

Feminizing Glinda as the Femme Fatale in *Wicked* (2024)

Adam Yudha Perkasa¹

¹*Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia*

Adam.21013@mhs.unesa.ac.id

A B S T R A C T

This research aims to analyze the femininity of the femme fatale in *Wicked* (2024) directed by Jon M. Chu, with a focus on Glinda as the femme fatale that is analyzed through her depiction in *Wicked* (2024). Utilizing the theory of male gaze by Laura Mulvey (1975), the goal of this study is to understand the depiction of women in movie, especially Glinda as the femme fatale, that is connected with the social expectation as well as the influence of the femme fatale towards the other character in the movie. This study explores the concept of embracing femininity in women and using it as power instead of seeing it as a weakness in order to influence other people and reach their goal. The findings in this study show that Glinda is the femme fatale character in *Wicked* (2024) as proven by her actions and how the other characters describe her. The femme fatale uses her charm to influence others. Fulfilling the archetype of a femme fatale, Glinda faces unfortunate ending as she has to live as a puppet of someone in a higher position.

Keywords: Femme Fatale, Femininity, Male Gaze, Charm

INTRODUCTION

Literature is often associated with something of a writing product, namely poetries, books, or scripts. As the time goes, literature does not only take form in writing or spoken story anymore. The invention of cinematography creates a whole new type of literature media. To compare, the product of cinematography is called film, which is somehow similar to a play but also distinct. Both productions aim to tell a story through actors with the help of physical settings. However, play is exclusively performed on a proper stage and enjoyed by live audiences. On the other hand, film is more versatile as the filming process is conducted anywhere and the result is ready to be enjoyed once the production process is done. Film is recognized as a media that potentially reaches a broader audience and possesses influential elements on how the audiences understand the world as well as the forms of norm in the society, which contribute to the development of human reality and socialization (Kayaoglu, 2016).

In classic literature, the common trope of the story is the damsel in distress. The female characters are eager to be saved and the male characters are the heroes of the story. Such

stories exist due to the social conditions of the era where they took place. Subsequently, an atmosphere where men are an expertise in public affairs and women are an expertise in domestic affairs is born. As for the result, gender roles are established in society. The separation creates a view that men are materialistic, assertive, and competitive while women are sacrificing, gentle, pure, as well as pious (Dzedze, 2017).

Furthermore, the establishment of gender roles in society creates a barrier between men and women. Different from sex which refers to the biological state, gender is a social construct that creates role distinction between men and women. The bodies of the males are associated with being masculine, while the bodies of the females are correlated with being feminine (Butler, 1999). Thus, the concept of gender creates limitations and reconstruction that is supported by heteronormativity, which is an acceptance of heterosexuality as the social norm. This structure of gender can create different performances of both genders and the expectations that follow (Gauntlett, 2008).

In practice, femininity that is often attached to women is seen as inferior to masculinity that is attached to men. Being feminine is heavily associated with submissive behavior. Such a condition puts women merely as an object of desire. The actions where women are treated as an object to fulfil men's desire are reflected in literary works, including film. Female characters are portrayed in a certain way to engage the audiences, either the way they dress or behave. This phenomenon thrives as it successfully caters the element of male gaze in film.

Because of the male gaze, female characters are eroticized and sexualized. The sexualization of female characters is the reflection of the society. Women are being told to dress or present themselves in a way to appear more feminine. Thus, women become the victim of the system as they are portrayed according to the stereotype. The meaning of gender stereotypes is a preconceived notion regarding how men and women should behave and look (Martin & Dinella, 2001). The female characters are often powerless, weak, and dependent. Movies with such characters are found in Snow White and Seven Dwarves, Cinderella, and Sleeping Beauty, which the heroines are "naive, beautiful, passive, domestic, innocent, and submissive" (Wasko, 2001). These classic characters display how femininity is seen as an unfortunate quality. Therefore, unsatisfied with the portrayal of women being the weak parties, film critics and directors try to change the current.

In her essay published in 1975, Laura Mulvey coined the concept of the male gaze. She criticized how mainstream films reinforce patriarchal ideologies. For example, female characters are portrayed using their beauty and alluring charms to seduce their target. The characters with a quality as such, for example, are Selina Kyle from The Dark Knight Rises (2012) and Jennifer Check from Jennifer's Body (2009). The term for such a power that those characters use is called femme fatale. They might appear beautifully feminine,

but they might bring danger to those they target. However, the femme fatale characters often face their demise due to their actions. For example, Jennifer is killed at the end of *Jennifer's Body* (2009) which reveals that she is a man eater.

Henceforth, it is proven that femininity is not in fact always negative and is worth celebrating as a part of human identity. One among many characters who embraces her femininity and uses it as a source of strength is Glinda from *Wicked* (2024). Glinda is always shown wearing pink, pretty dresses, and well-kept up do. Her lovely demeanor makes her surrounded by a lot of people who follow her out of admiration. As the story progresses, the movie displays how Glinda makes use of her femininity to get what she desires. Her femme fatale quality is proven working as she charms Fiyero. Both of them fit the standard of the perfect couple once they become together. Looking back, her character is somehow similar to Regina George from *Mean Girls* (2004) directed by Mark Waters.

Henceforth, this research aims to show how Glinda uses her femininity as source of power. It's interesting to reveal how femininity that is often associated with weakness can be the opposite of the popular belief. There are several previous studies that discuss how a female character is seen as a strong figure by adapting into a male trait in a movie. One of such studies is titled "Gender Empowerment in Disney's Live-Action *Mulan* (2020): A Feminist Perspective" (Putri and Thoyyibi, 2022). Thus, this research is eager to display that being a strong woman does not always mean sacrificing one's feminine side.

In order to create plausible findings, some questions are formulated to highlight the main focus of this research. Such the questions are provided as the following: (1) how does Glinda fulfill the characteristics of the femme fatale? and (2) how does the femme fatale's action affect the other characters? From the research questions given, the objectives of this study aim to answer the questions as the following: (1) to reveal how Glinda fulfills the characteristics of the femme fatale and (2) to reveal how the femme fatale's action affects the other characters. This research aims to elaborate on using femininity as power as displayed by the character Glinda in the movie *Wicked* (2024) by Jon M. Chu. This topic is interesting to be discussed because of the fact that there are some people who undermine femininity which is heavily linked to the quality of a woman. Henceforth, through this research, the readers are expected to realize that femininity is not inferior to masculinity. Femininity should be embraced as a source of power.

METHOD

This study utilizes the "male gaze" theory by Laura Mulvey. Her theory challenges how women are depicted in movies to fulfil the pleasure of the male characters and the male audiences. However, this research focuses more towards the actions and the

characterization of Glinda. Instead of being weak for embracing her femininity, Glinda finds power within her femininity. This idea tries to eliminate the view regarding the inferiority of femininity in front of masculinity. Henceforth, according to the theory of Laura Mulvey, this research is conducted to identify the portrayal of the female character in modern film. The primary source of this research is taken from the movie *Wicked*, released in 2024. This movie is directed by Jon M. Chu and has a total running time of 160 minutes. From the primary source, the research collects the data through the movie scenes and the dialogues. In order to take the evidence for the research, the movie scenes that contain the data are taken in a form of screenshot. The analyzing process is undergone with the help of the theory of Laura Mulvey. The selected data will be examined and discussed to form plausible findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter, this paper presents the data findings and conducts the analysis about femme fatale in *Wicked* (2024). There are several female characters in this. However, this study focuses on one prominent female character, Galinda Upland or also known as Glinda. To help formulate the analysis, this research uses the help of the male gaze theory by Laura Mulvey (1975) which explores the depiction of female characters in movies. This theory is in line with the main focus of this study which is explaining the femme fatale archetype and the way she is depicted in the movie.

The Femme Fatale Characteristic of Galinda Upland

Femme fatale always possesses unique features that best describe her position as such. The prominent features of femme fatale can be spotted from her actions as well as her appearance.



Figure 1: Glinda's parents' departure after sending Glinda to Shiz University

Timestamp: 00.14.21

Glinda: "They (her parents) are gonna miss me so much"

Glinda has the personality and an appearance of an ultra-feminine girl. Glinda is portrayed as a girl who grew up in a well-known lavish family which also loves her dearly. Thus, when Glinda first arrived at Shiz University, she brought a lot of luggage with her personal belongings. The most notable feature of her baggage is that all of them are pink in color. The scene also shows Glinda's attire that happens to stand out compared to the other students. Her excessive pink luggages and her choice of style show her feminine side, fulfilling the fantasy as she is styled according to the expectations of how a girl should look (Mulvey, 1975). Moreover, her choice of word implies that Glinda had a tendency of a narcissistic personality. The femme fatale believes that the world, especially men, should revolve around her. In this scene, Glinda believes that she would be missed by her parents as she feels like she is the main focus of her parents.



Figure 2: Boq trying to talk to Glinda for the first time

Timestamp: 00.14.35

Boq : "I know we don't really know each other yet, but..."

Glinda : "You know what I believe, Bick?"

Boq : "It's Bick (distracted). It's Boq."

Glinda : "That strangers are just people I've never met."

As the students just arrived at Shiz University, they are trying to meet and talk to each other, including Boq. Boq is a boy from Munchkinland who seems to be mesmerized by Glinda at first sight. As he approaches her to introduce himself, he stutters a little, displaying a sign of nervousness. However, although Boq just mentioned his name earlier, Glinda seems not to pay attention and instead calls him Bick. As he is distracted by Glinda's charm, Boq unconsciously agrees for a second that he is indeed Bick, but seconds later he corrects Glinda that his name is actually Boq. This interaction displays how the femme fatale appears to other people's eyes. Her appearance and her choice of words are portrayed as appealing to others, especially men (Mulvey, 1975). With such qualities, she manipulates and makes them confused, for a short period of time or longer.



Figure 3: Glinda meeting Elphaba for the first time at Shiz University

Timestamp: 00.15.46

Elphaba : "And, yes, I've always been green."

Glinda : "Well, I, for one, am so sorry that you have been forced to live with this."

Elphaba : "Is that so?"

Glinda : "Yes. And it is my intention to major in sorcery."

Glinda : "So, if at some point, you wanted to address the, umm, problem."

Elphaba : "Problem (smirk)."

Glinda : "Perhaps I could help."

In this scene, Glinda and everyone see Elphaba for the first time at Shiz University. Elphaba has a peculiar skin color which draws the attention of the students. They look shocked as Elphaba explains to them that she is not sick or anything and explains that she has been green since forever. Thus, seeing that, Glinda takes the opportunity to catch people's attention and sympathy. Glinda first shows her concerns to Elphaba by saying sorry that she has to live with green skin. Moreover, she preaches in front of other students that her intention of studying magic at Shiz is to one day help people in need like Elphaba, which makes the other students who hear her preach amazed. However, this scene proves that the femme fatale's words are not as pure as people think. Glinda shows her concerns by addressing Elphaba's peculiar skin color, which indicates that, through her eyes, Elphaba is weird and should be fixed. Subsequently, the students agree that Elphaba is indeed peculiar just because of her skin color. To appear as a good-hearted savior, she promises to Elphaba, in front of everybody, that one day she will help her and people like her. This interaction proves that the femme fatale uses her words to appear good in front of other people to gain their attention and their sympathy. In result, the students adore her and see her as a model student.



Figure 4: Glinda showing Elphaba her space in the dorm

Timestamp: 00.33.30

Glinda : "Oh, I saved you some space by the way. Here it is. It's great."

As Elphaba enters her dorm room, she is greeted by Glinda, her roommate. The film shows how spacious the dorm room is. This room is not the regular one, but the suite dorm room which explains its spacious size. Although the room is spacious, Glinda leads Elphaba to the corner of the room and explains that she already saved some space for Elphaba. This scene tries to emphasize how generous and welcoming Glinda is. Nevertheless, although she displays generosity and hospitality, the femme fatale wants to make other people suffer without making herself look aggressive. This way, she does not need to directly lay a hand to harm her target or make her target feel uncomfortable. Hence, it resonates with the belief that women are portrayed as physically weak in cinema (Mulvey, 1975). However, the femme fatale's power is not limited to her physical offence, but also her mental trick.



Figure 5: Glinda and Elphaba loathe each other's characteristics

Timestamp: 00.36.34

Glinda : "For your face."

Elphaba : "Your voice."

Glinda : "Your clothing."

Together : "Let's just say. I loathe it all."

The femme fatale feels that she is the paramount example of how a girl should look like. In this scene, Glinda and Elphaba show disinterest in each other's appearance. Glinda believes that Elphaba's choice of clothing is hideous and she loathes it. This happens due to the portrayal of Elphaba who is pictured as a girl who does not pay attention to her appearance. Her green skin accompanied with all-black clothing gives an impression of the exact opposite of how a woman should look. Henceforth, opposite to Elphaba, Glinda is seen to be more attractive in terms of appearance as she is portrayed as someone with fair skin and feminine clothes (Mulvey, 1975).



Figure 6: Glinda calling Elphaba a steamed artichoke

Timestamp: 00.40.08

Elphaba : "Maybe some of us are just different."

Glinda : "Well, it seems the artichoke is steamed."

Pfannee : "The worst way to cook an artichoke."

In the history class when Dr. Dillamond mispronounced Glinda's name, Elphaba stood up for him and explained that not everyone's the same. This refers to how the femme fatale expects Dr. Dillamond, who is a goat, pronounces her name correctly which dismisses the fact that it's impossible due to Dr. Dillamond's physical anatomy. Elphaba's reasoning was invalidated by Glinda by saying that her change in her speaking tone was not necessary and called her a steamed artichoke. A steamed artichoke is metaphorically used to describe Elphaba's anger. Moreover, the word artichoke refers to the state of Elphaba's appearance as her skin color is similar to an artichoke. The femme fatale shows her capability of flipping the truth. On top of that, the other students in the class take her side and laugh alongside her. Henceforth, this scene reveals that the femme fatale's words can be destructive without the need of touching her target. The femme fatale also gains the people's trust because of her sweet and alluring way of speaking, fitting the image of how a woman should present herself (Mulvey, 1975). Her choice of words might not seem sharp but still hide an ill intention behind it.



Figure 7: Glinda elevating her appearance after hearing the news about Prince Fiyero's arrival

Timestamp: 00.51.42

After reading and hearing the news about the arrival of Prince Fiyero, Glinda cannot contain her excitement. Prince Fiyero is a promising young gentleman who is everyone's dream. He is portrayed as a charming man who can melt everyone's heart. This type of man attracts the attention of the femme fatale. Because of that, the femme fatale prepares herself to look as presentable and as desirable as possible. The scene shows Glinda's room which is filled with tons of high heels, cosmetics, dresses, and perfumes. By society's standard, those things are linked to femininity. The ultra-feminine items define the femme fatale's interest which projects the male gaze fantasy of how a female figure should be styled (Mulvey, 1975).



Figure 8: Fiyero and Glinda's first meeting

Timestamp: 00.52.55

Glinda : "Are you a recently arrived student?"

Fiyero : "I am, yeah."

Glinda : "Oh, I didn't know."

Fiyero : "Though, I'm not sure I'll last longer at this school than any of the others."

Glinda : "But, I wasn't at any of your other schools."

This scene displays a classic portrayal of the femme fatale in cinema. The arrival of Fiyero attracts the attention of Glinda, the femme fatale. Their interaction starts out with Fiyero trying to keep his cool when he first makes his arrival at Shiz University. His cool demeanor is shaken when Glinda comes close to him. She greets Fiyero with a sweet and charming voice, instantly hypnotizes him. The femme fatale pretends to be clueless about the news of Fiyero's arrival. The innocent girl persona that she displays successfully convinces Fiyero and gains his attention. Their interaction proves how the femme fatale works her way to approach her target without anyone noticing her true intention. Her dialogues make her sound desirable, innocent, and trusted. Subsequently, the femme fatale fulfills the desirable image of a woman in front of the male protagonist (Mulvey, 1975).



Figure 9: Glinda convincing Boq to invite Nessarose to the dance

Timestamp: 00.59.55

Glinda : "I know someone would be my hero if someone were to go invite her."

Boq : "Well, maybe I could invite her."

Glinda : "Oh, Bick, really? You would do that for me?"

Boq : "I would do anything for you."

The femme fatale is famous in keeping her image under the good light. It is proven when Boq, the regular boy from her class, asks her to go to the dance with him. Since Boq is already head over heels towards Glinda, she uses that opportunity to deflect his invite, rejecting but making sure that he doesn't feel directly rejected. Thus, desperate to be seen as a hero in Glinda's eyes, Boq falls into her trap and forgets about inviting Glinda. Instead, he does exactly what Glinda asks him to do, inviting Nessarose who he barely knows to the dance. The femme fatale is cunning in reading the situation as she combines Boq's obsession towards her and Nessarose's disability to create a way out for her. The femme fatale proves herself again that her good-girl facade can become her source of power to escape from an unwanted situation. Her femininity answers to the calling of the vacancy of the male gaze fantasy in the story (Mulvey, 1975).



Figure 10: Glinda getting closer to Fiyero

Timestamp: 01.01.17

Glinda : "You're perfect."

Fiyero : "You're perfect."

Glinda and Fiyero : "So we're perfect together. Born to be forever."

As the story progresses, this scene indicates that Glinda has already caught Fiyero's interest. They are getting closer and are shown dancing with each other. The notable part of this scene is when the femme fatale praises the male protagonist by saying that he is perfect. In return, already charmed by her mystical beauty, Fiyero praises her by saying that she is perfect in return. Women's submissive nature has become the interest of men in cinema (Mulvey, 1975). The femme fatale teases the male protagonist by praising him until he is attracted enough to make a direct contact. With such treatment, the male protagonist feels valued and his confidence grows stronger, unaware that it is the intention of the femme fatale all along.



Figure 11: Glinda giving Elphaba a black hat

Timestamp: 01.04.33

Glinda : "You know, black is this year's pink. You deserve each other, this hat and you."

When Glinda was preparing herself to get ready for the dance party, she found a black hat that seemed to be distasteful according to her standard. Instead of throwing it away, Glinda gets an idea to give the hat to Elphaba. Her sugar-coated ill intention successfully convinces Elphaba. To make her sounds more convincing, she utters a lie that the color

black is the new pink. It means that pink has always been a popular choice of color. This statement supports the idea that Glinda is a popular girl as she is shown wearing pink most of the time. The femme fatale embracing the color pink as her signature color resonates well with the notion that pink is heavily associated with femininity. Hence, a woman can be seen as popular if they appear feminine, in this case favoring pink over another color to display her femininity. This happens due to the fact that society sees women as pleasing if they fit the standard, including becoming the objects of desire for men (Mulvey, 1975).



Figure 12: Glinda and Elphaba dancing together

Timestamp: 01.14.51

During the dance party, there is a moment where Elphaba is shown alienated by the other students. The reasoning behind this is because of her shocking arrival to the party. The first reason is Elphaba was initially not invited. The second reason is her choice of outfit where she is shown wearing the black hat gifted by Glinda. Due to that, the students who attend the party laugh at her because of her distasteful choice of hat. However, Glinda feels bad about it because the whole mockery towards Elphaba happens because of her. Instead of running away from the situation, Elphaba embraces herself by bravely dancing on the dance floor right in front of the whole crowd. They laugh at first. Unexpectedly, Glinda joins Elphaba on the dance floor and dances together. The reactions from the crowds shift from mocking to being fascinated. It shows that the same thing might receive different reactions depending on who does it. The femme fatale uses her influence and her popularity to lift Elphaba up from public embarrassment. Glinda's action reflects the core of the feminist movement, especially the third wave feminist movement. She embraces individuality and takes over women's sexuality to make it their own. This scene exhibits a moment where women support other women.



Figure 13: Glinda trying to elevate Elphaba's confident

Timestamp: 01.22.32

Glinda : "I know about popular."

As the story advances, Elphaba and Glinda grow closer to each other. In this scene, Glinda tries to elevate Elphaba's confidence by giving her a makeover. As a popular girl at Shiz University, she knows what it takes to be one, which is good appearance. Elphaba's growing trust makes her agree to follow Glinda's advice. She tries a new hat, hair, and accessories to transform her looks to the better. It is pivotal to note that Glinda's experience cannot be dismissed as she is depicted as the popular girl with striking physical appearance. By looking presentably feminine, the femme fatale gains popularity because she is seen as the model figure of how a woman should present herself in front of other people (Mulvey, 1975).



Figure 14: A glimpse of Glinda's room

Timestamp: 01.27.00

This scene further illustrates the connection between the femme fatale and her femininity. Throughout the movie, Glinda is not portrayed wearing any other color than pink. Aside from the fact that it simply is her favorite color, this color signifies her feminine side. Pink is heavily attributed to femininity. By embracing her femininity, Glinda successfully uses it as her source of power to get what she wants. This depiction

of femininity provides an image about the portrayal of female figures in cinema, which is represented in such a way to appear reassuring rather than dangerous (Mulvey, 1975).



Figure 4: Glinda changing her name into Glinda as a support to Dr. Dillamond

Timestamp: 01.44.50

Glinda : "Since Dr. Dillamond has used to have his own goat-like way of pronouncifying my name, in solidarity and in order to express my outrage, I will henceforward be known no longer as 'Galinda', but simply, Glinda."

The character development of the femme fatale reaches its point where she uses her influence to support the other character. This scene exhibits the reasoning behind Glinda's name. Initially, her name was Galinda Upland. However, in the previous scene, it was shown that Dr. Dillamond was the first one to call her Glinda due to his physical limitation as he is not a human but a goat. Dr. Dillamond was captured due to the new law where animals can no longer teach at school or speak freely. Inspired by Elphaba, Galinda takes a stand against the new law and shows support for animal rights, including Dr. Dillamond. Therefore, she wants to be addressed as Glinda instead of Galinda in support of Dr. Dillamond. The femme fatale exhibits her influence which is prominent enough to inspire other students. Her action mirrors the similar situation that happened during the feminist movements. Her feminist quality is evident as she supports the marginalized community, ensuring them to gain equal rights. Henceforward, she is more popular as Glinda than her actual name instead.



♪ You can still be with the Wizard ♪

Figure 16: Glinda trying to convince Elphaba to follow the Wizard of Oz

Timestamp: 02.18.25

Elphaba : "It's the Wizard who should be afraid of me."

Glinda : "Elphie, listen to me. Listen to me. Just, just say you're sorry"

Glinda : "You can still be with the Wizard."

After Elphaba rebels against the Wizard of Oz, Glinda tries to convince her to ask forgiveness, believing that everything is going to be alright. The reason behind her rebellion is she learns that the injustice that is experienced by the animals is born from the Wizard's mind. As part of the marginalized group, Elphaba shows his disagreement and tries to overturn the injustice. Nevertheless, Glinda takes the opposite side of Elphaba's as she believes that the Wizard is doing what he does for the betterment of everyone in Oz. Surely, Glinda is under the impression that the Wizard of Oz is wise. The femme fatale lets her guard down a little as her opinion is controlled by the Wizard. As strong as she is, the femme fatale still has a submissive side. This further proves the point regarding the existence of the belief that the man is undoubtedly on the right side of the law (Mulvey, 1975).



Figure 17: Madame Morrible hugging Glinda to gain her trust

Timestamp: 02.29.31

In the middle of the conflict between Elphaba and the Wizard's side, Glinda chooses to remain on the Wizard's side. However, the scene shows that Glinda still supports Elphaba behind the curtain. Her choice of action is stemmed from the fact that Elphaba

is framed as the enemy of the nation by the Wizard. Deep down, Glinda still has a thought that Elphaba is not entirely wrong. Thus, to ensure that she is in a safe position, Glinda takes the side of the majority. The femme fatale knows where and when she should position herself to ensure her wellbeing. Madame Morrible, the right-hand of the Wizard, takes Glinda under her wings. Subsequently, by the end of the scene, Glinda is portrayed as a girl who loses her glamorous characteristic and her show-girl connotation, becoming a puppet of the Wizard's party (Mulvey, 1975).

The femme fatale does not always attain her image from her visible actions. The other characters also take part in strengthening the image of the femme fatale from mouth to mouth. Those who are already influenced by the femme fatale spread the word about how flawless the femme fatale is.



Figure 18: The Students at Shiz sing about sharing the same loathing towards Elphaba with Glinda

Timestamp: 00.37.40

The students: "Poor Galinda, forced to reside with someone so disgistikified. We just want to tell you that we're all on your side. We share your loathing."

This scene is the continuation of the previous line where the students think that Glinda is just too good of a person. The femme fatale's image convinces everyone that she has pure heart as she volunteers to share a room with Elphaba. The idea that Glinda has to go through that, sharing a room alongside Elphaba, draws the sympathy of the other students. They will support whatever Glinda does and will always be on her side. Therefore, the femme fatale spreads her image and her influences through the other characters which can result in gaining more allies once they hear about it.



Figure 19: Fiyero trying to impress Glinda in front of Boq

Timestamp: 00.55.03

Fiyero : "I'm Fiyero Tigelaar. Winkie Country."

Glinda : "Oh, oz."

Boq : "Boq Woodsman of Munchkinland."

In this scene, Fiyero, who is still new at Shiz University, tries to make a good impression in front of Glinda. Such an intention is born due to the fact that he is already charmed by Glinda's beauty. In order to win her heart, Fiyero mentions his status in front of Boq. It is important to note that the higher the social status a man has, the more he is desirable in Oz. Boq, who is interested in Glinda as well, does not back down and answers Fiyero's introduction by mentioning his name and his place of origin. Hence, it is a proof that the femme fatale has control over those who are already charmed. They will try to win her attention and fight other men if it's necessary. These happening displays that the femme fatale is an object of men's desire and is portrayed in a way that attracts men's attention in order to fit the male gaze agenda (Mulvey, 1975).



Figure 20: Boq saying that he would do anything for Glinda

Timestamp: 01.00.33

Boq : "I would do anything for you."

In this scene, Boq is initially asking Glinda to come to the dance with him. However, as cunning as she is, Glinda rejects his invitation in a way that doesn't feel like one. She

points to another female student who is seen in a wheelchair. Glinda pretends to feel bad as that student does not yet have anyone to go to the dance with. With her power of persuasion, Glinda makes an implication that she will adore anyone who is willing to ask that student out. As Boq is already hypnotized by Glinda, he says he would do anything for her. His dialogue shows that once someone is put under her spell, it is almost impossible not to listen to her request. The way Boq treats her shows how dangerous the femme fatale is.



Figure 21: Nessarose talking about how good Glinda is

Timestamp: 01.01.50

Nessarose : "He said he was too shy to ask me at first, but then Galinda emboldened him."

Elphaba : "Wait, Galinda?"

Nessarose : "Don't. Don't you dare say another word against her. I'm about to have the happiest night of my life. Thanks to Galinda."

The interaction between Elphaba and Nessarose displays that the femme fatale has a believable image of a good girl. Nessarose is asked to go to the party by Boq. Hearing that, she is overjoyed and she displays a behavior of having a romantic interest towards Boq. Thus, Nessarose tells her sister, Elphaba, that Boq has asked her out and mentions Glinda as someone who gives encouragement to Boq. In confusion, Elphaba tries to process the situation as to why Boq needs Glinda to embolden him to ask Nessarose out. Nessarose brushes Elphaba's suspicion off as soon as she mentions Glinda's name. She does such a thing since she knows that her sister is not really fond of Glinda. Nessarose tells her directly not to speak ill about Glinda. Henceforth, this scene proves that the femme fatale has enough influence to make people see her as a kind-hearted woman. The femme fatale is seen as a reassuring woman who can do no harm towards other people (Mulvey, 1975).

The Femme Fatale's Influence towards the Other Characters

The first meeting between Elphaba and Glinda took place at the Shiz University during their first day of arrival. Initially, they did not go along with each other. Elphaba

disliked the way Glinda tried to appear as a savior, claiming that she would help Elphaba with her problem of having a green skin color. This created a tension between them which continued throughout the story. Thus, due to Elphaba rejecting Glinda's offer in front of the others, the other students disliked Elphaba and took Glinda's side. Moreover, due to misunderstandings, Elphaba ended up being a roommate with Glinda. This course of action brought opportunities to them both. As Glinda had to keep her image as a good person, she did not have a choice but to accept Elphaba as her roommate. Elphaba successfully secured a safe spot at the dorm which later on she could continue to pursue her study at Shiz University.

Since day one, Elphaba had to endure the alienation and the mockery from the other students. Whenever she disagreed with Glinda, she would receive backlash from Glinda and her friends. Elphaba had to face those challenges and tried her best to keep her focus to study. Despite the treatments she experienced, Elphaba still remembered that the reason she could stay was because of Glinda's willingness to share her dorm with her. Glinda previously expressed her intention that she wanted Elphaba to put up some good words to Madame Morrible. With Glinda's influence and her own gratefulness, Elphaba requested Madame Morrible to take Glinda as her apprentice.

Before knowing about the good news, Glinda already made a plan to embarrass Elphaba. The femme fatale convinced her that the black hat she gave was trendy and suited her really well. She also invited Elphaba to attend the dance party. Hence, when Elphaba arrived at the party, people saw her with a condescending look as she walked on the dance floor. They ridiculed her appearance as she wore the distasteful black hat. However, during the party, Madame Morrible shared the news to Glinda and told her that she should thank Elphaba for the chance she got. This event turned the femme fatale's view towards Elphaba. When Elphaba was ridiculed on the dance floor, Glinda came to accompany her and danced alongside her. That moment influenced the other students' view about Elphaba. She was finally recognized as a student who did the unique dance on the dance floor.

The next day, Elphaba experienced a more welcoming atmosphere from the other students. She also became closer to Glinda when she received some assistance from her regarding how to elevate her looks in order to become popular. Their bond grew stronger each day and they saw each other as friends. Their friendship was displayed when Elphaba invited Glinda to join her to meet the Wizard in Emerald City. When the intrications between her and the Wizard happened, she received support from Glinda. Her being seen as a rebel did not matter as long as she believed to be on the right path. When everyone despised her and tried to capture her, unexpectedly, the femme fatale showed support towards Elphaba although she had to hide it from other people for her own safety. That support boosted Elphaba's confidence to stand corrected. All in all,

Elphaba, who at first disliked Glinda and saw her as a rival, turned out to create a strong bond of friendship with the femme fatale.

Prince Fiyero Tigelaar is the main male protagonist in *Wicked* (2024). He is depicted as a charming gentleman with a flirtatious side. His arrival always makes other people feel amazed. Thus, it is not surprising if he becomes the love interest of the femme fatale. When Fiyero first arrived at Shiz, Glinda approached her in an effort to get his attention. Seeing his innocent demeanor, Fiyero was instantly charmed by Glinda's feminine personality, unaware that it was only her facade. Throughout the story, he was seen with Glinda many times.

As he was often spotted alongside Glinda, the other students speculated that they were indeed in a relationship. The femme fatale influenced people to believe so, making him left untouched by anyone but her. Her alluring beauty never failed to amaze Fiyero. Moreover, he invited Glinda as her date to the dance party, eliminating the chance for the other students to ask him out. Nevertheless, despite being charmed by the femme fatale, as the story went, he started questioning his feelings. He was spotted spending time with Elphaba. Fiyero was stunned after seeing Elphaba's good deeds towards the animal. This indicates that the femme fatale charm was fading away as he created more space between them. It was still undecided whether or not they would tie the knot with each other as the movie came to an end.

The femme fatale is portrayed as a girl who has an alluring charm and beauty. Her appearance checks out the description of a femme fatale in cinema. She is always seen with a polished appearance that highlights her beauty. However, the most prominent evidence can be spotted in figure 14. In figure 14, Glinda is shown wearing a see-through pink nightgown and dancing around her dorm room filled with all-pink feminine goods. Her portrayal is connected with how women are oftentimes portrayed in cinema as they are shaped in a certain way to fulfil the male fantasy (Mulvey, 1975).

Moreover, femme fatale is infamous for their ability to seduce other characters. The example can be spotted in figure 9. In that figure, the femme fatale is shown as a seductress who influences other characters, especially men, in order to benefit from them. Boq, who is charmed by her beauty, can easily be manipulated by Glinda with her sugar-coated words. She empowers her femininity and uses it as a tool to reach her goal. Her character is painted as a reassuring figure rather than dangerous (Mulvey, 1975).

In addition, it is found that the other characters also describe and talk about the femme fatale in the movie. It happens due to the influence that the femme fatale has. Her image creates an illusion that makes her look good in people's eyes. These findings can be supported by the presence of figure 18. In figure 18, the femme fatale holds the students' trust which influences them to stand on her side. All of those efforts create an impact towards the other characters, especially Elphaba and Fiyero. Elphaba experiences

alienation because of Glinda and experiences acceptance because of her as well. As the male protagonist, Fiyero is heavily impacted by the presence of Glinda as he becomes the victim of the seductress.

CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzes the topic of femininity and sexuality of a female character in movies *Wicked* (2024) with the focus towards one female character, Galinda Upland. This study explores how the femme fatale uses her femininity and sexuality as her power. To help formulate the analysis, the male gaze theory by Laura Mulvey is used as the main theory of the study. This movie depicts Glinda's journey of using her charm and influence to reach her goal. Her actions showcase her strength and her ability to put people under her influence. The way she is portrayed in the movie is attributed to how a female character should be portrayed in a movie. Her appearance and her personality display her as a woman who embraces her femininity. Moreover, Glinda's action throughout the movie proves that she fulfills the femme fatale archetype. She uses her charm and beauty to gather people's trust and put them under her influence. In addition, the femme fatale also gains support from those around her who believe that she is an innocent girl.

The actions of other characters towards Glinda prove that the femme fatale's influence is the dangerous aspect of her as she is portrayed as someone who is reassuring rather than dangerous. In addition, this study aims to reveal how the other characters are affected by her. The two characters that become the main focus of the analysis are Elphaba and Fiyero. The study reveals that Elphaba experiences alienation because of Glinda's influence on other students. However, Elphaba's acceptance is influenced by Glinda which displays feminism in the movie. On the other hand, the femme fatale's charm and seduction affect Fiyero, the male protagonist, and make him fall under her spell.

This movie provides a message about the importance of embracing one's femininity. Femininity is not to be seen as inferior compared to masculinity. The femme fatale highlights how her femininity helps her reach her goal. Glinda's portrayal in the movie proves that women should have power over herself even though her existence can be interpreted as something else, to fulfill the male gaze aspect. Through her confidence and her femininity, Glinda proves that women can be influential and powerful as well.

REFERENCES

Ayyildiz, B. (2023). Reflections of second wave feminism in the Female Man and the Left Hand of Darkness. *AKRA Kültür Sanat ve Edebiyat Dergisi*, 11(31), 149–168. <https://doi.org/10.31126/akrajournal.1282800>

Barić, Tea. (2017). *The representations of femme fatale in literature and movies: a feminist phenomenon or a sexual object?* (Master's thesis, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Croatia). *FFOS Repository*. Retrieved from <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:142:287897>

Bssey, Helen. (2024). Femme fatale in a dance of the forest. *Beyond Babel: BU Journal of Language, Literature and Humanities*, 8(1), 64-76. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14282421>

Butler, J. (1999). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Gauntlett, D. (2008). *Media, gender, and identity: An introduction*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hales, B. (2007). Projecting trauma: The femme fatale in Weimar and Hollywood film noir. *Women in German Yearbook: Feminist Studies in German Literature & Culture*, 23(1), 224-243. University of Nebraska Press. <https://doi.org/10.1353/wgy.2008.0002>

Inamdar, Sheerinusultana. (2023). The impact of digital media on third-wave feminist literature: analyzing online activism and feminist expression. *International Education and Research Journal*, 9 (8), 64-66.

Jayastu, N. A. P. (2023). Breaking gender stereotypes in Enola Holmes 2 (2022). *Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies*, 11(3), 45-56. <https://doi.org/10.26740/lk.v11i3.59553>

Kayaoglu, M. N., Erbay, S., Flitner, C., & Saltas, D. (2016). Examining students' perceptions of plagiarism: A cross-cultural study at tertiary level. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 40(5), 682-705. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2015.1014320>

Kožul, M. (2023). *Dangerous Beauty: The role of femme fatale in film noir* (Master's thesis, University of Zadar, Department of English). University of Zadar. 56 pp. Retrieved from <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:162:255639>

Martin, C. & Dinella, L. (2001). Gender-related Development. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 6020-6027.

Nsaidzedze, Ignatius. (2017). An Overview of Feminism in the Victorian Era [1832-1901]. *American Research Journal of English and Literature*, 3 (1): 1-18.10.21694/2378-9026.17012.

Nurhidaya. (2022). Gender Empowerment in Black Widow (2021). *Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies*, 10(3), 32-41. <https://doi.org/10.26740/lk.v10i3.53664>

Putri, N. A. (2022). Disney Frozen: Challenging the traditional gender roles of disney princesses. *Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies*, 10(2), 59-67. <https://doi.org/10.26740/lk.v10i2.55373>

Putri, R. A., & M. Thoyibi. (2024). the gender empowerment in Disney's live action Mulan (2020): A Feminist Perspective. *Ethical Lingua: Journal of Language Teaching and Literature*, 11 (1). <https://doi.org/10.30605/25409190.674>

Ramadhan, Chintya. (2024). Women's empowerment through Barbie (2023). *Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies*, 12(2), 9-16. <https://doi.org/10.26740/lk.v12i2.62119>

Rikhana, P. C., Lesmana, F., & Wijayanti, C. A. (2025). The representation of women empowerment on The Little Mermaid Movie. *Journal of Content and Engagement*, 2(3), 235-248. <https://doi.org/10.9744/joce.2.3.235-248>

Smelik, A. (2016). Gaze. In N. A. Naples (Ed.), *The Wiley Blackwell encyclopedia of gender and sexuality studies* (pp. 1-2). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118663219.wbegss157>

Mulvey, Laura. (1975). Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. *Screen*, 16(3), 6-18. <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen.16.3.6>

Rachma, F. M., & Ulya, H. (2021). Representasi male gaze dalam film biografi *Lovelace* (Analisis semiotika John Fiske). *Jurnal Ilmiah Muqoddimah: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Politik dan Humaniora*, 5(2), 384-394. <https://doi.org/10.31604/jim.v5i2.2021.384-394>

Wasko, J. (2001). *Understanding Disney: The Manufacture of Fantasy*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing Inc.

Wellek, R., & Warren, A. (1949). *Theory of Literature*. New York: Brace & CO.

Address for correspondence:
Adam Yudha Perkasa
Faculty of Language and Arts
Universitas Negeri Surabaya
Kediri, East Java, Indonesia
adam.21013@mhs.unesa.ac.id

(Received 05 May 2025; revision received 15 June 2025;
accepted 16 July 2025; final revision received 24 July 2025)