

THE EFFORTS OF JOSEPHINE MARCH TO FIGHT AGAINST GENDER INEQUALITY AS PORTRAYED ON LITTLE WOMEN NOVEL: FEMINIST APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This study is based on Mary Wollstonecraft's theory of women's rights and Raymond B. Cattell's about character and personality. The study focuses mainly on the main character, Josephine March. According to Wollstonecraft, men and women are entitled to equal rights, which relates to the inequalities that occur in gender studies. Therefore, the author discusses the actions and attitudes taken by Jo March to fight against gender inequality. In addition, the study also looked at Jo March's character development at the end of his story. The study was conducted using qualitative-interpretative methods. The statements and narratives listed in this novel are considered the primary sources of data. The data is then classified into gender inequality, any experience experienced by Jo March, and character development starting from before the struggle and after the fight. The aim of this research is to find out what attitudes are best used to address gender inequality. In addition, the study also seeks to find out whether Jo March remains firm in her fight against inequality or embraces it and manages it. This research will focus on all the narratives and dialogues spoken by Josephine March, the main character in the novel.

Keywords: *Feminism, Inequality.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature itself is a creative work done orally and in writing that discusses the purpose of the author. Drama, poetry, and prose are three types of literature that are well known by many people. In addition, this study will discuss about prose fiction writing. Prose fiction is a literary work based on the imagination of the author. The fiction category can cover many genres, including mystery, science fiction, romance, fantasy, and crime thrillers. According to Cuddon (1998: 471) The popular term "literature" is used to describe works in the major literary genres of epic, play, lyric, novel, and short story. "Little Women" is a novel created by American author Louisa May Alcott in response to a publisher's request for a novel of her own. Margaret, Josephine, Elizabeth, and Amy are four daughters of the March family who all have different personalities. However, there is one character, Josephine March, who stands out as the major character and appears to be more significant than the other characters. The story of Little Women is the same as the life journey of Josephine March.

In a book entitled *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* by Rosemarie Tong, Tong's (2013) reveals that feminism is not a universal movement that represents all women in the world. However, this concept is very broad and complex. At the UN Speech, Watson (2017) said that "Feminism is about giving women choices. Feminism is not a stick with which to beat other women with. It is about freedom. It is about liberation. It is about equality,". Besides that, there is also feminism according to Mott and Stanton (1848) who quote the words "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal.". In the book *The Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft (1792) talks about education rights for women, who at that time did not receive the same education as men. She hopes that with education, women can develop their intelligence and become more financially independent. According to a research article by UNICEF, many girls receive less support than boys in pursuing their chosen studies.

The writer uses this novel because this book is one of the works of classic literature, even this book is included in the classic book, the language that this book uses is easy to understand even though the plot used is quite complicated with flashbacks in several parts of the story. Besides that, the reason the author chose this book is because the main character's attitudes and actions in this novel show how much a woman struggles with inequality, which in some cases makes it difficult for women to achieve their goals. This novel itself has been made into film adaptations three times: the first adaptation appeared in 1933, the second adaptation appeared in 1949, and the last adaptation appeared in 2019. Apart from that, this book is considered a feminist novel. Based on what Acocella (2018) said, "This novel has been an inspiration for female writers". Through this study the writer would like to analyze about Gender Inequality that shows up at "Little Women" Novel. This study will be focus on the main Character Josephine March based on narration and utterances. the writer discusses the actions and attitudes taken by Jo March to fight against gender inequality. In addition, the study also looked at Jo March's character development at the end of her story.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

To answer research question, the writer needs to analyze the data, which contains the kind of gender Inequality that portrayed by the main character. Next, the writer will collect data about Character and personality portrayed by the main character. The data and references are collected through library sources, so this research will use library research method for collecting the data. Library Research will be used to collect the data for this research. Library Research is a study related to library data collection (Bauana, 2022 in Mestika, 2018). George (2008) proposed that library research is the type of research used to collect the data using several sources of information such as journals, documents, articles, or websites to analyze the topic. The primary data is obtained through reading the hard copy of The Shack novel and the references are obtained through library sources.

Since this research is to show Gender Inequality that Main Character experienced on the novel, it needs an interpretation to interpret the utterances and the narrations. Qualitative research is a research method that more focuses to analyze non-numerical data (Crossman, 2020). An interpretive-qualitative method is used to analyze the data. According to Manzilati (2017), this method means that it gives an interpretation of the data that has already been collected.

Feminism

The study of and advocacy for feminism, women's rights, gender equality, and issues related to women's experiences and roles in society form the basis of the fields of feminism and women's studies, which are closely related. Despite their distance, they frequently interact and cooperate in different ways that are most effective. There is a clear connection between feminism and women's studies because both fields have an interest in promoting gender equality and challenging patriarchal structures. While feminist theories and movements are frequently covered in Women's Studies courses, feminist advocacy and understanding of gender-related issues are informed by research and insights from Women's Studies. Feminism provides the ideological framework for addressing gender disparities and pursuing equality, while Women's Studies contributes the academic rigor and research to better understand the complexities of gender dynamics and their impact on individuals and societies. They effectively collaborate to promote social change and demand a society that is more gender-equitable.

Although the scope of the framework of such courses will vary depending on the cultural context and social and institutional attitudes toward the field, the spread of women's studies programs, courses, and modules throughout Europe, Australia, Asia, and the Middle East has resulted in what Mary Maynard called "something of a global educational phenomenon" (Maynard in Jackson and Jones 1998: 247). Both "formally," where it is a recognized discipline (albeit one that is dependent on funding and institutional support), and "informally," where existing subject areas offer courses or components of courses that specifically address women and/or gender differences, women's studies is present in the academy. The formal presence of women's studies is constantly in danger because it is still up for debate at the institutional or governmental level or is based on more pragmatic factors. According to Mary Evans, who also made this observation, "one of the ironies of the history of women's studies in Britain in the 1980s was the increased toleration for it precisely because of market factors, and the income potential for women's studies" (1997: 115).

Derived from the French feminine or femininity. Feminine is an adjective, an adjective that means "feminine," or an adjective that describes a feminine feature. Feminism is a women's movement that fights for women's rights. It is a movement and ideology aimed at achieving gender equality under the umbrella of human rights. Feminism are a series of social, political, and ideological movements aimed at fighting for women's rights. Feminism includes the position that society prioritizes the perspective of men and those women are treated unfairly within that society. Feminists work to safeguard women from social violence so that they are shielded from rape, sexual assault, and domestic abuse. The feminist exercise frequently includes dressing differently and engaging in appropriate physical activity.

The feminist movement began in the late 18th century, beginning with the declaration of women's equal political rights and growing rapidly throughout the 20th century. Feminists' opinions are multidimensional but unified by the idea that patriarchy dominates society and the law. Perhaps the neutral and objective rule of law is Decision-makers' ideologies frequently serve as a cover for political and social considerations that do not benefit women. Women's injustice is a result of patriarchy and the application of the law in society, domination, and subordination, and as a result, gender equality is required. Within the institutional framework of the ideology that is currently in power, gender equality cannot be achieved. The analysis of how the law upholds patriarchal hegemony is the focus of feminists.

In this case the Author used Mary Wollstonecraft Theory about women's right. Mary Wollstonecraft was a feminist, writer, and philosopher who was born in Spitalfields, London, in the 18th century. Much of the original radicalism is still present in Mary Wollstonecraft's (1759-1797) assessment of the place of women in contemporary society. Her attempts to understand human relationships in a society that places more emphasis on acquisition and consumption are among the reasons her opinions on the status of the female sex continue to be controversial. The *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), for which she is best known, was a significant contribution to feminism, but she had a wider impact.

Character and Personality

In literary works, character and personality are related, but they are not the same thing. Character and personality are not the same thing, but they are related. While "personality" refers to the collection of persistent features and characteristics that define an individual's behaviour, ideas, and feelings, "character" in the context of literature refers to the fictional persons who inhabit a story. Character in literature refers to a variety of things, such as one's appearance, background, motivations, behaviours, and interpersonal interactions. It includes both the exterior (such as a character's appearance, attire, or behaviour) and interior (such as their thoughts, beliefs, and emotions) components of that character. The study of personality,

on the other hand, focuses specifically on the enduring characteristics and behavioural patterns that distinguish one person from another. It has to do with a person's psychological make-up all around, including their temperament, values, attitudes, and preferences. Personality traits can influence a character's choices, interactions, and course of action.

A story's character and personality are crucial elements. Together, they propel the story, create conflicts, and keep readers interested. Characters give a story life by taking on the roles and perspectives that the events are seen from. They act as plot vehicles, enabling readers to relate to and become invested in the narrative. Character motivations, decisions, and responses to various situations are influenced by personality traits, and these actions further the plot. Characters with distinct personalities produce tensions, conflicts, and dynamics that move the plot along and engage readers on an emotional level.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Women Discrimination

The act of treating people unfairly or inappropriately based on certain traits or characteristics is known as discrimination. Discrimination is the term used to describe how some people or groups are treated unfairly or unjustly based on traits or characteristics. It involves making differences or distinctions between people, often resulting in them being subjected to less favourable treatment or opportunities solely because of their perceived or actual characteristics. Jo March is passionate about writing and aspires to be a well-known author. Despite the widespread perception that women should not work in the writing industry, she actively pursued her goals. This is consistent with Wollstonecraft's theory to support for women to have a better education and the acknowledgment of their intellectual prowess. According to Wollstonecraft's theory, independence and self-sufficiency are crucial for women. She fought for women's economic independence and equal access to all professions and jobs because she thought women should not have to rely solely on men for their financial security or general well-being.

Women have encountered significant obstacles when trying to enter the workforce and engage in economic activity. Women were traditionally assigned domestic responsibilities and frequently denied access to formal employment and professional opportunities. However, because of various social, economic, and political changes, women's roles in society and the workforce have changed over time. According to the Wollstonecraft theory, Wollstonecraft criticized the traditional gender roles that restricted women to domestic work and only allowed them to play the roles of wives and mothers. She pushed for extending the roles of women outside of the home and promoting their involvement in the workforce. Wollstonecraft's writings questioned the traditional gender roles that kept women in the home and barred them from participating in public life.

Character and Personality

Jo March is a Round character, also known as a Dynamic Character, according to the character type. A dynamic character undergoes both attitude and personality changes. Considering what Soles had to say about dynamic Character One whose values, attitudes, and/or ideals change because of the experiences the character has throughout the story is referred to as a dynamic character, also known as a round character. 2009's Soles (p. 65). A dynamic character is similar to character development, which can change as the story progresses. From the beginning of the story to the end of the story, readers can observe how the character changes or grows. Changes in development may occur in a person's personality, behaviour, or attitude. Jo March's character is the main and central character in *Little Women* that known for her strong mindset, attitude, and behaviour.

Warmth, Abstractness, Emotional Stability, Dominance, Liveliness. Jo is very loyal to her family and friends. She cares deeply about her sisters and is willing to make sacrifices to ensure their happiness and well-being. Although Jo is not the eldest child, in this story she always plays an important role when their parents are not at home. If Meg, the eldest child of the March family is compared to the mother role, then Jo would gladly be the father role in their sisterhood. Jo is the type of character who prefers to express what he thinks without knowing whether it is logical or not. Abstractedness refers to a person's preference for abstract and theoretical thinking over concrete and practical thinking. Individuals high in abstractness are imaginative, philosophical, and enjoy contemplating complex ideas. Because of this, sometimes his brother and family do not understand what Jo thinks until he can assume beyond logic and so blunt to say it. An individual who goes through emotional ups and downs can be thought of as having emotional stability. Jo did not want to cry in front of their family or cause them concern, but on that night, she did so anyway, assuming that everyone in the family had fallen asleep. Jo is a typical child who is very hardworking compared to her other three siblings and is very independent, she has a strong sense of individuality. She refused to conform to society's expectations and endeavoured to carve her own path in life. Although she sometimes complains about her work, she does not give up because she knows that the results of her work can help her family's economy.

The Efforts and Responses

Jo's responses to fighting inequality are very evident in her attitudes and stances. Jo looks very disagreeable that the only ones who can work are men. Jo is very competent to show that She, as a woman, can work too. Jo always pursues her future career by trying to write so many stories, even those that end up being rejected by the publishers. Jo keeps working on her writing. She even asked her family how to deal with the critics. Jo is a unique young lady; she always has a tomboyish nature, which influences her writing. She never writes stories based on love and romance. Jo always writes stories that have action and morals. Still, that cannot make the publisher stop criticizing her writing.

Her unconventional writing style and subject matter are also seen as inappropriate by the time's established literary standards. Jo is less confident in her writing because of her own self-doubt and sensitivity to criticism. Negative criticism hurts her feelings, and she starts to doubt her writing skills. She also gets support from her family and close friends, who value her talent and distinctive voice. Jo's writing skills continue to improve despite the criticism. She learns from constructive criticism and hones her craft, developing both as a storyteller and a person. Besides that's, Jo also shows her big disagreement at the word marriage. Jo March is adamant about rejecting the 19th-century gender roles that were traditionally assigned to women. She rejects the notion that marriage ought to be the goal for women and that a woman's value is solely determined by her capacity to become a wife and mother. Jo values her freedom and is fiercely independent.

4. CONCLUSION

After the collected data has been analyzed and the solutions to the problems presented in the previous chapter, it is time to summarize all the research findings. Based on the Writer analysis, I found that fighting gender inequality at that time was very hard, especially because the character I used as the object of research struggled alone, and all other characters, such as her family and friends, seemed not to care about what she felt. The author sees from the way her family keeps trying to get Josephine married and not focus on her writing that she is becoming more like a woman and not living her tomboy nature.

Based on the analysis at that time, women were able to work and choose what they wanted, but they still had to face more criticism compared to men. Because everyone still

assumed that men were more competent than women. The main character, Josephine March, experienced so much criticism and rejection in her journey to sell her writing. Every time she wanted to sell her writing, she would get criticized by publishers, whether it was to delete half of the story or change the story according to the publisher's wishes. Even after Jo changed her story a little so that it could be sold, she received very little payment. This is what makes Jo continue to struggle to pursue her career in writing in the hope that she can help her family's economy and pursue her dream of becoming a writer.

Based on the story, the writer can see that sometimes women can still fight against Gender Inequality by embracing it and following the changes from time to time. The fight against inequality does not have to be an action that ultimately leaves women tired and upset because the results are not what they expected. From Josephine's character, the writer can see the development of an attitude that is very good at dealing with this inequality. Who was originally very passionate and stubborn to defend everything, both her dreams and goals, became a figure who was willing to accept input and surrender to circumstances that did not allow her to fight against inequality alone. What is meant by accepting input and surrendering to circumstances is the moment when Josephine March finally gave up on not getting married because, in the end, she felt lonely because of her mindset, which according to her is why women are always connected to love, whereas women can be connected to other things and not only live for love.

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