



## Feminist Perspective of Life's Struggle: A Literature Review of the Movie Little Woman (2019)

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Received:</b> 2024-05-15 <b>Revised:</b> 2024-06-21 <b>Accepted:</b> 2024-06-22</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Feminist and Thoughts; Josephin Life Struggle; Little Woman Movie</p>	<p>This study delves into the challenges contemporary women face, particularly in negotiating societal expectations, spiritual support in relationships, and the balance between education, career, and marriage. Through an analysis of the characters Jo and Amy in Greta Gerwig's "Little Women," it aims to explore these complexities and offer insights into modern women's perspectives on life. The research draws on the film "Little Women" (2019) and a range of literary sources, including research papers, journals, and publications. By examining the educational backgrounds, marital experiences, motivations, and thoughts of Jo and Amy, the study investigates the nuanced struggles and aspirations of women in different facets of life. The findings reveal that feminist ideology intersects with various dimensions of women's struggles, encompassing aspirations for freedom, education, marital rights, and happiness. Jo and Amy confront significant obstacles reflective of 19th-century challenges, compounded by societal norms that tethered women's happiness to male support, hindering their pursuit of independence. The study emphasized the continuing relevance of the discourse of feminists by exposing the challenges faced by women in Little Woman. Through an exploration of Jo and Amy's journeys, it emphasizes the ongoing struggle for autonomy and fulfillment in women's lives across historical contexts.</p>

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### INTRODUCTION

Women's issues have always been fundamental to discussions of human rights, equality, and justice (Pasque, 2011). Financial inequality, persisting social class divisions, sexual transgression, assault against women, and ethnic or sexual orientation stigma are all concerns. These difficulties are persistent because they reflect society's gender norms and preferences and prolong women's marginalization and oppression. To comprehend women's marginalization, societal structures, and gender dynamics must be considered (Ahmed Elsherbini, 2023). Traditional narratives portray women as weak and needing protection, perpetuating prejudices that limit their freedom and initiative. These portrayals strengthen systemic gender inequality and impact public opinion by influencing policy and institutional practices. Sociocultural dangers and effects are greatly influenced by individual circumstances. Sunaryo et al. (2021) found that Indonesian women face a glass ceiling, which limits their job options. Males' efforts to construct standards that force women to bow to them have led to the erosion of women's independence (Chakraborty & Goswami, 2024). Without exception, everyone has intrinsic rights and sovereignty over their existence. Society often views women as weak and dependent on men (Barreto & Doyle, 2022; Suja et al., 2024). Men are superior to women, giving them more power and advantages. Women must fight gender inequality because they are continually oppressed. Feminism is the social and political movement that results. The feminist movement values women's autonomy, public participation, educational equality, and economic prospects. The outcome consistent to a discrimination of working place (Liu, 2024), in which the harm individuals and organizations (Rim & Kim, 2024). Workplace discrimination can have dire implications for individuals and companies. Prejudice can lower morale and involvement, which lowers productivity.



Throughout history and now, women have worked alongside men in a variety of fields. Long-held attitudes and conventional beliefs in communities have greatly impacted women's experiences and possibilities (Mirjam Hölzle, 2024). These deeply rooted societal standards and expectations frequently appear as normal as people did, preserving them throughout generations. This can reduce women's leadership and other areas' representation. Traditional cultural conventions expect women to be husbands and homemakers. This limits their ability to pursue non-domestic goals and careers. Due to this constraint, women often struggle to achieve their goals. Women have persevered despite discrimination and inequality by expressing their feelings, goals, and challenges. Scholars have studied feminist themes in several works. Gerwig's interpretation emphasizes the March sisters' perseverance, independence, and originality as they face societal expectations and personal goals (Ashfiya & Degaf, 2023; Wang & Wang, 2024). Recently result of this issue was also studied by Gerwig's feminist adaptation. Feminism influences women's career prospects and ability to overcome hurdles (Pasque, 2011).

## **METHODS**

The method taken was a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the study from the sight of feminist sisters' challenges as portrayed in Greta Gerwig's film adaptation of *Little Women* (2019). This method entails a comprehensive analysis of pertinent literature, as well as a detailed examination of the film's content and themes (Sullivan-Bolyai & Bova, 2021). The researchers' objective is to ascertain how feminist perspectives on life's challenges are depicted during the period in question by concentrating on the narrative and characters in the film. Two techniques and sampling methods were implemented in this investigation: literature review and movie analysis. The researchers closely observe *Little Women* in the context of movie analysis, with a particular emphasis on the narrative developments, character interactions, and scenes that exemplify feminist concepts and the challenges faced by women. This entails the identification of critical dialogues, behaviors, and decisions made by the primary characters, with a particular emphasis on Josephine March.

The movie analysis primarily centered on the 2019 film "*Little Women*," which explored the lives and journeys of its lead character, Josephine March. The researchers gathered data through a meticulous examination of the film, including multiple viewings and detailed documentation of relevant elements. Furthermore, academic sources were consulted to gather additional information on the film and its themes. In summary, the research identified similarities between the film's historical setting and the contemporary challenges faced by women today. By integrating a literature review with a movie analysis, the researchers can develop a thorough comprehension. The analysis focuses on the feminist philosophy shown in *Little Women* and its relevance to the challenges faced by women regardless of the past time frame of the film and present-day society.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Regarding to result analysis of "*Little Women*" (2019) and pertinent literature, Josephin March's multifaceted struggles in the 19th century are illuminated, reflecting her quest for freedom, education, and happiness amidst societal constraints. As a determined writer, Jo confronts societal norms that confine women to traditional roles, as seen from the fact that a male publisher claimed that her work did not have a male protagonist was evidence of this particular point. Her refusal to compromise her artistic integrity underscores her resilience and defiance against gender biases in the publishing industry. Jo's struggles extend beyond writing, encompassing her pursuit of education in a male-dominated society where opportunities for women are limited. Despite facing barriers, she seeks knowledge independently, symbolizing her resilience against gender-based educational constraints. Additionally, Jo's reluctance to conform to societal expectations of marriage showcases her commitment to personal autonomy and growth, highlighting her pursuit of happiness on her terms. Through her creative pursuits, educational endeavors, and defiance of traditional norms, Jo embodies the courage and determination required to challenge societal expectations and carve her path.

The data results discovered important challenges that the character Jo March faced throughout the 19th century by examining the film "*Little Women*" (2019) and reviewing literature that is pertinent to the topic. This period was marked by ongoing social conflicts and strongly established cultural conventions that restricted women to traditional roles who had become wives or mothers and took responsibility for the family and the care of children. The difficulties that were discovered throughout this investigation are summarized as follows:

### ***Josephin Fight for Freedom***

The core of Josephin quest for freedom and independence lies in her unwavering resolve to achieve success as a writer. Amidst a societal framework that imposes conventional duties and expectations on women, Jo's decision to be serious in the writing profession distinguished her as a determined and enthusiastic woman. She aspires to forge her trajectory in a predominantly male-dominated field, defying cultural conventions and (Dewi & Medina, 2021; Septiana, 2021) pursuing achievement according to her standards. An important scene in the film emphasizes Jo's battle against the demands and standards of the publishing industry. Upon submitting her novel to be published, the owner proceeded to critique it on the grounds of lacking a male protagonist, insinuating that this omission would hinder its marketability. This argument exemplifies the industry's partiality and inclination towards narratives that focus on males, which underestimated Jo's artistic stories and lessened the significance of female sights in the art of the story. Jo's resolute reply, "If I were a man, it would be less burdensome to achieve success," succinctly expresses her exasperation with the industry's gender prejudices. The statement she made demonstrates her cognizance of the obstacles she encounters as a female writer endeavoring to establish herself in a predominantly male sphere. Jo's determination stays unwavering, despite these challenges (Rosalinah et al., 2022). Defending her creative integrity to the publisher was another example of Jo's obstinacy. "My characters will speak their minds," Jo asserted. "Writing about women's inferiority to men is something I'd rather steer clear of." Jo's dedication to portraying women's stories was evident in her statement. She demonstrated her commitment to her craft and her ambition to challenge narrative norms by refusing to compromise her creative vision to align with industry expectations. During her discussions with the publisher, Jo exhibited courage and determination in the face of adversity. Her advocacy for creative autonomy in a male-dominated field symbolized the broader struggle for gender equality in other male-dominated arenas. Jo's narrative inspired women to assert themselves and carve out their own identities. Her steadfast commitment to writing truthfully and imaginatively was further illustrated by her creative dilemmas. In correspondence with her publisher, Jo expressed her preference to avoid portraying women as inferior to men. Her unwavering dedication to depicting reality mirrored the challenges faced by women worldwide. Jo aimed to empower women and offer authentic narratives that resonated with their experiences. Her tenacity and resolve to resist society and achieve her goals are shown in her character.

### ***Struggle for Education***

Personal growth and goals depended on Jo March's education. Jo struggled to receive a formal education in the 19th century since society emphasized men's education (Wood & Eagly, 2002). Jo's intellectual curiosity and independent research were inspired by this challenge. Jo read books in the family attic to get ideas for her project. Jo proved women could overcome challenges and succeed. Jo studied in the US too. Ambition, freedom, and novelty influenced her decision (Desmawati, 2018; Simanungkalit & Putra, 2019). Jo said residing in her hometown hindered her writing career. She moved to New York to be near literary talent, including publishers, authors, and others. Jo may have met industry leaders, gained feedback, and improved her writing in this dynamic network. Jo traveled to America for personal independence. Jo March's American teaching experience (Septiana, 2021) improved her writing and personal and professional satisfaction. She chose teaching for financial security and new challenges. Jo's teaching position showed her struggle to follow her interests and improve among 19th-century women's limited options. Teaching in America let Jo experience other cultures and viewpoints. This event broadened her vision and inspired her writing.

### ***Struggle for Happiness***

Another struggle this main character fights are her struggle to pursue happiness. This encompasses her interactions with her sisters and her perspective on getting married (Rosalinah et al., 2022). Jo's predicament epitomizes her aspiration to harmonize personal gratification as her dedication to her family and her autonomy as a woman passed in the 19th century. Josephin has a profound intricate connection with her sisters and family, Meg, Amy, and Beth, which greatly influenced her quest for happiness. Being the second and eldest of her siblings, she experiences a strong life of duty and guardianship towards the sisters, frequently assuming the role of a guiding influence and peacemaker in the family (Septiana, 2021). The video portrays the affection and companionship between the sisters and emphasizes the difficulties Jo faces as she pursues her goals while also taking care of her siblings. Jo faces a significant challenge as she observes the divergent paths her sisters decide to follow. Meg chooses to lead a conventional lifestyle, placing marriage and family as her top priorities, which is in direct opposition to Josephin desire for autonomy and achievement in the field of writing. This disparity prompts a dialogue between Jo and Meg on the day of Meg's wedding, during which Jo asserts. Jo and Beth share a profound bond of love and a strong sense of guarding and caring for each other. Jo is deeply moved by Beth's delicate physical condition and kind personality, which causes her to worry about the

possibility of losing her dear sister. Jo's fragility is poignantly depicted in a scene where she sits by Beth's bedside and softly pleads. Amy's endeavor to establish herself in the field of art and her international journeys provide a challenge to Jo's perception of being happy at the end of their story life. The geographical differences and distance between them give rise to a division in their life and relationship, and Jo feels separated from her sister. During a passionate discussion with Amy after returning from her dream country, Europe, Jo articulates her exasperation, stating, Nevertheless, Jo ultimately backs Amy's thoughts, acknowledging the significance of pursuing someone's goals and dreams. Jo's need for autonomy and her reluctance to follow societal standards shape her viewpoint on marriage. The protagonist's struggle with marriage is shown in her contacts with Laurie, her childhood friend and possible partner. Jo declined Laurie's proposal because she believed that getting married would limit her ability to express her creativity and restrict her independence. She firmly informs Laurie that she cannot marry him since it will lead to unhappiness for both of them, showcasing her determination to stay loyal to her ambitions. Jo's choice in prioritizing her writing on marriage is daring within the 19th-century environment, where marriage is frequently regarded as the major avenue for a woman to attain stability and fulfillment. This moment signifies the start of a connection built on shared admiration and comprehension, which ultimately steers Jo toward both personal and career development (Intan & Tuaderu, 2023). The character of Jo March in *Little Women* intricately examines her quest for happiness via her interactions with her sisters and her perspective on marriage (Lafamane, 2020; Wang & Wang, 2024). The protagonist's journey is characterized by instances of affection, emotional pain, and personal growth as she navigates the intricacies of familial relationships and societal norms. Jo's narrative serves as a motivating affirmation of the bravery needed to chase after aspirations and establish personal contentment with someone's conditions. Several obstacles encountered by Jo March in the film *Little Women* (2019) encompassed a wide array of feminist perspectives that are both enduring and relevant to current dialogues on gender equality and the progress of women's lives.

The depiction of Jo March's struggles in "*Little Women*" (2019) carries profound implications for contemporary society. Jo's unwavering determination to challenge societal norms and pursue her aspirations underscores the ongoing importance of gender equality and women's empowerment. Her journey highlights the transformative power of education as a means of overcoming barriers and achieving personal growth. Furthermore, Jo's resistance to conventional expectations of marriage emphasizes the significance of individual agency and autonomy in shaping one's destiny. Ultimately, her story serves as a compelling reminder of the enduring quest for equality, empowerment, and self-realization in the face of societal constraints. An analysis studied from the challenges of Jo March taken from the movie and real life of "*Little Women*" (2019) provides valuable perspectives, albeit there are certain constraints. Exclusively examining the movie version might fail to consider subtle details from the original written work, and the subjective nature of qualitative research could create prejudice. To address these limitations, future studies could do comparative analyses of numerous adaptations, explore more literary sources, and utilize mixed methods approaches. By adopting these tactics, we would improve our comprehension of Jo's issues and their broader ramifications.

## CONCLUSIONS

In "*Little Women*" (2019), Jo March sought independence, education, and happiness, all of which were linked to her self-discovery. Jo cherished her freedom and was driven to succeed in a culture with high expectations for women. She wanted to be a strong and successful writer in a society where males ruled, breaking expectations and taking risks. Her refusal to follow literary standards showed her commitment to her unique vision. Her journey was shaped by education, which she worked hard for. Finally, Jo March's struggle for freedom, knowledge, and happiness was riveting. With family, society, and her goals, she was busy. She was tough, brave, and continuously discovering herself. Jo's tale showed how women could defy society and find happiness. She inspired us with her power and inventiveness. Jo was a role model for women who wanted to achieve their goals due to her perseverance. It was fascinating to analyze how Jo's actions and presence affected the other characters and what she left behind. Looking into Jo's journey concerning modern feminist movements may shed light on the gender equality movement. The intersectionality of race, class, and Jo's drive for freedom and independence could be explored in future studies.

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