

The 1949 Version of Little Women Wears more Feminism Features than the 2019 One

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Abstract: This paper will begin with a discussion of the historical context of the two film adaptations of Little Women and the novel of the same name, as well as their distinct intersections with various phases of feminism's development. Specifically, the Civil War and the suffrage movement supported as the history background for the novel penned by Louisa May. Then, the production history of Mervyn LeRoy's 1949 picture Little Women, which was produced in America soon after the end of World War II and the beginning of the first wave of feminism, will be discussed. Further, the background of the 2019 edition is the condition of the United States in the twenty-first century and the third wave of feminism with the Me Too Movement. Then, analyze at least five scenes from each film in terms of lens language, characters (particularly the two leading characters Amy and Jo in both films), etc to illustrate the thesis of this paper: the 1949 version of Little Women is more feminist than the 2019 adaptation. It is vital to emphasize that the defining characteristic of feminism is a woman's unwavering commitment to her own beliefs and decisions.

Keywords: feminism, little women, feminism waves, films

1. Introduction & Background

1.1. Little Woman with Its Author Louisa May Alcott

Little Woman was published in 1868 by Louisa May Alcott, when the American Civil War broke out. The objective of the war was to reunite the United States, but it evolved into a revolutionary battle for emancipation [1]. Due to their disagreement on slavery, the southern and northern regions of the United States generated the unpleasant scenario, which severely hampered the American labor flow and hindered the growth of American industry. The 19th century was represented by the renaissance, the protestant reformation, the enlightenment, and the ideological progress and technological advancement of the industrial revolution, all of which contributed to the emergence of Americans with an active spirit of adventure [1]. The first wave of feminism, which occurred mostly in the United Kingdom, France, and the United States from 1848 and 1920, emphasized female suffrage, educational and employment opportunities, as well as the freedom to own property [2]. Louisa May, the author of Little Women and a supporter of feminism, was the first woman to register to vote in Concord and an ardent woman-suffragist at the time. Moreover, she was active in the temperance movement and various Women's Suffrage activities. Both the 1949 version directed by Mervyn LeRoy and the 2019 version directed by Greta Gerwig are adapted from this novel. This novel primarily follows an ordinary New England family that raised four girls during the American

Civil War [3]. Little woman was inspired by the author's experience with her three sisters. Since the age of sixteen, May had worked as a tutor, tailor, and nurse in case of an emergency. During her working hours, she began writing books with specific objectives. She wrote fables and horror stories under her real name and a pseudonym. Since the beginning of the Civil War, May had chosen to serve as the united army's nurse [4]. With the encouragement and support of her editor, Thomas Niles, she released the book titled little woman, which was written specifically for girls. The character Amy was inspired by Louisa's sister May, who also went on to become an artist and helped with the book's setting. Although the original intent of producing this book for Louisa was to provide her with a livelihood, subsequent generations have been profoundly affected by its publication [4].

1.2. The 1949 Version of Little Women with Mervyn LeRoy

1.2.1. The 1949 Version of Little Women

During World War II, nearly all male labor was deployed to the battlefields, leaving the elderly, women, and children at home. Therefore, women must be the sole wage earners in their households. When the war ended, some of their husbands returned to their own homes, whereas the ladies decided to work rather than settle down, notwithstanding their husbands' objections. They believed that women should stay at home and take care of the entire family, especially their children [5]; consequently, nature provides women with these characteristics. Men were afraid that women hindered or threatened their employment opportunities. In this era, several women preferred to remain single for their entire lives to escape the dilemma between marriage and employment.[2] For example, Jo in Little Women believed that obtaining work is the key to a woman's survival in this world, and that marriage is not the sole option for women. During this time, the first wave of feminism continued to have an impact on America. The second wave is thought to have occurred between the early 1960s and the 1980s. Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex is a seminal work that continues to have a significant impact on the general public. Inside of it, she describes the three ways how women free themselves: 1) Women should dedicate themselves to socially occupations, which could be their fate as the original master. 2) possessing a high level of education 3) Strive for socialist change in order to resolve the question, subject, and collision between oneself and others [6]. The initial path is the appeal or cry of the final portion of the first wave. Females should accomplish financial independence, which necessitates that they earn the job opportunity to participate in society by competing fairly with men, and then receive the same pay as others doing the same job. The effort will then provide employment for women.

1.2.2. Mervyn LeRoy

Mervyn LeRoy was a prominent American film director, film producer, and screenwriter. In the 1930s, he was also a spectacular Hollywood filmmaker [7]. LeRoy arrived at M-G-M between 1946 and 1950 fully expected to end his career as the studio's chief production officer [8]. LeRoy primarily produced and directed comedies, melodramas, and a remake of Little Women, a well-known literary classic written by Louisa May. Little Women, one of several adaptations of Louisa May Alcott's work, was written during the American Civil War. The technicolor produced by M-G-M is one of the major aspects of this film and offers "picture postcard prettiness" in lieu of credible performances by famous actors, including June Allyson, Janet Leigh, Elizabeth and Margaret O'Brien [9]. The version of 2019 directed by Greta utilized the same selling strategy of commercial films. LeRoy's social realism mocked corrupt politicians, bankers and the idle rich, while celebrating Depression Era experiences of hard-working Chorus girls..taxi-drivers and bell-hops struggling to make ends meet in the brawl of New York..." gloss and polish were considered useless

affection [10]", and with the combination of his earlier experience, LeRoy became a Newsboy and earned his first money at the age of 12, when he had limited opportunities to obtain a formal education and his father's finances were precarious [11]. Therefore, he was in sympathy with the life of the working class and those who is not able to speak more at some extent. Meanwhile, women were a group marginalized in the community and they also under excessive pressure to be a perfect wife or mother. So, he brought out a movie like little women, which let all the society to pay attention to the life and problem women were caught in.

1.3. The 2019 Version Film and Greta Gerwig

1.3.1. The 2019 Version

Entering the digital age in the 21st century, the huge explosion of information caused by the widespread adoption of the internet spawned instant messaging between countries, which also makes it easier for individuals to focus on female issues on a global scale. In the most popular social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, SnapChat, and Instagram, inputting messages and pressing the "post" button will reveal your thoughts and opinions to the world instantaneously. If any influencers or celebrities with large traffic upload a post on their own social media account, millions of subscribers and likes will be generated worldwide. It is advantageous for feminism to promote ideas and encourage contemporary society-wide interest for women's issues. Some experts believe the 1990s marked the beginning of the third wave of feminism. On one night in October, 2017, actress Alyssa Milano, a Hollywood fixture since her childhood years, best known for the long-running hit shows, *Charmed* and *Who's the Boss?* - was as absorbed as the rest of the population in the allegations of sexual assault against super producer Harvey Weinstein [12]. On the advice of her friend Charles Clymer, she chose to share the screenshot of the 'me too' status for women who have been sexually harassed with the following line: "If you've ever been sexually harassed or assaulted, reply to this tweet with 'me too'." This piece shifted the attention from the abhorrent behavior to the experience of female survivors, generating a great deal of conversation. The following morning, she discovered up to 55,000 responses and the top trending hashtag. With the ease of information transfer, the activity swept across 85 nations and generated millions of social media posts in a matter of weeks [12]. This pervasive female issue makes women aware that sexual harassment is not a personal or private occurrence, but rather a pervasive female issue in our daily lives. Talking courageously about your experience as a victim of sexual assault could facilitate the combination of women and force us to confront and resolve the common female issue in a male-dominated culture.

1.3.2. Greta Gerwig

Greta Gerwig is one of Hollywood's most appealing directors. At 2019, Greta independently produced her second film, *Little Women*, which received six nominations, including Best Film, Best Adapted Screenplay, etc [13]. The primary objective of recomposing the original work is to underline this sort of appealing closeness. Instead of adapting the linear narration from Mervyn's 1949 film adaptation of *Little Women*, she decided to divide the timezone and combine it with two eras separated by seven years, and integrated the perceptions of the characters' memories with their emotional states. In this work, the majority of the character shifts in the perceptual experience and the time jump in the plot stemmed from the four principal female characters' sisterhood and daily lives.

Greta once described her experience as a woman in an interview: "The question like sort of how this been for me as a woman always little hard for me to talk about. Because I do not have alternate reality [14]." Consequently, the creation of the female characters in the films she worked on or

directed, especially *Little Women*, was based on her own life experiences and journey of self-discovery.

"I always knew who Joe March was those sisters and their mother and those adventures, and they still became part of the inner landscape of myself. They feel like my memories...it feels like more autobiographical to me than everything I have made [15]." So, the very main female character, Jo, mostly represents Greta's personal experience. She edited the scripts and directed the film without sharing the common experiences and emotions of most women.

"I try not to think about it (meaning of Oscar nominations for women) too much, It's such an honor, but...It's all about making the film and connecting with the audience...If it help audience find work, that's the famous most important [15]." she is primarily concerned with if there are the resonance between all audiences and the idea she intends to convey, not just the enthusiastic response came from female audiences, indicating that this film was not designed just for girls or women but for the broader public. Ultimately, this film primarily inspired by the director's own personal journey, rather than the dilemmas and experiences of contemporary women.

2. The Selection of Film Clips

2.1. The Version of 2019

2.1.1. Jo----the Way They Present Her

Timeline: 35:01-36:33

This is one of the scenes that exhibited the 2019 version of small women's slight feminism compared to the 1949 version when introducing the character Jo in the film. In this scene, the most of the visual content depicts a dialogue between Jo and her aunt March. Aunt March believes that Jo's ideas are impractical and tells Jo that girls are meant to marry upper-class men. However, when Jo gently disputes aunt March's beliefs, aunt March views herself as one of the wealthy, which makes it very plausible for her to be single throughout her existence. Similarly, the aunt believes that females can support themselves. Despite the fact that there are two ways to make it a reality: 1) maintaining a cattery 2) Being an actress is a modest and demeaning profession. During the conversation, aunt March also disparages and criticizes Jo's father's profession. Jo tries to communicate her emotions and thoughts about what her father did, but when her aunt says "you are not to pay to think," she lowers her head and pretends to read a book.

The presentation of scene language, line substance, and acting all indicate that Jo, who was supposed to be a straightforward and honest woman, does not immediately confront the things and ideas with which she disagrees. In contrast, she closed her eyes and remained silent for the things and ideas on which she insists and agrees, which is not a feminist act. Postmodern feminism immediately attacked the Age of Enlightenment's "universality" and modernism's "authority" and "tradition" connotations.[2] The genuine female image that embodies feminism should resemble the description of postmodern feminism, in which individuals fearlessly defend their viewpoints in the face of authority, great narratives, and influential ideas. March aunt exemplifies archaic views on women's place, whereas Jo is a figure of newly-developing female independence; nonetheless, she has surrendered to the culture of the past. In addition, based on her tone and emotion during the talk, she did not aggressively convey her disapproval of her father's insults and the beliefs she disagrees with, and she even responded in her most composed voice.

In addition, the lens language of this scene indicates that the over-the-shoulder shot nearly fills the entire scenes. Medium shots and the camera is static, and the actress acting in this scenario does not glance or stare at the camera. In the over-the-shoulder shot, whether aunt March was gazing at Jo or Jo was looking back at her aunt, Jo occupied only a small piece to the left of the frame. Her

body and shoulders were cut, and only a small portion of Jo's body occasionally appeared in the scene, while aunt March faced Jo in an over-the-shoulder shot. The entire upper body of her aunt was seen in this clip. Moreover, her proportion in the image was clearly larger than Jo's. In addition, the filming direction of the camera or the edges of the frames were not parallel to the shoulders of these two people, which may signify that their relationship was not harmonious. In addition, towards the beginning of the scenario, a deep-focus shot appeared, with Jo practically fading into the background in the upper right corner of the frame, indicating that her aunt March does not value Jo's thoughts. And it could also imply that in the 1860s social context, those ideas represented by Jo were marginal or consistently disregarded by the wider public. In fact, when the two characters appeared in the same frame, Jo occupied approximately 30 percent of the picture while sitting on a standard wood chair on the left and away from the central axis of the frame, whereas aunt March occupied the center of the frame while sitting on a luxury chair and staring directly at Jo.

Regarding light, the filmmaker chose not to use harsh light indoors, but rather low and gentle light. It may indicate that the filmmaker did not wish to emphasize this conversation's subject.

In terms of performance, Jo's actor did not meet aunt March's stare or see her aunt's eyes during this scene. Specifically, after her aunt said "you are not to pay to think," Jo lowered her eyes and continued to read with both hands.

Above all, it was not a display of feminism or a desire to assert or defend herself; rather, it was a manifestation of fear or submission in the face of power or the majority in the community.

Timeline: 01:13:09-01:13:27

For Jo, who has always desired to be a male, cutting her long, curly hair to pay her mother's trip was against her will. She found it difficult to accept her own appearance and did not want others to notice it. Therefore, she hid in a stairwell corner and sobbed quietly. The director did not film this moment from the actress's perspective, and neither Jo's face nor body are illuminated. Which represented Gerwig's desire to conceal Jo's emotion and the audience's reaction to her short haircut. It is also not a display of wearing feminist characteristics. First and foremost, because of her short hair, which was a common label of an attractive girl in the past, Jo is unable to escape the social expectations placed on women and girls in her day. She still viewed her long, beautiful hair, which is a societal indicator of femininity, as a vital aspect of her identity. In addition, while retaining the same content as the 1949 version, Gerwig accentuated the traditional element from that era. Jo appeared to share similarities with one of her sisters, Amy. They both want frank expression of their emotions and thoughts. In addition, they all own their own unique ideals, which diluted and diminished the feminism features of the original work. In this film, Jo tells Laure that she would like to be a male, but after getting a haircut that resembles a boy's, she feels uncomfortable, unpleasant, and undesirable about her current appearance. Even when her sisters stated their opinions regarding her recent haircut, such as "you look like a boy" and that could be nice," she remained unhappy and depressed. Clearly, it cannot share the feminist position. The truly independent woman should demand or hold to her choice without remorse, as well as feel happy and at ease for achieving her goals and being who she truly is.

In terms of lens language, the scenes included medium shots until the end of the clip. In addition to the actress's body sitting against the side of the wall, the director did not film this moment from her front face with high lighting, indicating that he did not want viewers to witness or sympathize with Jo's current emotion but rather to calmly observe her situation. After Amy entered the picture and sat next to Jo, the sole light was on Amy's body, not Jo's. This may imply that the filmmaker did not intend to show Jo's sadness, and there is even a suspicion that Jo's emotions were undermined.

Above all, Jo's emotional outburst over her new haircut demonstrates that the director attempts to conceal the real response and sad feelings from the audience, which is contrary to the feminism principle that women should express their inner feelings honestly and never conform to societal expectations.

Timeline: 01:40:25-01:42:59

The third clip reveals that after Beth's death, Jo abandoned her passion for writing. At that point, she abandoned all of her pursuits and ambitions. This setting has the suspicion of arousing audience's fervor on purpose. In the 1949 adapted movie of *Little Women*, Jo did not sacrifice her own profession and goals for her family or Beth, as she does in the 2019 adaptation. Apparently, Gerwig changed the setting to highlight the sisterly tie between Jo and Beth, which was at odds with Beauvoir's views on female independence. The above-mentioned three approaches to liberate women themselves, in particular the way that women should devote themselves to society and take jobs. Therefore, this setting was not consistent with feminism. In addition, the dialogue Jo had with her mother was very superficial, which suggests that Jo, who had this conversation with her mother, merely expressed her sentiments in an outburst and did not embrace the crushing loneliness in her heart. Jo did not reveal her true views on marriage until the second half of the film, and her opinions suggested that she opted not to marry because she wanted to prove that women could find happiness without being married. The meaninglessness of the dialogue between Jo and her mother did not prevent Jo from writing the letter for Laure.

After Beth's burial, Jo packed her belongings in the attic, and her mother attempted to engage her in conversation. Jo's emotions intensified, and because her words and novels cannot save the life of her dear younger sister, she voiced a desire to stop writing. According to this content, writing became a tool for saving one's life and suddenly is not an ideal or something she has pursued for a long time; consequently, Jo views writing as a task and not a pursuit.

In terms of lens language, the only source of bright light was the window, which served to contour and accentuate the body shape. Other interior light is faint and subdued. Two characters appeared in the medium shot. Jo and her mother, with Jo on the left packing her suitcase while her mother attempted to speak with her. Jo did not instantly respond or make an eye contact. After then, the camera zoomed on characters to emphasize their discussion, which was also intended to reveal their innermost thoughts and emotions. The scene then transitioned to a full shot, and the camera moved to the left side of the frame, drawing the audience's attention to Jo hanging within the attic. In the meantime, Jo avoided eye contact with her mother, and her eyes frequently wander. She turned her back to the audience and her mother for a period of time, then moved to the rear of her mother and turned her head to the left side of the picture, symbolizing the insecurity within her mind and her initial unwillingness to speak with her mother and express her emotions.

During her mother's conversation with Jo, the scene shifted to a close-up, and the character's eyes were no longer focused on the camera, but rather on the exterior of the frame. In addition, the medium shot is not filmed from Jo's perspective, but from that of the audience or spectator. Jo's eyes were darting to the right and left and she still not stare at the camera, stating that she is still reluctant to have a heartfelt dialogue with her mother. During the course of their conversation, Jo did not express her deepest desires; rather, she merely alluded to her desperation and solitude. She opted to convey her sentiments in a highly emotional circumstance, which renders the debate pointless.

Finally, when Jo desired to share her feelings with her mother, the action transitioned between close-up and over-the-shoulder shots. Her mother was filmed from a low angle, whereas Jo was filmed from a high angle. In addition, they continue to converse without looking directly at the camera, hinting that they have not yet had a conversation that could influence Jo's decision to return

Laure to her side. Instead of listening to her mother and following her heart to love the person she truly fancies, Jo believed that she still needed to discuss the marriage with Laure by writing him a letter, echoing the scene where Jo placed the letter in the wooden mailbox. As one of the characteristics of feminism is a woman should firmly devote to her career and get together with the people she loves, Jo gave up her career and did not confront her loneliness. She can not get along with herself and accept what was occurring in her life, which is hardly a sign of feminism.

2.1.2. Amy---the Way They Present Her

This paragraph will specifically reference Laura Mulvey's Male Gaze theory. Mulvey suggested that in a gender-imbalanced society, the pleasure of watching or staring was unequally distributed between the sexes, forming the polarized pattern "male equals initiative" and "female equals passivity" and allowing men to project their male gaze and fantasies onto female characters. In conventional mainstream films, female characters were viewed as sex objects, and in particular scenes, they were depicted as carrying the attention from unknown men and bearing their desires [16]. The three clips below are the ideal demonstration of Male Gaze theory.

Timeline: 07:09-07:24

Whether by lens language, voice, or tune, the director of *Amy* did not place the devotion of men and women on an equal footing. For a woman who cares a great deal about etiquette in public places, it is both crawling and flattering for her to ignore this concern and instead express her admiration for Laure.

Based on the content of picture, This clip implied that Amy met Laure occasionally in Europe and the moment he came into view of Amy.

From the lens language, the close-up of Amy's surprised face induces psychological identification and the same emotion in the audience. The close-up shot was then replaced by a slow-motion with full shot, which slowed down Laure's walking. In addition, it is a dynamic shot, a panorama, and a point-of-view shot of Amy, which expressed the delight on Amy's face when she unexpectedly saw Laure in Europe. Throughout his journey, Laure occupied the center of the frame, displaying that he is always in Amy's line of sight, and Amy adores him very much. Later, As the full shot became a medium shot and the camera moved to the left, Laure's expression did not resemble Amy's surprise and excitement. Amy ran into his arm and tightly hugged Laure as the scene shifted to shot.

From the performance of the characters, the actress who played Amy used voice and tune to create Amy's character. When she met Laure, her voice and song were rough and loud, transporting her back to her childhood. Moreover, based on her body language, she was hitching up her clothing and running forward, which shows that she adored Laure so much that she ignored or forgot about etiquette. In the meantime, a child on the right side of the screen has turned his head and stared at her, signifying that her actions and voice are unsuitable and erratic.

Nonetheless, when this clip is viewed in conjunction with the entire film, if the manner in which Amy expresses her devotion for Laure gives the impression of being obsequious to men or masculinity, yet Laure's love for Jo is not less than Amy's love for Laure. The director did not employ a similar approach to lens language, which did not convey the core value and concept of feminism. Principally, feminism holds that there is equality between men and women.

Timeline: 38:09-38:39

The Male Gaze theory suggested by Mulvey was present in this clip based on the lens language and character performances in this scenario. Female, during the time, became the object of male's gaze,

as well as the object of male's sex desire. In addition, after being disciplined by her male teacher, Amy became an image of a helpless and weak female, and even a scenario enjoyed by Laure and his tutor, which weakened the hue of feminism rather obviously.

Amy expressed her displeasure and requested Laure and his male tutor for assistance after drawing a humorous portrait of her male teacher.

The initial medium shot from a high angle indicates that Brook and Laure are staring at Amy with an obsessed gaze and expression. Then, the scene shifted to a close-up shot of the window in Laure's home, in which their focus settled on Amy's face and body as she arrived through the window's crack. After that, it became the static camera and POV shot, and it was imperative that the POV view of Amy always be at a low angle, while the POV shot of the two young men always be at a high angle. The scenario then changed to a medium shot out of a high angle, and the two men continued to stare at Amy with an obsessive face. When it was cut into their point-of-view shot, the scene became a full shot from a low angle, and Amy's entire body and the male focal point of the frame occupied the scene's center. Amy's tear and cold-reddened cheeks form a vulnerable, sorrowful, and endearing female image that is enhanced by the white snow background. In addition, it demonstrates that men held a prominent and influential position at the span of time. In addition, it suggested that females have less strength than men. In order for the audience to easily see Amy's right hand, the action shifted to a medium shot. The two guys continue to stare at Amy until the end of the clip, with the tutor in particular staring at her without speaking.

Amy stated in this clip that she did not like her sister, who sprained her ankle, and described her pitiful experience, which made her more special and lovable in order to earn the sympathy of men and create a delicate, endearingly female character who also need protection from men.

Above all, it is evident that characters of different genders did not hold the same position or power in the film. Feminism should equitably distribute power between men and women, as opposed to women passively carrying the gaze and desires of males.

Timeline: 01:13:54-01:14:13 & 01:15:53-01:16:08

The first clip mostly depicted the scene of Amy and Laure's prime moments in Europe before Amy accepted Fred's proposal.

The over-the-shoulder shot of Amy revealed that her figure was incomplete and fragmented due to the lens language. However, Laure's body was displayed flawlessly and in its entirety, and the filming of the camera caused his shoulders to not be parallel to the frame, resulting in a composition that was not harmonious and concordant.

From the line "I'm looking at you," it is clear that Amy was the subject of Laure's glance and observation. Females in films are landscapes, idols, viewing objects, and images lack of underlying significance; women who were considered as stars were the object of male gaze, amusement, and masculine focus [16].

Chalamet (the actor of Laure) held Pugh's chin (the actress of Amy) during the performance, forcing Amy to remain still so that he could appreciate her beauty more vividly. Amy was suddenly Laure's or men's viewing, manageable, and pent-up subject.

The over-the-shoulder shot from Amy's perspective revealed that Chalamet attempted to place his hand around Amy's neck and kiss her during the performance, which is a motion or action indicative of lust and sexual desire.

Amy in these two clips was a woman who was observed by men or the object of their lust. In addition, in terms of line design, the director believed that women are comparable. However, it is impossible to compare different female individuals because female are plural and different.

2.2. The Version of 1949

2.2.1. Jo---the Way They Present Her

Timeline: 01:05:47-01:06:27

The main content of this scene is that aunt March and Jo quarreled over Jo's father because they had different perspectives. In both the late 19th century and the 1940s and 1950s, it was disrespectful for young people to retort her senior or elder relatives aloud. In particular, when confronted by someone who represented the majority of society and traditional public opinion, Jo bravely and directly challenged the universality of women's ideas, which undoubtedly shared or possessed the characteristics of postmodern feminism: to reject all grand narratives regarding rationality and liberation and all great theoretical systems [2].

From lens language, Through the low angle, high angle shot, and composition, the social status of Jo and aunt March was conveyed in the photograph, which not only implies that aunt March was a rung or two above Jo, but also suggests that in the post-World War II social context, the traditional thoughts of Jo's aunt had more power of discourse than the emerging thoughts of independent women like Jo.

In the composition, the stairwell serves as a diagonal line from the higher left to the lower right, which also signifies the difference socioeconomic status and discursive power between the two individuals. At the beginning of the scene, Jo did not stand on the edge of the frame, as she did in the 2019 version. Instead, she occupied the center of the frame in a low angle and full shot. This arrangement would give the impression to the viewers that Jo was not in a disadvantageous position at that time. The subsequent shot from aunt March's point of view was from a high angle, indicating that Jo possesses less discourse authority in society than her aunt. However, in Jo's point-of-view image, even though the angle is low, Jo occupies a larger portion of the frame than aunt March, and the light is stronger on Jo than on her aunt. In addition, aunt March did not occupy the center of the frame, and her body was cut off by the staircase in the picture, revealing that in the director's eyes, Jo is too young to have a high social status, but her courage in expressing her feelings and thoughts is remarkable. Mervyn's answer to the question of how we treat women or where we place them in the contemporary society was based on the social context of the 1949 filming of *Little Women*. According to this context, Jo and her aunt have vastly different social statuses, but after the Second World War, the emerging type of women like Jo strengthened their social forces. Jo storms out of the room and slams the door in a fit of rage while the camera focuses primarily on her back, demonstrating that her actions and individual personality are distinct from those of her sisters.

From dialogue and performance, in the face of aunt March's sarcasm and flight, Jo courageously conveyed her authentic ideas and feelings, rebelling the great tradition notions and majority of how society perceives women. Regardless of the scene's line, lens language, or composition, this clip demonstrates not only the new feminine image of Jo at the time, but also Mervyn's response to the social problem of women's employment after the Second World War.

Timeline: 01:08:03-01:09:25

In contrast to the scenes that shared the same substance across the two versions of *Little Women*, Jo's attitude toward her new haircut and her strong personality are more pronounced in the 1949 version. In the 2019 version, Laure, who represented old society, just touched Jo's head when he noticed her new short haircut, which did not suffice to provoke Jo's emotions. In the 1949 version, prompted by Laure's remark, Jo revealed her attitude and thoughts regarding her short hair. Thus, the setting is more realistic than the 2019 edition.

This clip is also intended to demonstrate that the 1949 version of Jo is more feminism than her 2019 counterpart. In this section of the essay, feminism refers to women expressing their actual emotions and feelings. In addition, they reject the label and societal expectations. This clip mostly depicted Jo selling her long hair to her mother, and the reaction of her entire family was coincidental; they were all surprised by Jo's short hair, but ultimately gave her the most positive response.

During the second wave of feminism, the views on female image were as follows: women who are constantly under the pressure of appearance competition, and the public criticizes women's bodies based on the perspective of men, and only focus on their image and face, denying their true feelings that are generated from their own hearts [2]. In this scene, Jo did not take for granted society's expectations for girls; instead, she focused on her own sentiments, which exemplifies feminism's characteristics.

When Laure entered the frame in medium shot, the camera was returned to full shot so that the audience could calmly see that Jo was scolded by Laure, which also reveals that the director was on Jo's side. Jo then gazed at Laure as she ran her fingers through her hair, before pulling back the camera to the bottom right of the frame. Then, she began to convey her displeasure with Laure's impolite remark. Meg, Amy, and Jo's mother each of them gave their support for Jo's new hairstyle in a medium shot.

Scene and camera movement indicate that Jo did not regret her decision to remove her hair. furthermore, when confronted with Laure's harsh critique of her hair, Jo expresses her true rebellious views against the traditional notions of short hair on women and her true favorable attitude toward her new image of short hair, which was once a label for men. Postmodern feminism is characterized by a rebellious spirit and the courage to declare one's true ideas.

Timeline: 01:45:57-01:46:35

In this scene, the professor did not approve of the stories written by Jo, believing that she should write from her heart. Although Jo was saddened by the professor's critique, there are more tears of joy in this passage. Because, at last, someone grasped the essence of what she had written from the heart. Then, Jo wiped away her tears and embraced her professor's critique, which was also the catalyst that lead her to the appropriate procedure for writing novels. Accepting reasonable criticism from others with courage and writing from the heart was one of the core concepts of the third wave of feminism. Feminism recommended that women should courageously express themselves and confront obstacles and concerns.

The medium shot indicated that when Jo wiped her tears from her cheeks, she considered that if she could not accept the criticism, she would be worthless. Then, she looked at the professor directly, and her body language did not escape his comments. Professor then remarked that Jo had a gift for writing in medium shot. In the middle of this scene, when the director filmed the part of the professor, he never filmed him from his front face or showed the audience his entire face. Even Mervyn filmed him from a distance, and the scene was close to the full shot, with the light on the actor of the professor being either faint or dim. When the filmmaker filmed Jo, he filmed her at close range in profile, so that the audience may see her facial expression clearly from the reverse side. It signaled that the filmmaker prefers the audience to focus more on Jo's reaction than on the professor, who solely serves as a counterpoint.

Mervyn wants the viewers to focus on Jo's response to the professor's criticism based on the lens language, line, and performance of the two characters. Jo embraced the professor's ideas and criticisms and eventually created a book titled little women based on her personal experiences, which displayed the feminism trait by confronting the disappointments of her life and expressing her true feelings and opinions.

2.2.2. Amy---the Way They Present Her

Timeline: 01:39:27-01:43:08

This clip, whether from composition or lens language, described Amy and Jo, both of whom are independent females in this version with their own distinct personalities and charm. In the 1949 version, Jo are meant to be as distinct and diverse as four sisters. There is no comparison between different female individuals, and in the 2019 version, Amy believed she will be second to Jo in her entire life.



Figure 1: This caption has one line so it is centered.

From composition (picture I), March's aunt brings Amy to meet Jo before they depart for Europe. Jo is ecstatic to see them and the three of them have a brief talk in the hallway. The three characters occupied the frame evenly. In addition, aunt March, who represents the old beliefs of society, was placed in the left margin of the picture, signifying that the director was on the side of Jo, who represented the new generation of independent women. Amy and Jo were placed in the center of the frame, showing that the filmmaker wanted the audience to focus on their conversation. Three individuals in the picture formed a triangular composition, which conveys that despite the existence of old notions in society, they will not impede the development of these new independent women, which is consistent with postmodern feminist perspectives. Postmodern feminism is strongly opposed to dualism in the western structure of knowledge, which always divides things into you and me, good and evil, for instance. Postmodern feminism proposed alternative thought patterns, including integrated thought patterns, such as the mode of attributing values to women, opposing dualism and favoring pluralism, as well as the mode of politics of difference, etc. Postmodern feminism also contested all notions of womanhood produced by earlier feminism groups. There should be an abundance of different types of women in the world, rather than just a few. [2]Whether Amy or Jo are the sole special and unique type of women in the world, there is no one or a small number of types of women that could represent all women in the world.

Amy's costume color and hairstyle altered from her adolescence to her adulthood in the 1949 version. Amy, who is now a gentle considerate woman, was previously an avaricious and vain girl, as seen by her transformation from a collection of pink dresses to a dark green, plain one.



Figure 2: This caption has one line so it is centered.

At 01:41:50 in the film, the composition (picture II) of a full shot depicted the talk Amy and Jo had before departing for Europe, with Amy and Jo occupying the most of the frame. Especially Amy sits in the middle of the frame, while March's aunt occupies the smallest portion on the right side. This indicates that Mervyn wants the spectator to focus on Amy and Jo rather than their aunt. Aunt March, who represented the old class of society, is no longer that influential or has much discourse power in the eyes of the director. Whether through performance, costume, composition, or lens language, Amy and Jo have matured into women with their own unique appeal.

Timeline: 01:57:59-01:58:26

Amy was really anxious to learn Jo's reaction to her marriage to Laure since she was aware of the unique relationship between Jo and her husband. In addition, Jo learned of the news from Meg, indicating that Amy was afraid and hesitant to tell Jo the news. In this instance, the filmmaker utilized a symmetrical composition to depict the scene in which Amy saw Jo at their common house, signifying that despite Amy's nervousness at seeing Jo again at home, they still held the same status in the film. In addition, the director did not select to contrast Jo and Amy. It conformed to the notion that female should be plural, which is accord with postmodern feminism. In contrast, Amy in the 2019 adaptation did not avoid comparing herself to her older sister Jo in the line or over-the-shoulder shot of the abovementioned films.

Full shot panning from the right to the left showed that Amy had entered the picture. Due to Laure's old affection for her sister, Amy was apprehensive and nervous about Jo's reaction to their union. Amy paced back and forth with her eyes scanning the room, with a rainy and cloudy background behind the window in deep focus, which added to the sense of unease and nervousness she felt. In the meantime, Amy cannot stop talking about where Jo and Laure are. And the light on Amy was not bright. When she heard footsteps coming down the stairs, she hitched up her skirt and raced in the sound of direction, which is contradictory with Amy's high regard for etiquette and behavior. This indicates that Amy's body was filled with worry and unease.

After that, a medium shot depicted Amy and Jo's conversation, which was shot in deep focus. Amy and Jo were positioned in the foreground, and when Laure appeared in the background, his head did not appear in the frame. So, Laure's reaction to the two sisters' dialogue did not matter, and the director chose to show the greetings instead of a man. In addition, the symmetrical composition

(picture III) in this scene demonstrated that the proportions occupied by Amy and Jo are identical, demonstrating their touching sisterhood and equal status. Finally, Amy began to giggle, and the two sisters hugged and exited the frame. In contrast to Amy's apprehensive demeanor, Amy resumed her usual behavior at that moment.



Figure 3: This caption has one line so it is centered.

Every woman is an own entity; two women cannot be compared. Every woman has her own unique style of attractiveness, and they should all be treated equally in daily life and in the movies, as the 1949 version demonstrated so clearly [17]. In the 1949 version, there is no contrast between the characters, and all share equal status. The vast disparities between Jo and Amy present several forms of appeal, which are certainly more feminist than the 2019 version of Little Women.

3. Conclusion

The 1949 version of Little Women possesses more feminist characteristics than the 2019 version. The feminism discussed in this essay refers to women who insist on pursuing their passions and careers, courageously dispute the big narrative and the majority's truth, and speak their own minds openly. Women should be diverse and pluralistic. In addition, every woman is completely self-reliant and has her own charming personality and methods for being fascinating. Consequently, they cannot be compared or contrasted. This study introduces the societal context of each era of the novel called LW, as well as the two film adaptations and the subsequent wave of feminism. This paper additionally introduces significant author Louisa May and directors Gerwig and Mervyn in order to provide readers with additional information regarding these three works. Second, by evaluating lens language, composition, performance, light, and other elements, this essay demonstrates that Amy and Jo show stronger feminist qualities in the 1949 version than they do in the 2019 edition. This essay's premise and views are supported by theories of postmodern feminism, feminism from Simone de Beauvoir, and Male Gaze theory proposed by Laura Mulvey. However, the weakness of this article is that we only examine the thesis through limited and numbered clips; it may also contain clips or scenarios that have nothing to do with feminism. Additionally, there should be a consideration of the historical context.

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- [5] Jon Lewis, *American Film: A History Second Edition*, ISBN-13: 978-0393664898, ISBN-10: 0393664899.
- [6] *Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir
- [7] Barson.2020.
- [8] Barson, 2020: "LeRoy left Warner Brothers for the greener pastures of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), where he was offered an unusual deal that allowed him to function as either a producer or a director. He began by producing the films of other directors: Robert Sinclair's *Dramatic School* (1938), W.S. Van Dyke's *Stand Up and Fight* (1939), Eddie Buzzell's *At the Circus* (1939), and Victor Fleming's *The Wizard of Oz* (1939)."
- [9] Baxter, 1970 p. 168: "...flawless design by Hobe Erwin..."; Canham, 1976 p. 161: "...emphasis was all on heart and color at the expense of credible acting performances.";Higham and Greenberg, 1968 p. 132: "...Mervyn LeRoy's unremarkable remake of *Little Women* (1949)..."
- [10] Baxter, 1968 p. 69; Canham, 1976 p. 139; Weil, 1987: "Through the 1930s, he directed many of the fast-paced melodramas that gave the Warner Bros. studio a reputation for films embodying hard-grained social realism." ; Sarris, 1998: "Not for Warners were the longueurs of MGM and the polish of Paramount. A Warners' B picture seldom ran more than seventy minutes. MGM and Paramount production values padded their Bs to the eighty-and ninety-minute mark without adding anything of substance or originality; Flint, 1987: "Mr. LeRoy was a keen, adaptable director who made mostly taut, punchy, socially critical films at Warner Brothers for a decade..."
- [11] LeRoy and Kleiner, 1974 p. 21: "I wanted to make some money, to help my poor [father]..."
- [12] Lotti Davidson, *Me Too Movement*, P2-6
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- [16] Shohini Chauduri(2006) ,*Feminists Film Theorists: Laura Mulvey, Kaja Silverman,Teresa de Lauretis, Barbara Creed*, USA: Routledge.
- [17] Jaggar, A. M. and Young, I.M. *A Comparision to Feminist Philosophy*, Blasckwell Publishers,1998.