comprender si es posible forjar un vínculo entre ambos que pueda mejorar la lucha feminista. Dado que la película de Gerwig ha sido enmarcada como una declaración feminista, la exploración de tres tonos de rosa diferentes, aunque similares, revela cómo pueden integrar narrativas de consumo con aquellas del activismo feminista, enriqueciendo en última instancia el discurso en torno tanto al color como al movimiento que representa.

Palabras clave: rosa Mexicano, feminismo Mexicano, colorismo, feminicidio, consumismo

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INTRODUCTION

Mexico is two Mexicos made up of multiple Mexicos. The *caste's* paintings, as part and parcel of a eugenic process, inflicted a wound that remains open in Mexico. In a territory with few authentic symbols of identity, there is little doubt that one is Mexican pink (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2017). In 1949, the fashion collection introduced by Ramón Valdiosera at the New York Fashion Week was based on that color, inspired by the Mexican bougainvillea that was already reproduced on everyday objects and crafts in many communities. The presence of pink overcame gender stereotypes. It appeared in taxis, in the metro, in the logo of the Mexican post office, in restaurants, hotels, shops, festivities, objects, and art. Later, during the twentieth century, and so far throughout this one, feminist groups transformed the pink shine into a symbol of their struggle, and the mothers of victims of femicide have ascribed a new significance to the color by placing pink crosses at the sites where they have found their daughters and in cemeteries. That is why, due to the intensification of the Mexican feminist struggle in recent years, Mexican pink was first adopted in Ciudad Juárez. There, the pink crosses that indicate and denounce feminicides do not distinguish between skin color, ethnicity, origin, or social position. Regardless of these references, Pantone introduced "VivaMagenta" as the color of the year 2023 without considering its previous significance for Mexico. Hence, it was no surprise that various Mexican associations resisted Pantone's color of the year. Regardless, Mexico was pinker than ever in July because of the premiere of Greta Gerwig's Barbie movie (2023). Although Barbie's pink is not precisely Mexican pink, their similarity is undeniable. However, this paper shows that their understanding is not. Mexican pink, the pink of the crosses in Ciudad Juárez, and Barbie pink are very similar tones but different, as they are different in their meaning because the first is rooted in culture, the second is a symbol, and the third obeys consumption; these three categories that apparently could be assumed to succeed, if not intersect, but interweave, as we would believe happens with the representations of the Day of the Dead in Mexico, cannot be added because the tradition comes from a memory built collectively slowly, in the same way as symbols, on the other hand, consumption, particularly fashion, it is characterized by its ephemeral condition devoid of memory, in such a way that it is not possible to integrate or expand the meaning of color, which is above all a language and "[a]ll language understood as a means of communication of extralinguistic contents finds its end - without interruption - in language as an expression of the being

that is communicated in it - and not through it. (Collingwood, 2012, p. 189), which, as demonstrated here, is given by the context and is non-transferable.

Gerwig's film wields some feminist arguments. In Mexico, Internet users appreciated Barbie as a feminist film. Perhaps this will allow for, at least, a timid approach to making the feminist struggle visible. So, following LasTesis' remarks about the apparent contradiction involved in promoting the consumption of products employing feminism to do so (LasTesis, 2023), I propose to examine some of the effects of *Barbie's* film in Mexico. Therefore, I have considered the questions posed by LasTesis: "But isn't it better [for feminism] to be fashionable than invisible? Could this perhaps be seen as a way for people to approach feminism, at least in form if not in content?" (LasThesis, 2023, p. 44). I want to emphasize that my intention is not to answer these questions but merely to present a first approach to *Barbie's* film's impact in Mexico. Thus, I delve into Araceli Barbosa's exploration of the Barbie doll as a toxic stereotype perpetuating colonialism and an inherently violent caste system (Barbosa, 2018). I hypothesize that Greta Gerwig's Barbie has promoted a cultural paradox in Mexico: while seeming to promote a feminist agenda, the film instead reinforced a colonialist cosmetic standard. My analysis of the discourse promoted by four Mexican fashion influencers who identify as feminists demonstrates that Gerwig's film has encouraged the paradox by which, due to their adoption of Barbie's pink, Mexican fashion influencers have reinforced the colonialist standard. Thus, they missed the opportunity to consolidate Mexican pink as a national symbol of the feminist struggle. I find it essential to acknowledge this paradox because Mexico is one of the most dangerous countries in the world to be a woman.

METHODOLOGY

The proposal to analyze the relationship between the Mexican pink, the film Barbie, and the sociocultural context of Mexico is based on a series of theoretical and methodological principles that allow us to understand the complexity of national identity and its intersection with contemporary feminist struggles.

Mexican pink's historical and cultural context is of significant importance, as it made it a symbolic color adopted in various social expressions. Its visibility and subsequent adoption throughout the country originated from the fashion collection that Ramón Valdiosera presented in New York in 1949. This color represents an aesthetic and has been a vehicle for national identity, reflecting the cultural richness of

Mexico and its history. Its evolution has been marked by its use in art, architecture, and fashion, becoming a symbol of national pride.

Intersection with feminism.

The discussion on the Mexican rose is completed by considering its appropriation by feminist movements in Mexico. As women have used the rose as a symbol of resistance and denunciation, especially in the context of femicides, the color has acquired meanings that go beyond its aesthetic representation. For example, the pink crosses in Ciudad Juárez clearly testify how pink has been recontextualized in the fight for women's rights, challenging gender stereotypes and patriarchy.

Critical analysis of the film Barbie

Greta Gerwig's film Barbie, although presented as a product that promotes gender equality, has been criticized for perpetuating cosmetic and colonial standards that can distort feminist struggles in contexts such as Mexico. Influencers' adoption of Barbie pink and its association with mass consumption poses a paradox. While seeking to empower women, stereotypes are reinforced that limit the understanding of feminism to a fashion and consumer phenomenon.

Feminist methodology

Addressing these issues requires a feminist methodology that allows a critical reflection on using the rose in different contexts. This methodology is not just a choice but necessary in our quest to understand the complex interactions between color, identity, and feminism in Mexico.

Feminist epistemology: Recognize that knowledge is situated and that women's experiences should be at the center of analysis.

Research intervention: This study utilizes qualitative methods to delve into the diverse narratives and meanings associated with the Mexican rose across various communities and social contexts.

Discourse analysis: The focus here is on how social networks actively construct and disseminate interpretations of the rose's relationship with feminism and how these discourses significantly influence the public's understanding of the feminist struggle.

In conclusion, the theoretical-methodological justification for this research is rooted in the necessity to unravel the intricate interplay between color, identity, and feminism in the Mexican context. This study

will adopt an approach that acknowledges the cultural history of the Mexican rose and its recontextualization within the framework of contemporary struggles.

The methodology employed in this study was a qualitative research approach based on a content analysis of the social media posts of four Mexican influencers who self-identify as feminists. Kimberly Loaiza, Domelipa, Mont Pantoja, and Brianda Deyanara were selected due to their many followers on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok.

To carry out the analysis, all posts from these four influencers were collected and examined over three months, from June to August 2023. The objective was to determine the percentage of content that referred to the Barbie movie, the use of pink, the feminist perspective, and the decolonial gaze.

A binary metric was used, assigning a score of 1 when a category was met and 0 when it was not. Specifically, the following aspects were analyzed:

- Barbie references: We quantified the percentage of posts that contained direct references to the Barbie movie, such as mentions, photographs, videos, etc.
- Use of pink: The percentage of content that incorporated pink, either in clothing, makeup, accessories, or other elements, was determined.
- Feminist perspective: We assessed whether the influencers' content questioned or challenged stereotypical gender roles, included voices from different women, encouraged collaboration and support between women, used inclusive language, avoided stereotypes and bias, or directly addressed the feminist perspective of the Barbie movie.
- Decolonial gaze: The contents were examined to determine whether they promoted diversity and challenged Western thought's cultural, political, and economic domination, whether they questioned power structures and colonial relations, and whether they fostered encounters and collaboration between different cultures and perspectives.

This comprehensive analysis of the publications of the four Mexican influencers underscores the significant role these opinion leaders play in shaping public perception. Their approach and stance towards the Barbie movie and its impact in Mexico profoundly influence their millions of followers, highlighting the weight of their influence in shaping public discourse.

DISCUSSION

Mexico is one of the most dangerous countries in the world to be a woman[1], although that would hardly be perceived from the discourse of the top Mexican women influencers. Mexico ranks first in femicides, and "between six and eight out of ten women (Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, and Dominican Republic) have been victims or have experienced some episode of gender-based violence in different areas of their lives" (ECLAC, 2022). This is why many organizations, associations, and feminist collectives have emerged in the country, and the number of feminist books, documentaries, and films has also increased. However, none of them has caused massive interest. On social media, more and more women's accounts appear propagating and discussing feminist issues with seriousness. It seems that little by little, feminism permeates accounts of women with different interests, such as fashion, makeup, skincare, travel, or crafts, where, with varying intensities, they seem to oppose different forms of violence. Teenage and young adult women with internet access nationwide follow YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok accounts. On this platform, the most followed influencers in Mexico are Kimberly Loaiza, who has seventy-eight million followers; Domelipa, with seventy million; Mont Pantoja, with almost forty million; and Brianda Deyanara, whom thirty-seven million users follow. Since June 2023, all four influencers have uploaded videos related to the Barbie movie, showing promotional gifts and items sent by Mattel, posts using Barbie filters, purchases of pink products, and their preparations to attend the premiere.

These influencers also shared their interactions with a human-scale doll package and the different points designed explicitly for taking *Instagrammable* photos of people "being Barbie." For this research, a thorough analysis of these four influencers' publications was conducted over three months (from June to August) to determine the percentage of pink content, references to Barbie, allusions to feminism, and publications with a decolonial perspective. A binary metric was assigned a score of one when the category was met and zero when it was not, ensuring the rigor and thoroughness of the research process. Deyanara constituted 11% and 12%, respectively. Regarding their use of pink, Kimberly

[1] According to data from the Executive Secretariat of the Public Security System in Mexico, in the last eight years, 23,017 femicides have been committed (Info-delict-violencia contra las mujeres_Ene24.pdf, s. f., 19) and 11,578 missing or unlocated women (Contexto general - Dashboard CNB, s. f.); This, combined with 42.6 million women living in conditions of vulnerability due to poverty (Mujeres, s. f.). To mention some data.

Loaiza used it in 14% of her contents, Domelipa in 16%, Mont Pantoja in 8%, and Brianda Deyanara in 17%. Concerning the influencers' feminist perspective, given that the content of none of them refers explicitly to the subject, it was considered whether the content questioned or challenged stereotyped or traditionalist gender roles, if it included voices of different women, if it somehow fostered collaboration or support for other women, whether they used language that does not exclude or discriminate against anyone because of their gender, if they avoided stereotypes or prejudices or if they spoke directly about the feminist perspective of the film. Brianda Deyanara's content presented a .5%, while in the publications of the other three influencers, the data showed a 0% incidence.

Finally, the decolonial perspective was also examined in these influencers' publications, considering whether the contents promote diversity challenging Western thought's cultural, political, and economic domination and whether power structures and colonial relationships were addressed –the acceptance of hierarchical forms of domination. It was also examined whether the perspective from which the content was approached fosters encounter and collaboration between different cultures and perspectives, whether it questions the imposition of a single dominant vision, and whether it questions globalization processes that perpetuate inequality and domination, promoting alternatives that respect the diversity and the autonomy of peoples. This last category is important because "the modern/colonial Latin American project is understood as an entangled package of various forms of hierarchies and devices of domination on a global scale" (Garzón Martínez, 2014, p. 225). The European colonization of America began in the late 15th century with the arrival of the Spaniards. After the viceroyalties' independence, the new countries, orphaned and nostalgic, harbored a particular coloniality. They were eager to obtain tutelage. They first adopted European ideas and forms; later, the United States' influence consolidated. "Race" was not the only piece in the framework of subordination. Knowledge, beliefs, language, customs, and, of course, the alleged superiority of men over women were present too. Therefore, given that the film proposes to invert the system of domination to one where Ken is practically an accessory to Barbie, it seemed reasonable to assume that, for these influencers who show themselves as confident and independent, it would resonate in some way. However, that was not the case. The result in this category showed a 0% incidence. The four influencers studied did not oppose Barbie's pink colonization – a likely result of centuries of subjugation.

Following José Vasconcelos' initiative, from 1928 to 2018, October 12th was commemorated as the "Day of the Race" in Mexico. Vasconcelos proposed a commemoration of Christopher Columbus and his crew's arrival to the New World, widely conceived as "America's Discovery." Columbus' expedition across the Atlantic was intended to reach

Asia. However, an unknown continent got in the way. Before it became his eponym, Amerigo Vespucci called it, wrongly, a "new world." America was neither a world nor was it new, hidden, or lost. Therefore, it was not discovered. The continent that became known as "America" was an already existent reality inhabited by diverse civilizations. Upon Columbus' arrival – within the same world – to America more than five hundred years ago, two distant and distinct regions met, each with its diversities in pasts, traditions, customs, languages, beliefs, and systems. The outset of this encounter was that a region subjugated the other. By branding America as "new," Europe entitled itself to rewrite its history from that moment on – as if time only began then, at the point where the "old" world invented America. Moreover, on it, she drew the city that "[w]as built on the ruins of indigenous cities or in that territory considered empty, even though it belonged to and was habited by the invaded groups" (Guerra, 2007, p. 127). The Kingdom of Castile brought other Iberian kingdoms together, conquering and colonizing most American territory. It considered itself the owner of the land and everything on it – including the people. Columbus thought he had arrived in the Indies. Hence, the term "Indian" was assigned to the natives of the continent, which became known as America. However, once it became clear that Colón had not reached the Indies but another continent, and the original error was settled, the name did not change. Since, in the Spanish crown's colonization of America, the different native peoples were not recognized as diverse, they were all named Indians: "The idea of an *American Indian* is a European invention correlative to, and necessary for, the narrative about America's invention, which is why the native cultures were not included as a constitutive element of the new world's being" (Montemayor, 2016, p. 24). Thus, the Mayans, Purépechas, Nahuas, Tarahumaras, Tzotziles, Zapotecs, and Mixtecs were not considered civilizations with their languages, traditions, history, and bodies of knowledge. In addition, there has been a willingness to forget that the Spaniards brought enslaved Black people from Africa to Mexico who, disguised by the castes, remained hidden. Today, they are lumped together in a single group: Indians.

During the Colony, the original inhabitants of America were conceived as “Indians.” Thus branded, they were forced to believe that due to the color of their skin, they ought to consider themselves inferior and become subdued. During the 18th century, *casta* paintings emerged in America: a graphic instrument that presented and hierarchized the so-called castes, a byproduct of unions between people with different skin tones. The caste paintings depict local costumes and customs in picturesque scenes, in imposed stories “[a]s a memory color, it has more layers of complexity and nuance than any other for several reasons. One is that it is tied not just to our general familiarity but to individual people. We care most about how naturally ourselves, our loved ones, and our friends look. After that, we are more concerned about our own skin type. However, that is defined. This is where it gets tricky because it enters the area of culture and race” (Freeman, 2023, p. 72). In these depictions, the gradation of skin color also grades the scenes. Some constitute “an idealized vision of family groups, while some of the latest showed unexpected signs of violence, affliction, decadence, and poverty” (Ledezma et al., 2019, p. 107). The castes gave rise to class stratification.

The highest class, of course, was formed by the Iberian Spaniards, followed by the Creoles. After them came the castes.

> [U]sed the name the presumably pure descendants of the New World's conquerors, the word Español signaled the untarnished, undifferentiated, and unmarked center of a system in which peripheral positions, the product of crossbreeding, entailed a deviation that other linguistic sings would seek to regulate. From terms like "Mestizo," "Castizo," and "Mulato" -among others that also designated the mixed lineage of so-called castas- meant to contain such deviation by adjudicating it clear. Cut place within an order of descripción, a regulated structure in wich any nuance of ethnic identity could be readily located, grasped and controlle[d] (Ledezma et al., 2019, p. 35).

These were decreed based on an absurd eugenics project that sought to whiten the subjects within the viceroyalties of America. Thus, the offspring of mixed couples belonging to different “races” were meticulously cataloged. The first place was the *Español,* “termed the normative standpoint from which Hispanic American colonial discourse constructed a nomenclature of racial hybridity” (Ledezma et al., 2019, p. 35).

The offspring of a *Español* with an Indian woman was called a mestizo—that of a mestizo with a Spanish woman, a Castizo. A Castizo and a Spanish woman would produce a Spaniard. The children of a Spaniard and a Moorish woman would be called Mulattos. The progeny of a Mulatto and a Spanish woman would be *Moriscos*. A *Morisco* and a Spanish woman youngsters became *Chinos*. A *Chino* who procreated with an Indian woman would produce *Salta atrás*, whereas the child of a *Salta atrás* with a mulatto woman would be a Wolf. A Wolf and a *Chino* birthed a *Gíbaro*; a *Gíbaro* and a Mulatto woman, an *Albarazado*. The offspring of an Albarazado with a black woman were *Cambujos*. Cambujos, who mixed with Indian women, produced *Sambaigo* offspring. A *Sambaigo* and a She-wolf gave birth to *Campamulatos*. A *Campamulato* with a *Cambuja* woman would have had *Tente en el aire* children. The brood of a *Tente en el aire* and a mulatto woman were *No te entiendo.* Finally, the children of a *No te entiendo* with an Indian woman would become *Torna atrás*. It turned out, then, that for the children to gain access to a better social class, achieving a lighter skin tone was essential.

The social stratification promoted by the invention of castes did not disappear with the declarations of independence of the 19th century. Just consider, for example, the case of Miguel Barbachano, Yucatan's governor who, in 1848, executed a large sale of Mayan enslaved people, whom he sent to Cuba, arguing that there were too many Indians on the peninsula, which hindered the whitening of the population. A simplified form of color-based segmentation continues to exist in Mexico today because "[c]olor only exists if it is perceived, that is if it is seen not only with the eyes, but also, and above all, apprehended and decoded with memory, knowledge, and imagination (Pastoureau, 2018, p. 243) and precisely It was for 300 years that the imagination was stimulated to see the most refined differences between skin colors given that the "[s]ingularity in opposition to generality in order to acknowledge and focus on the strictly irreducible differences between people and what happens to them" (Bal, 2022, p. 34). The distinction now falls upon whether people are white or brown – the ladder being synonymous with Indian. According to Montemayor, the word "Indian" does not refer to the persons themselves but to the conquistador's concept of them. Therefore, an "Indian" became "a being denied in his social and human specificity; the Indian was the other" (Montemayor, 2016, p. 76). In Montemayor's account, according to European dictionaries since the 18th century, an Indian is barbaric, cruel, inhuman, savage, silly, and gullible. Little has been done to modify such meanings. Presently, the RAE dictionary states the

following expressions: "*Caer de Indio* (to fall as an Indian): to fall into a deception out of naivety. *Indio de carga* ("pack Indian"): an Indian who, in the West Indies, carried loads from one place to another, making up for the lack of other means of transport" (ASALE & RAE, n.d.). In consequence, concerning the present century's everyday life, Mexico can be reduced to two fictional Mexicos: a white Mexico, conformed, primarily, by European and North American foreigners and Creoles, Mestizos, and *Castizos* – as long as their skin tone is light enough or their socioeconomic level is high enough – and a brown Mexico: that which is Indian. The former is considered wealthy, honorable, cultured, intelligent, and hardworking; the latter is construed as poor, criminal, ignorant, incapable, and lazy.

Barbie's beauty is stereotypically associated with her skin color, which, in turn, relates to her intelligence. In Barbie's film, the monologue that Angelica Ferrera – an actress of Honduran origin – addresses Barbie (the character performed by Margot Robbie) begins by stating: "It is literally impossible to be a woman. You are so beautiful and so smart, and it kills me that you do not think you are good enough" (Gerwick, 2023, 1:30:00). Within the standards of beauty imposed by supposed white supremacy, a tall, thin, blonde, blue-eyed woman is considered beautiful, period. However, at that moment of the film's development, Barbie has not done anything that could allow Ferrara to deduce that she is also intelligent besides being pretty. However, beauty magically grants her intelligence. Thus, Ferrera's "powerful speech" is ought but the same old diatribe that has been repeated for over five hundred years in Mexico: white skin is immediately associated with intelligence, culture, and goodness; darker skin is, at best, suspicious and no, it is not beautiful. The question is not whether Barbie is beautiful. What is the matter is that Ferrara's monologue, which constitutes the film's most feminist discourse, is – if anything – a consequence of white feminism not taking all women into account. While people ought to be considered good enough just for being, the speech reveals precisely the opposite, to wit: possessing specific attributes, such as white skin, is of the essence to attain Barbie's prestige since the image that she projects and that Ferrara refers to, "alludes to a cultural stereotype that connotes the feminization of a woman's identity invested with glamor and banality (Barbosa, 2018, p. 25).

Barbie's film superficially introduces typical expressions of feminism without committing to them. A case in point is that Margot Robbie is, of course, the stereotypical Barbie. She knows it and seems proud about it, even if she represents "a gender stereotype that is discriminatory, toxic, which promotes the

glamorized feminization device" (Barbosa, 2018, p. 30). However, she never acknowledges her privilege: the other less favored Barbie dolls are there to help her. In some cases, they are Mattel's mistakes that enter the game of "power relations derived from the dualistic oppositions of superiority/inferiority" (Barbosa, 2018, p. 28). Another instance, right at the outset, is that Barbie's existential crisis is prompted by the discovery, one morning, of the fact that her feet are flat. Such a dubious calamity underscores the banality of a girl who does not question how she treats others, whether she does something meaningful in her daily activities or the meaning of her life. No. What triggers her quest for something else is a cosmetic change. The shape of Barbie's feet is not an *El Ciruelo* packaged meat ad, an orthopedic disease, or a disorder. Barbie's foot anomaly is due to a deformation caused by the abuse of high heels. However, the doll's alienated gaze does not see that realization as a cure or liberation. This is relevant because Barbieland will be consolidated as a matriarchy – a replica of patriarchy at the film's end. Barbieland maintains the same man/woman domination system, although now inverted as woman/man. However, relationships of sorority are established horizontally. Therefore, it is not enough for the typical opposition dominant/dominated to be inverted in Barbie's relationship with Ken. Nevertheless, within the dynamics in the film, the vertical hierarchy always remains, with Stereotypical Barbie in a position of privilege.

The expectation of Barbie's premiere flooded shopping malls across the country with clothes, accessories, makeup, household items, bags, backpacks, and all sorts of objects colored in intense pink: magenta. Magenta is a color that comes naturally to Mexico, and we consider it our own. Perhaps it is the only one. Its association with Mexicanity seems even more plausible than the flag's colors because, in a restaurant, the national colors (green, white, and red) announce Italian food throughout the year and, in December, Christmas. Green, white, and red are Mexico's official and imposed colors that are seldom included, for example, in the Day of the Dead altars or traditional festivities. We see them in September for the commemoration of Independence and in sporting events. However, no one is surprised that the swimsuit of the Mexican Olympic divers is blue or that the best-selling shirt of the Mexican soccer team combines black and Mexican pink because the meaning of color can be, according to Fox (2022), for three reasons:

> “Perhaps there are three types of meaning when it comes to color. The first is derived from the affective or psychological meaning of hues and hues [...] The second is created not by subjective responses but by codified social conventions [...] The third meaning is color associations. However, there were a small number of color metaphors that have appeared repeatedly and with striking similarities around the world over the centuries. These associations are based on what we might call universals of human experience: a handful of simple, stable reference points that all people have encountered, wherever or whenever they have lived. They are black: night, darkness, earth; White: day, light, cleanliness; Yellow: sun, fire, earth; Red: blood, fire, earth; Green: vegetation and water; Blue, sky, water” (Fox, 2022, pp. 9-10)

Mexican pink meets the first two, and locally with the third, which is very different from the colloquial understanding of pink in English-speaking countries, where it is mainly only from lighted English speakers who get "tickled pink" even though other familiar color phrases are widely shared across languages" (Kastan Scott, 2018, p. 101), that *tickled pink* in the Barbie universe makes sense.

Mexican pink is its defining color across the territory; all of Mexico fits into that one color. Already during the 1940s, the architect and designer Ramón Valdiosera toured Mexico to find distinctive signs that were common throughout the country. He found bougainvillea everywhere, and its color is present in local art and crafts: it is in the Saltillo *sarapes*, in the *alebrijes*, in Huichol, and in Tarahumara crafts; in the embroideries of Chiapas, Yucatan, and Merida; in the fabrics of Puebla and Oaxaca, in Queretaro’s Lele, in many of the regional costumes of the national territory. He also found it in cooking, medicinal remedies, pink corn tortillas, *xoconostle*, *guamúchil*, tuna, *cuchunuc*, *papausa*, *garambullo,* and *peyote* flowers. Pink, Valdiosera’s discovery, was the common thread of the fashion pieces he presented at New York Fashion Week in 1949. In the reviews of the American newspapers, they spoke then of “The Mexican pink collection.” Miguel Alemán, the then president of Mexico, saw in this color an ideal element to achieve a cohesive national identity, which had never been attained. Mexican pink almost immediately became the symbol of a traditional, unique, and independent Mexico. The increased presence of Mexican pink in buildings, transportation, brands, and monuments ran naturally, authentically, and unquestionably.

In Mexico, Barbie found the place where its characteristic color belongs. However, Barbie arrived in Mexico as an authentic colonizing product imposing a beauty canon unlike that most Mexican girls fulfilled. The blondie model of beauty was received in the country as the image of unreachable perfection – one far superior to the black-braided rag dolls. While the first Barbie doll wore a black and white striped swimsuit, several of the garments sold separately were already pink, under the argument that this was a feminine color. However, the tone is intense and bright, just like Mexican pink: vibrant and robust, like the music, landscapes, and flavors of Mexico. As the Barbie world expanded, houses, furniture, cars, objects, and accessories were colored pink.

It should be noted that Mexican pink is not, strictly speaking, the "little girl pink":

That pale pink that, during the mid-20th century in the United States, was designated by social convention for anything linked to girls, including toys. Meanwhile, light blue was intended for boys' clothes, objects, and rooms. For no good reason, this fashion trend of associating masculine with blue and feminine with pink has thrived and continues to impact the differentiation of many masculine products. However, today, it is less widespread. Regardless, the difference between the magentas of Barbie, Mexican pink, the pink crosses symbolizing femicides, and the tone of the glitter that marks monuments and fences in March is minimal if these colors are not considered together; therefore, for most, their differences are imperceptible just by the color. Thus, the stereotypical Barbie is the radical prototype that is found at the top of the racial classification, revealing colorism throughout the country. Consequently, even if Barbie's pink is not Mexican pink, their difference is not only due to the variance in their composition of the actual color. As we learned from the caste paintings, accessories and class, determine the color, even when the difference between a shade and another is imperceptible.

The similarity between the shades of Barbie's pink and Mexican pink, the feminist discourse, where the blonde female protagonist is presented as a feminist role model who leads the intersectional, trans-feminist, and decolonial struggle, seemed to be an ideal crossover to open spaces for discussion and action, for combating violence against women in Mexico and elsewhere. However, this did not happen. In the end, the pinks did not come together. On the contrary, they broadened the gap of Barbie's trivialization of feminism. Evidence of this is that today, the blonde Barbie doll sells at a ratio of 18 to 1 compared to any other phenotype of the doll. As for accessories, the most sought-after and bestselling

items are Barbie the movie stylist play set and closet, Barbie the movie dream room set, the portable closet, the Malibu stylist set and the cosmetics spa set; then come those that include pets, the cafe, the restaurant, and travel sets. The game girls in Mexico seek to play today is the reproduction of the influencers' content on TikTok. While I grant that influencers are content creators, the images and videos produced by the four influencers reviewed here portray a fun, frivolous, and cosmetic hyperreality. There, skin and hair treatments, makeup sessions, and trying clothing and accessories promote a woman's ideal goal of dancing and being pretty; it also reinforces the notion that a woman is prettier if she has lighter skin and hair. Barbie seems to be able to become whoever she wills: "nurse, teacher, veterinarian, pet sitter, athlete, aerobics instructor, diver, skater, firefighter, chef, baker, lawyer, photographer, police officer, model, fashion designer, princess, bullfighter, journalist, flight attendant, rocker, gymnast, dancer, tennis player, singer, musician, actress, dentist, doctor, architect, paleontologist, filmmaker or presidential candidate" (Barbosa, 2018, p. 37). However, Barbie is not Indigenous, poor, a migrant, a domestic worker, a factory seamstress, an undocumented person, or a peasant. Thus, Mattel's doll is updated so girls can dream of being what social networks, sponsored by many products, tell them they can be.

CONCLUSIONS

The *Barbie* movie is, above all, a capitalist product. In this case, since "capitalism has tried to appropriate feminist slogans to increase sales" (LasTesis, 2023, p.44), it can be argued that it has performed very well as merchandise. So far, it has made more than one billion four hundred million dollars. During the first three weeks, the film grossed over a billion dollars worldwide (Liy, 2023). In Mexico, as of September 9, products directly related to Barbie had generated 54.3 million dollars. Without directly mentioning Barbie, Brianda, Domelipa, and Mont Pantoja adopted distinctive features of the doll's stereotype, such as makeup, hairstyle, and clothing, which millions of TikTok users replicate. In the comments of the influencers' followers, phrases like these frequently appeared: "You are prettier than Barbie." "You are the real Barbie." "How beautiful that Barbie is." When Domelipa had her Porsche painted bright pink for her birthday, followers noted: "Dome became Barbie" (Domelipa, @domelipa, official, nd). By reproducing the Barbie stereotype in videos, reels, and live streaming, "colonial/racial/gender/body/sexuality and the geopolitical difference is reaffirmed. (Valencia, 2018,

237). Thereby, according to Valencia, any possible feminist visibility derived from the film is nullified because, on the networks, there is: “the visual elimination of the public-private division, the reification of time as something without duration (pure adrenaline, instantaneity and lack of memory), the extreme cosmeticizing of images and their critical depoliticization” (2018). Hence, even an approach to feminism through mass media social networking seems impossible; on the contrary, it seems more likely to be trivialized, putting it at risk of commercialization and thereby endangered.

Consequently, violence is not combated because “it is necessary to recognize that the patterns of violence in a society are tied to how it is organized and that societies with a certain type of organization generate conditions more conducive to the establishment of violent relationships” (Orraca Corona 2018, p.5) but it becomes part of everyday life, pink feminism is used as advertising material for frivolous consumption, as we can see in the case of a collectible doll that reinterprets La Catrina, the 2023 Barbie Day of the Dead /Pink Magnolia, which is sold out. Meanwhile, we place photographs of the 426 women feminized this year on our Day of the Dead altars. Mexico is two Mexicos. One is colored in Barbie’s pink, the color of privilege, packed and ready to go. The other is painted in Mexican pink, symbolizing the feminist struggle, and is present in the graffiti, demonstrations, and crosses of the feminized women.

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