



Navigating Class And Gender Through The Lens Of Greta Gerwig's Little Women's Economic Inequality And Its Current Relevance

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Abstract

This study investigates the themes of class conflict and economic injustice in Greta Gerwig's 2019 novel Little Women and considers its applicability to society in the modern world. In addition to highlighting the connection of gender, class and the restricted prospects open to women in a patriarchal, economically stratified society, the film depicts the March family's financial weaknesses. The story discusses how decisions about marriage, careers, and creative endeavors are influenced by economic reality. These issues are still very relevant in today's world, regardless of cultural background. Particularly in patriarchal nations, women still face systematic economic inequalities such as salary discrepancies, restricted educational opportunities, and the strains of financial dependency through marriage. It highlights similarities between the film's portrayal of 19th-century hardships and current issues, including the conflict between financial security and artistic aspirations, the gendered wage gap, and the exacerbated injustices experienced by vulnerable communities. Paper highlights the ongoing need for structural change to alleviate economic inequality and advance fair possibilities by examining Little Women through the prisms of gender and class. The results demonstrate how Little Women's story goes beyond its historical context, providing a powerful critique of persistent social problems and stimulating discussion on gender equality and class mobility.

Key words: Class conflict, Economic injustice, Little Women, Gender, Class, Patriarchal society, Economically stratified society, Financial weaknesses, Marriage, Careers, Creative endeavors, Economic reality, Modern world, Systematic economic inequalities, Salary discrepancies, Educational, Structural change, Economic inequality, Social problems, Gender equality, Class mobility

Introduction

Adaptations in literature and movies provide new insights on classic subjects while bridging the gap between historical accounts and current concerns. A notable illustration of this occurrence is the 2019 adaptation of *Little Women* by Greta Gerwig, which is based on Louisa May Alcott's 1868 novel. The film moves beyond its 19th-century roots to address urgent contemporary issues with its rich narrative and complex character development. Fundamentally, Gerwig's *Little Women* examines issues of economic inequality and class conflict, crafting a story that is just as pertinent now as it was in the years following the Civil War.

This study explores how gender, class, and financial constraints are portrayed in the movie, especially as they influence women's decisions and goals. It looks at how the March family's financial difficulties are a reflection of larger social limitations and how these relate to persistent issues around the world, like gendered wage discrepancies, systemic economic injustice, and restricted educational opportunities. This study emphasizes *Little Women*'s ongoing relevance in addressing gender and class disparities by comparing the movie's depiction of historical adversity with contemporary social dynamics. This research emphasizes the need for structural reforms to reduce inequality in a world that continues to struggle with economic stratification and patriarchal traditions. This analysis of Gerwig's adaption via the prisms of gender and class highlights the story's enduring critique as well as its potential to spark conversations about opportunity and equity in modern society. By using this perspective, *Little Women* transcends its status as a historical drama and becomes a potent commentary on the fights for class mobility and gender equality, providing universal and vital insights.

Literature Review

Greta Gerwig's 2019 adaption of *Little Women* has attracted a lot of critical and scholarly interest because it creatively reimagines a classic work of literature. The film invites analyzes along a number of thematic and contextual dimensions, especially in its examination of class, gender, and economic limits, as it is both a faithful adaptation and a contemporary critique.

Class strife and economic inequality, which are major themes in both Gerwig's adaptation and Louisa May Alcott's original novel, are at the center of arguments over *Little Women*. According to scholars, the March family's financial instability reflects the perilous circumstances of lower-middle-class families in the 19th century and acts as a microcosm of larger socioeconomic injustices. Gerwig's adaption, however, brings this criticism up to date with current problems by highlighting the continued influence of economic inequality on personal possibilities and decisions. Research has shown how the movie skillfully contrasts past economic hardships with contemporary issues including financial dependence, income disparity, and the need to fit in with society's expectations in order to maintain financial stability. The focus of Gerwig's *Little Women* on the confluence of gender and class, particularly how financial constraints limit women's agency, is emphasized in a large portion of the critical discourse surrounding the novel. The film's critique of patriarchal systems that link women's social advancement to marriage and financial dependence has been examined by academics. The March sisters' hardships, as they balance the conflict between their own goals and those of society, serve as an example of this. Jo March in particular has served as a focus point for examination, symbolizing the ongoing tension between creative ambitions and practical economic considerations. According to recent feminist analyses of the movie, Gerwig's telling of Jo's experience highlights how persistent institutional injustices, such as unequal pay and limited educational opportunities, are.

The tension between artistic goals and financial stability is another recurrent issue in *Little Women* literature. This conflict is heightened in Gerwig's adaption, which shows the concessions and sacrifices women frequently have to make while pursuing unusual or creative occupations. The way the movie presents writing, art, and self-expression as acts of defiance against social and economic norms has caught the attention of critics. This viewpoint illuminates how these tensions still exist in modern culture by placing the story amid larger conversations about cultural capital and the gendered value of creative labor.

Many academics contend that because *Little Women* tackles topics that are relevant to viewers today, it transcends its historical setting. The movie's portrayal of structural inequities, such as the gendered pay gap and the difficulties experienced by marginalized groups, has been seen as a critique of persistent social injustices. Additionally, studies show how Gerwig's adaption places the March sisters' individual hardships within a larger context of structural inequity, highlighting the necessity of institutional change to address these enduring problems. *Little Women* offers a profound commentary on the intersections of gender, class, and economic realities through its intricate interplay of historical narrative and contemporary critique.

Materials

Little Women (2019)

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative methodology to explore the themes of class conflict, economic injustice, and gender inequality in Greta Gerwig's 2019 adaptation of *Little Women*, with a focus on its relevance to contemporary societal issues. Grounded in literary and cinematic analysis, the methodology seeks to critically examine how the film portrays the intersections of gender, class, and economic realities. The 2019 movie *Little Women* will serve as the study's main source and will be examined alongside academic works on feminist criticism, gender studies, and class stratification. To find and examine the recurrent themes of financial instability, patriarchal limitations, and the conflict between creative goals and social expectations, a thematic analysis will be carried out. In order to determine how they figuratively relate to contemporary societal injustices including the gendered wage gap, limited educational opportunities, and financial dependence in patriarchal societies, key scenes, dialogues, and character arcs will be carefully examined. This study will include a survey of secondary literature on systemic gender inequality, economic stratification, and feminist readings of *Little Women* in order to put the findings in context. Further layers of analysis will be provided by comparative examinations of related works that deal with gender and class dynamics, both historically and currently.

This approach places *Little Women* in the larger context of feminist and socioeconomic criticism, exploring how its story serves as a critique of enduring contemporary injustices as well as a mirror of the struggles of the 19th century. This strategy seeks to show *Little Women*'s ongoing significance in confronting systematic inequalities and igniting discussion on social reform by making links between the story's historical setting and its contemporary ramifications.

Analysis

An examination of Greta Gerwig's 2019 version of *Little Women* shows how the movie tackles gender inequality, class struggle, and economic injustice by fusing historical and modern issues. The film's ability to analyze both 19th-century and contemporary society issues is demonstrated by this analysis, which critically examines its themes, character arcs, and narrative structure.

The film's main focus is the March family's financial difficulties, which are used as a prism to look at the wider social effects of class disparity. The March sisters are shown by Gerwig as negotiating little prospects because of their socioeconomic background, mirroring the predicament of lower-middle-class families in the 19th century and now. The movie emphasizes the conflict between individual goals and financial necessity by highlighting how financial instability affects choices concerning marriage, careers, and artistic pursuits. Concerns about financial dependency and income inequality, especially for women in economically stratified nations, are reflected in this relationship.

The movie challenges structural obstacles that uphold class inequalities by showing the March family. Aunt March's representation as a representation of privilege and wealth highlights the gap between social classes and reflects the enduring impact of wealth on opportunity and power in both historical and contemporary contexts. The patriarchal structures that restrict women's agency by linking their social mobility to marriage and financial reliance are scathingly criticized in Gerwig's *Little Women*. The March sisters' varied responses to these limitations demonstrate the range of ways in which women negotiate social expectations. For example, Amy's practical quest for financial security through marriage emphasizes the compromises women are frequently required to make, while Jo's reluctance to follow traditional gender roles illustrates resistance to patriarchal norms.

In particular, Jo's character provides a central point for examining the tension between personal aspirations and social pressure. Her writing difficulties mirror those of women seeking artistic professions in traditionally male-dominated industries. The movie's depiction of her publisher rejection and insistence on creative integrity speaks to current debates over gendered discrimination in the workplace, unequal compensation, and the underappreciation of women's labor.

Another recurrent subject that Gerwig emphasizes is the conflict between creative goals and financial security. Jo's artistic endeavors serve as a metaphor for the larger fight for independence and self-expression, as writing and art are portrayed as acts of disobedience against social standards. The difficulties people—especially women—face in juggling their personal interests with practical financial considerations are shown in this issue. Crucial moments, like Jo's haggling over the conclusion of her book, highlight the concessions artists have to make in order to thrive in a market driven by profit. The gendered value of labor and the financial difficulties of pursuing nontraditional jobs are two contemporary issues that creative professionals confront that are similar to this battle.

Perhaps the film's critique of systematic inequality best demonstrates its relevance to current events. The continuing nature of these concerns is highlighted by the similarities between the March sisters' struggles and contemporary issues including the gendered wage gap, limited educational options, and financial dependency. Gerwig's adaptation highlights the necessity of structural reforms to solve these disparities by juxtaposing historical hardships with current reality.

The film's detailed depiction of vulnerable communities also emphasizes the difficulties underprivileged people endure. These depictions work as a call to action, imploring viewers to acknowledge and address structural inequities that endure throughout space and time.

Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* is a potent statement on modern class and gender issues that goes beyond its historical context thanks to its intricate storyline and nuanced character development. The movie offers a timeless perspective on the connections between gender-based oppression and economic inequality by criticizing the systemic injustices that still influence personal opportunities and social standards. This essay shows how *Little Women* functions as a critique of current societal inequalities as well as a mirror to past battles by examining the conflicts between individual goals and structural limitations.

The March family's financial hardships are shown in Gerwig's *Little Women* as a microcosm of larger social injustices, reiterating structural problems with class inequality. The movie emphasizes how women's aspirations are frequently hindered by financial reliance and limited chances by tying economic instability to individual decisions. Gerwig takes a feminist coming-of-age stance, illustrating the relationship between individual development and structural obstacles, as noted in *A Study of Female Growth Narrative*. The film examines the restrictions imposed by women in a patriarchal and capitalistic culture, from Jo March's royalty negotiations to Amy's practical marriage strategy. That Jo represents liberal and Marxist feminist beliefs, dispelling preconceptions that limit women to conventional roles and promoting economic freedom, is consistent with *Feminism Reflection Through Family Communication*.

The liberal feminist worldview is best illustrated by Jo March's disobedience of social norms. According to *Liberal Feminism in the Little Women Movie*, Jo challenges the idea that women need to be married in order to have financial security by claiming her independence via her writing and professional endeavors. Her statement, "I want to own my own book," represents her defiance of the limitations imposed by the male-dominated publishing industry.

The patriarchal constraints placed on women in politics and education are also examined in the movie. Systemic injustices are brought to light by Jo's battle to publish a novel without sacrificing her morals and Amy's school experience, where she is disciplined for expressing her creativity. These difficulties are similar to persistent problems with gender equality in the creative and professional spheres.

Gerwig depicts the March family as a loving family that encourages uniqueness by deftly integrating family dynamics into the feminist story. The March sisters' relationships provide the basis of their resiliency, as discussed in *Feminism Reflection Through Family Communication*. Jo's relationships with her family serve as an example of how candid dialogue may foster feminist ideals, allowing her to follow her goals while negotiating social expectations.

The conflict between artistic goals and social expectations is highlighted by Jo's writing career. She rebels against the commercialization of women's roles by refusing to wed Laurie and by being adamant about preserving her artistic individuality. As *A Study of Female Growth Narrative* emphasizes, this theme fits with Gerwig's larger cinematic strategy of highlighting the complexity of women's lives.

Gerwig's *Little Women* goes beyond its 19th-century context to address current injustices. The way that systemic discrimination is portrayed in the movie, whether it be through the gendered salary difference, limited educational options, or financial dependency, is reminiscent of current equality movements. This criticism is strengthened by Jo's liberal feminist beliefs and her defiance of social norms, as mentioned in the supplemental materials.

Findings

- The March family's financial difficulties are presented as representative of larger social problems with economic injustice and class inequality. Echoing both historical and modern reality, the movie examines how women's liberty and choices are restricted by financial dependency and limited prospects.
- Jo March's reluctance to marry for financial security, rejection of social conventions, and quest for professional independence all serve as examples of liberal feminism. By proving that women may succeed without conforming to traditional gender roles, her character dispels misconceptions.
- The movie emphasizes how women's opportunities are restricted by the combination of capitalist systems and patriarchal standards. Scenes like Amy's realistic thoughts on marriage and Jo negotiating her book royalties highlight the financial realities that compel women to make concessions.
- *Little Women's* loving family dynamics serve as an example of how candid communication may promote empowerment and resilience. The March sisters' interactions and Jo's conversations with her family highlight how crucial family support is for fostering feminist ideals.
- The conflict between individual goals and social norms is emphasized by Jo's difficulties as a writer and her refusal to follow them. Her experience challenges the devaluation of creative work and the commercialization of women's positions.
- The movie's portrayal of gendered pay disparities, limited educational possibilities, and financial dependence is indicative of persistent social injustices. These similarities highlight the necessity of structural reform and the continuation of systematic discrimination.
- *Little Women* critiques the social and economic constraints placed on women by including a variety of feminist perspectives, such as liberal and Marxist feminism. This multifaceted strategy increases the film's impact and relevancy.
- The film redefines female agency by demonstrating how women may defy and modify society expectations through its multi-narrative structure and complex character arcs. This change is best illustrated by the way Jo, Amy, and other characters are portrayed, which offers a forward-thinking perspective on historical accounts.

Results

Greta Gerwig's 2019 adaption of *Little Women* goes beyond its historical context to offer a sophisticated analysis of current problems with class and gender injustice. The video illustrates how economic injustice and patriarchal restrictions intersect through the March family's financial hardships, illustrating the restricted prospects that women faced in the 19th century and in the present. The film highlights the enduring impact of economic reality on women's autonomy and aspirations by analyzing the decisions made by the characters, such as Jo March's rejection of conventional gender norms and Amy's practical quest for financial security. According to the study, Gerwig's adaption reflects persistent social issues like the gender pay disparity, limited educational opportunities, and marital financial strains. Liberal feminist ideas are reflected in Jo's refusal to marry for financial security and her quest for creative independence, which challenges the belief that women must live up to social standards in order to succeed. Amy's acknowledgment of marriage as a means of financial survival highlights the structural obstacles that women encounter in patriarchal and capitalist societies. The study comes to the conclusion that *Little Women* speaks to current struggles for economic justice and gender equality in addition to criticizing the systemic injustices of its era. Gerwig's depiction of the March sisters' tenacity and camaraderie implies that community and family support are essential for promoting empowerment. In the conclusion, the film's examination of gender and class emphasizes the ongoing necessity of structural change, establishing *Little Women* as a classic that never fails to spark discussions about social justice and change.

Conclusion

Little Women by Greta Gerwig is a powerful examination of the relationships between economic inequality, gender, and class that offers a critique that cuts beyond time. Gerwig creates a story that not only captures the socioeconomic hardships of the March family but also draws attention to the persistent issues that women still face today by reworking Louisa May Alcott's 19th-century novel. The movie emphasizes how economic stratification and patriarchal systems still influence women's choices, opportunities, and goals, reflecting current discussions about wage inequality, financial reliance, and the gendered value of work. The conflict between individual aspirations and social expectations is at the heart of the movie's theme, and Jo March's rejection of conventional gender norms and quest for artistic autonomy serves as an example. Her rejection to marriage as a source of financial stability and her struggle for book royalties are potent representations of liberal feminist ideas that subvert the concept that women's success must fit patriarchal norms. Amy's practical attitude to marriage also highlights the severe economic realities that still drive women to make tough decisions in order to achieve stability.

In addition to criticizing structural injustices, Gerwig's adaption emphasizes the value of family support and unity in building resilience and self-determination. The common experiences of the March sisters are indicative of larger battles for gender equality, highlighting the need for structural change to alleviate social and economic inequalities. In the end, *Little Women* goes beyond its historical setting to become an important critique of contemporary issues, promoting a time when women's aspirations in terms of their careers, creativity, and personal lives are unrestricted by their gender or class. In doing so, Gerwig's film challenges viewers to confront the enduring injustices that continue to influence our world and promotes critical thought and discussion.

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