



A Critical Analysis of the Representation of Choice Feminism in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*

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Abstract

Little Women by American novelist Louisa May Alcott is a well-known novel in American literature that deals with feminist issues. This text analyses choice feminism through the four sisters Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy. Qualitative research shows how these four sisters make decisions, set goals, and make sacrifices. The study examines the attempts of the characters to negotiate gender norms, set personal goals, and make decisions as per their choices. This analysis emphasizes the elements that empower choice feminism, where the four sisters want to be autonomous, with the help of historical and modern feminist theories. At the same time, this paper shows the limitations and contradictions that are parts of choice feminism. By revealing their shortcomings, the characters need to accept the gendered norms and social effects that form their choices. This study aims to critically analyse the novel's depiction of choice feminism through a close textual analysis and feminist theory, which can be enlightening for current discussions about the role of choice in feminist involvement and concept. This study will add new knowledge to the existing debate on women's agency and empowerment, echoes with themes about choice feminism in the modern era.

Keywords: Feminism, Choice Feminism, Gender Discourse, *Little Women*, Louisa May Alcott

Introduction

In the existing literature, Choice feminism is a new phenomenon. American feminist writer Linda Hirshman's work *Get to Work: A Manifesto for Women of the World* (2005), used the term "choice feminism" for the first time. Choice feminism, a subsection of contemporary feminism, highlights how a woman acts to make all kinds of decisions in her life. This phrase 'choice feminism' shows that for leading a woman's life

in her way, she requires freedom to fulfil her dream, and to take up any male profession. Choice feminism is contradictory to the traditional Western or European society due to its acknowledgment that women have different backgrounds, have different experiences, and their priorities are also different. It supports a comprehensive perspective of feminism that deals with views and understandings. Choice feminism seems to be an all-encompassing way of feminism from an extensive viewpoint. However, going into it, one finds it is not without any problem. Critics view it as excessively direct and disregard the more significant universal issues that do not allow women to have multiple choices. Choice feminism aims to show that when a woman makes a feminist decision, it can impact other women or the feminist movement. Moreover, critics find that personal choice complicates the prejudices that limit women's freedom of choice: disparity in the workplace, the pay gap discrimination, and a lack of access to reproductive healthcare. The critics also highlight the issue that choice feminism can work as an impediment to a single choice. They also observe that cultural norms and expectations of society impact women's choices and strengthen gender discrimination. For example, when in a patriarchal society, a woman decides to work outside and gets unfair treatment by the housewife who stays at home instead of working out. A housewife also does not have the opportunity to be a career woman in patriarchy. In general, choice feminism has been subject to criticism for overgeneralizing feminist theory that overlooks the problems related to gender inequality.

Little Women received wide acclamation after its publication. It is a well-read book still today. It is regarded as a classic of American literature and has been transformed into numerous stage plays, movies, and television programs. The novel was released in two volumes in 1868 and 1869. The book was written at Alcott's publisher's request because they wanted a book for girls. Alcott drew a lot of inspiration from her own life while growing up in Massachusetts with her three sisters. The semi-autobiographical tale follows the lives of four sisters as they mature during the American Civil War era: Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy. The book is a coming-of-age tale that explores family, love, friendship, and women's struggles to find their place in society, among other themes. Even though the book is over 150 years old, it contains elements of choice feminism. It demonstrates women's independence and free thinking. The March sisters take an active role in directing their own lives rather than being passive or submissive. Jo decides to follow her ambition of becoming a writer; Beth finds satisfaction in helping others; Amy embarks on a trip to Europe to explore her passion for painting; and Meg decides to get married and establish a family out of love. On the surface, it appears that the novel celebrates the idea of choice feminism because of this. However, a microanalysis of the novel to determine how much of their choices were the result of social norms reveal that it is not entirely accurate. Rather, a close reading of the novel suggests there is criticism of choice feminism woven throughout the book.

This research aims to assess Louisa May Alcott's novel *Little Women* to investigate the rendition of choice feminism and the influence of social mores on individual choices. By examining the historical context and critically analyzing the text, this study will demonstrate that Alcott's portrayal of choice feminism concerns traditional gender roles and highlights women's agency in forming their futures whilst still revealing the potential and restrictions of choice feminism within the novel's setting, ultimately recognizing the shortcomings of this approach to feminist activism.

The book *Little Women* was written by a woman and is about women's life. So it should come as no surprise that a lot of feminist research has been done on it. There are even articles attempting to clarify whether or not the book is feminist. According to a 2018 article, *Little Women* is a true feminist novel because it "argues that women's lives are worthy of examination. Women's stories deserve to be heard. Even when beloved female characters make disappointing choices, writing and sharing their stories is a feminist act" (Keenan, 2018). Another Vulture article from the same year makes the opposite argument that, "It's downright strange that intelligent women would call a book that disposes of its protagonists' dreams in order to settle them into lives darned socks "required reading" for young girls today" (Kelly, 2018). This article also berates the novel's second volume, *Good Wives*, for impeding its development into a legitimate feminist work (Kelly, 2018).

A 2017 dissertation examines how feminist concepts are presented and expressed in the *Little Women* and *Emily series*, concluding:

The representation of feminism in *Little Women* and *Emily series* is that women can work both inside and outside the home. They are responsible for their husbands and children, but also for their community and themselves. Alcott and Montgomery show to the reader, especially those who are in nineteenth and early twentieth century that women do not have to stay single to be successful, that marriage is compatible with work and that their work do not need to be always limited at home (Madani, 2017).

According to another research:

The importance of this pioneering novel is especially evident when we follow the three overriding themes of the novel: challenging the educational establishment that preserves and consolidates the inferiority of women; a presentation of subversive femininity that advances a new perception of female and male concepts free of social stereotypes; and married life as the basis of equality between the sexes, thus leading to a greater equality among races and classes. These messages of Alcott's novel are relevant to the beginning of the 21st century to the same extent as they were at the end of the 19th century (Rudin, 2021).

Another researcher, Desmawati (2020) aims to elaborate on the types of feminism and their reflection on feminism in the novel *Little Women*, concluding that:

There are four types of feminism from the novel the *Little Women*. First, the

characters in the novel reflected in Liberal feminism, because of what the characters doing to fulfil their own life to earn money through hard work. Second, Marxist feminism, it reflects the characters show the value of women's work and encourage more equality and capitalism is the cause of women's oppression which is depicted through the role of character positions in the novel. Third, existentialist feminism, it reflects the character who is tomboyish and a woman must become a subject, transcends definitions, labels, and essences and need for total freedom. Fourth, Radical feminism, it reflects the characters who had a corporal punishment as well as all the manifestations of sexual violence or as one who "insist the sex or gender system is the fundamental cause of women's oppression..

An essay from 2021 contends that *Little Women* reinforces the idea that women can only be truly happy if they conform to stereotypical gender norms, rather than encouraging the breaking of such norms and gender roles of the 19th century (Killmer). According to this study, Meg was consumed by Victorian-era social norms in the novel, and because of how she behaved in accordance with those norms, she was praised by society; however, Jo, who was not feminine like Meg, attempted to defy the norm, but by the end of the book, she had also succumbed to the norm and decided to marry, so the study concludes that:

In the nineteenth century, though, readers did not have such understanding as they had a different viewpoint when it came to gender norms and their place in the patriarchal system, and because *Little Women* is a didactic tale, children were made to believe that the only way to be truly happy is by following gender roles and norms (Killmer, 2021).

Mijia Zhang, another researcher, examines Jo's rebellion in the novel *Little Women* in 2023 and claims, "Jo's rebellion against social norms reflects the empowerment of women in that era, an appeal for freedom; and her rejection of the concept of marriage reveals her self-worth and satisfaction with self-fulfilment" (2023).

There have also been studies done on the film adaptation of this novel. Such research is done by a researcher named Ante Koek, who tries to answer whether the film adaptation of this novel lives up to the feminist portrayal presented in the novel (2022). The research states:

Alcott's novel is progressively feminist in its depiction of work in *Little Women*, as it champions women working outside of the home and pushes for equality, which are key concern for first wave feminism. Gerwig's adaptation is moderately progressively feminist, as the adaptation embraces fourth wave feminist notions, such as equality and inclusivity, but neglects the nuance of women's choice. However, Armstrong's adaptation mostly highlights the romantic underlining of Jo's narrative and is, thus, not progressively feminist (Koek, 2022,).

Another study like this tries to examine the 2019 adaptation of the *Little Women*

novel and explore, "(1) to see kinds of problems the main character face related to gender stereotypes and (2) to know the main character struggle to pursue her dreams in the future" (Sutrisno et al., 2023).

Notwithstanding its manifestation of choice feminism in the novel, it is evident that previous scholarly writings have neglected to find the critical tenets of choice feminism within it. The novel could also be viewed as a miniature representation of the drawbacks of choice feminism. This oversight in the previous research constitutes a significant scholarly shortfall, recognizing the need for a deeper examination of the novel's feminist motifs. Thus, the goal of this research paper is to examine how *Little Women* serves as a critique of choice feminism by highlighting both its advantages and disadvantages.

Methodology

The study aims to examine and analyse how *Little Women* portrays choice feminism. It shows Alcott's dealing with choice feminism through the four sisters and their activities. The aim of the paper is also to show the consequences of these representations of women for current feminist discussion.

In this paper, a qualitative method has been employed to show how the representation of choice feminism in the text as qualitative research is apt for finding the representations of choice feminism. To give importance to the March sisters' behaviour, dialogues, and decisions, the text has been closely analysed. With this qualitative method, this paper will help gain knowledge of *Little Women's* portrayal of choice feminism and its implications for current feminist discourse.

For data analysis of this research paper, the writers used primary and secondary sources. The text of *Little Women* is our primary data source. We read the book multiple times for note-taking and underlining significant sentences related to the portrayal of choice feminism. The research has also gone through several secondary sources, such as articles, books, and collections of critical essays relevant to the novel and feminist theory of choice feminism available on the internet and in the library. After gathering the data from primary and secondary sources, the writers analysed them. We read the text critically and interpreted meanings with the help of feminist theory inspecting the representations of choice feminism in *Little Women*. In the end, discussion has been formed on how *Little Women* portrays both the positive and negative sides of choice feminism highlighting the March sisters. Finally, findings and conclusions were discussed based on the collected data.

Findings and Discussions

Meg comes across as a typical New England woman from the beginning of the novel. She has the support of her family, particularly her parents and sisters, just like all of her sisters do which allows her persona to highlight some positive aspects of choice feminism.

Ultimately, she becomes a housewife with a wonderful family, just like every other woman in her generation. She decides to be in charge of her anatomy and selects the partner she wishes to wed, in contrast to other women of her time. When her aunt May discourages her from marrying John Brooke, she finally takes a firm stance against her. She states, "I shall marry whom I please, Aunt March, and you can leave your money to anyone you like" (Alcott, 2005). Her decision to wed whoever she desired was a highly unusual one for women in that century. Her aunt was correct in warning her about the financial difficulties she would face in the future, but in the end, she conquered them on her own and found happiness. Meg's persona in this case demonstrates the efficacy of choice feminism.

However, in the end, she turns into a housewife, just like every other woman in her generation. In the book's second section, Meg seeks her mother's counsel after becoming preoccupied with raising her twins and sensing that John is drifting away from her. But it is a painful thing that her mother holds Meg responsible for the distance, and in the end, Meg offers an apology to John. The mother states, "Watch yourself, be the first to ask pardon if you both err, and guard against the little piques, misunderstandings, and hasty words that often pave the way for bitter sorrow and regret" (Alcott, 2005.). As Bender states, "John has male anger that must be accommodated and that must fit into their life together, but Meg (and the other female characters) exhibit female anger that must be suppressed." and "Women must be careful" (2017). This adds power to the patriarchal standard at the end, because there was a space for John to be present in his children's life as they were his too. It is consistent with the flaws of choice feminism in that it believes that a woman's choice will be given under any circumstances, despite the fact that there are so many social norms that prevent women from doing so. As a result of choice feminism's failure to confront these issues, women's freedom of choice ultimately becomes unattainable, which harms the movement's reputation. Moreover, Meg's decision to become a housewife might have been influenced by her environment, her upbringing, or the culture she was a part of. It is possible that social norms had an influence on her decisions. Her communication with her sister Jo also demonstrates it when she scolds her for being a tomboy. She says, "You are old enough to leave off boyish tricks, and behave better, Josephine. It didn't matter so much when you were a little girl; but now you are so tall, and turn up your hair; you should remember that you

are a young lady” (Alcott, 2005, p.13). This raises the concern if Meg’s choice to start a family was really her own choice or if it was just a choice influenced by the society she was a part of. Additionally, it is also important to take into account that she was able to marry the person she loved since her parents backed the choice she made to get married. However, she would have been forced to wed someone she did not like if this had not been the case. This highlights the reality that a woman's decision will only be adequately approved or accomplished if she has the necessary support from her environment, including her family, society, or her field of employment. Meg's persona illustrates the complex links women have with the choices they make and brings out the complicated nature of choice feminism.

The majority of readers believe that Jo is the novel's primary character. Compared to other female characters from that age, she is distinctive. She relishes doing anything she wants and is very free-spirited. Therefore, one could assume that she might have had more opportunities to exercise her choice throughout her life. Nevertheless, this is untrue.

Jo's writing is backed up by others. In this case, she receives a great deal of support, especially from her family. When Amy burns her notebook, the story states, “Jo’s book was the pride of her heart, and was regarded by her family as a literary sprout of great promise” (Alcott, 2005, p. 89). Without fear of being judged, she can share her aspirations with Laurie and her sisters.

I want to do something splendid before I go into my castle, — something heroic, or wonderful, — that won’t be forgotten after I’m dead. I don’t know what, but I’m on the watch for it and mean to astonish you all, some day. I think I shall write books, and get rich and famous; that would suit me, so that is my favourite dream (Alcott, 2005, p.166).

For girls of that era, this kind of support was rare. Her family also encourages her to pursue her passion. They joyfully celebrate the publication of her first story, "The Rival Painters" (Alcott, 2005, 179). When she publishes another one, her father cautions her not to get too excited and to keep her feet on the ground. He says, “You can do better than this, Jo. Aim at the highest, and never mind the money” (Alcott, 2005, p.302). She even receives consent to travel alone to New York in order to find employment and continue writing literary works. After her sister Beth's death, it is her mother who instructs her to compose something, as that always makes her “happy” (Alcott, 2005, p.479) It is evident that Jo was fortunate to have encouragement for her work during a period when women were not even allowed to pick the spouse they would marry. However, despite all of these backing for her decision, she ultimately fails to establish herself as an accomplished author. Instead, she gets married, starts a school for boys, and settles down. At the book's conclusion, she states:

Yes, I remember; but the life I wanted then seems selfish, lonely, and cold to me

now. I haven't given up the hope that I may write a good book yet, but I can wait, and I'm sure it will be all the better for such experiences and illustrations as these (Alcott, 2005, p.536).

She appears to be a fallen soldier in this passage because, despite having a strong support network, she also adopted the traditional roles of a married woman and a charitable giver, just like all the women of her generation. One critic states, "This one passage illustrates the anti-revolutionary, somewhat contradictory nature of *Little Women's* feminist leanings. Jo is ambitious compared to other housewives of her time period, but her overall character arc still amounts to a breaking of spirit" (Tracey). Another writer states:

It's very hard to see Jo, the rebel, writer, tomboy, misfit and author avatar – an enterprising girl who raises money for her sick father by selling her own hair – marrying a paternalistic professor who is so critical of her writing that she “corks up her inkstand” and sets up a boys' school (Ellis, 2017).

Despite being a strong female character in the first half of the novel, her character development feels lacking in the second half of the novel, and where her character could've challenged the social structure of the time and showcased the problems, female writers of the time faced, she simply becomes a romantic heroine at the end and nothing more. As one article states, “the novel is not radical but rebellious, intending not to change the world as we know it but to carve out a space for strong, independent women within the already-established patriarchal structures” (Tracey). This matches with the choice feminism's inability to challenge the social, cultural, or political norms as it does not want any judgment to be born. As one paper states the problem that choice feminism has is that it “maintains the dominant system for the sake of individualistic goals and pleasures and due to fears of offending, being criticized, or otherwise being ostracized by/from a patriarchal society” (Gonzalez & Jones, 2018). However, in doing so, Jo's persona highlights the constrained prospects that were faced by women in her era. Even though she defies some expectations, societal norms nevertheless have an impact on her choices. She does, of course, have the freedom to choose, but the fact that she isn't able to fulfil her dream of becoming a successful writer highlights the structural sexism in our culture, which prevents women from truly having the freedom to choose. Also, Jo like Meg has a choice as she is privileged (as she belongs to an upper-class family) whereas for other women of her era, it would have been impossible. This is a major issue that gets overlooked by choice feminism as well, which is that privilege gives one the opportunity to choose.

The most admirable character in the novel is Beth March. But because of her shorter lifespan in the narrative and less character development than her sisters, it is difficult to delve deeply into her persona. Still, her character like her sisters highlights many of both the benefits and drawbacks of choice feminism.

She is a likable character in the book despite lacking the strength of her other sisters since she accepted her decision to be selfless and helpful to others. One could interpret Beth's persona as a representation of individual freedom. She bases her decisions on her personal inclinations and morals, especially her love of music and her wish to lead a calm, uncomplicated life. She follows her passions for music and taking care of her family instead of fitting into the conventional mould of marriage and work. By embracing her loving and artistic skills without feeling the need to conform to more typical responsibilities for women of her era, Beth challenges traditional gender stereotypes. This is evident from what she states about her dream- "Mine is to stay at home safe with Father and Mother, and help take care of the family," (Alcott, 2005, p.166). When Laurie asks if she has any other wishes, she says, "Since I had my little piano I am perfectly satisfied. I only wish we may all keep well, and be together; nothing else" (Alcott, 2005, p.166).

But it is possible that her family had low hopes for her as she was a sick child, which led to their giving her a little flexibility. Which might've enabled her to have a life of her own choice. Not all women of that era could have had this position, and still many women now do not have the same level of autonomy as Beth. Hence, it is evident that her decision may have received support due to her having unique privilege. In addition, like Meg, she may have been a product of her time, choosing to be a devoted and subservient lady. As one research states:

the character of Beth embodies the idea of the ideal woman, who is content to stay at home and please people. Beth has usually been labelled a flat character. Her character neither changes nor has any aspirations other than to be kind, sweet, and pleasing. Like many other women of her day, Beth's sacrifice for domesticity seems ultimately to bring her to her death. During the nineteenth-century era, women were encouraged to give up their art and pastimes and instead serve others. Additionally, women in general were told that home was their place. Home supposedly functioned as a place of safety and protection. But, in the end, home's effect on women sometimes produced negative results, as it did for Beth (Bender, 2017, p.145). Thus, in the framework of choice feminism, it is unclear whether or not her choice was her own.

Amy is a strong-willed lady with an artistic personality, much like her sister Jo. She's regarded as the "Little Raphael" (Alcott, 2005, p.52) as her family dubbed her at the beginning of the book. Even when discussing her dream, she states, "I have ever so many wishes, but the pet one is to be an artist, and go to Rome, and do fine pictures, and be the best artist in the whole world," (Alcott, 2005, p.166) Even her parents appear to be giving her the support she deserves, as her father states she has: "mould her character as carefully as she moulds her little clay figures" (Alcott, 2005, p.252). She was afforded the same freedom to choose how she wanted to live as her other sisters.

However, her demeanour ultimately begins to shift when she visits her aunt

May's home and receives praise for acting like a so-called proper woman. For this reason, after that- "She was learning, doing, and enjoying other things, meanwhile, for she had resolved to be an attractive and accomplished woman, even if she never became a great artist" (Alcott, 2005, p.290). When Amy was selected to travel with her aunt to Europe instead of Jo, Aunt May's influence over Amy became further strengthened. As Jo did not behave like a respectable woman, Amy succeeded in securing the trip to Europe. Amy was greatly impacted by this as, although initially planning to study art in Europe, by the end of the book, Amy's perspective just shifted and she told Laurie that she wanted to: "Polish up my other talents, and be an ornament to society, if I get the chance" (Alcott, 2005, p.446). In the end, she gets married to Laurie and also practices her art in her personal life but never becomes a professional artist. And like Meg she gets to choose her partner highlighting the good side of choice feminism.

At the same time, unlike Meg, Amy's case makes the influence of social norms very evident, as she, an ambitious artist with a goal to study art, also becomes like every other woman of the 19th century. Since the expectations of society ultimately shaped Amy's decision, this highlights a crucial question: given how much the long-standing social structure impacts the brains of young women, is choice feminism really the solution? Thus, it becomes important to consider whether or not she was indirectly forced to make the choice she did.

It is clear from reviewing each of the March sisters that they demonstrated the value of having the ability to make decisions without fear of criticism from others. Self-employed author Jo March challenges gender expectations by pursuing her passion and getting married to anyone she likes. She provides an illustration of the value of women's independence in choosing their own judgments. Meg March makes the decision to wed for love rather than money. Beth March is an example of a kind, sympathetic, and unselfish woman who demonstrates that women should be able to engage in service and caregiving if it fulfills them. Amy March is a character that goes through a lot of growth and represents the idea that women can make choices that help them grow as individuals and as artists. When Linda Hirshman coined the term choice feminism, she wanted to create an environment in which all women's choices would be respected, and the March sisters being able to choose their path and not face backlash from their parents demonstrates the perfect representation of it. This demonstrates one of choice feminism's main advantages: it is inclusive and supports all female choices.

Nevertheless, they also highlight the negative aspects of choice feminism. Although the original purpose of choice feminism was to shield women's choices from criticism, this idea does not function in the real world. That is why we see Aunt May criticizing the sisters in the novel, who mirror society or its norms. And this blatantly exposes the flaw with choice feminism, which is that in order for women's choices to be acknowledged by others, we must first work to question and reform the social norms that

currently restrict or criticize women's choices. As one researcher states, “Choice feminism has been criticized for being individualistic, lacking in collectivity, overly consumerist, and for upholding patriarchal structures, all the while emphasizing women's rights to choose and play with these structures, as empowered subjects” (McIntyre, 2021).

Furthermore, despite having a strong character like Jo, who could have been used to challenge the norms of society, Alcott, in the end, made all the sisters become housewives. This ultimately demonstrates that a woman's decision-making will be influenced by social norms, regardless of her level of strength. This corresponds with critic Ferguson's concerns that choice feminism does not challenge the status quo, claims to accept all women's choices but “it enables feminists to sidestep the difficulties of making the personal political: making judgments and demanding change of friends, family, and lovers” (2010).

The March sisters also demonstrated that the ability to choose comes with privilege. Compared to other women of that era, they had more opportunities because they came from an upper-middle-class household. Therefore, the likelihood exists that it was their privilege that gave them the ability to choose. Like how they were able to choose the person they wanted to marry. This debunks the notion that choice feminism is inclusive of all. For instance, in the United States, women of color have fewer choices because white women have greater opportunities than them. As stated by one writer, “Choice feminism’s fatal flaw lies within its name: the assumption that choice is a liberty that everyone has.” (Li, 2019) and this is why “Ironically, the positive impacts of choice feminism don’t reach all women. Instead, choice feminism really only benefits a small minority of extremely vocal privileged women, particularly white feminists” (Li, 2019). The writer states:

Women who suffer from additional injustices as a result of their race, class, sexuality, or ability have little time to worry about whether or not they are buying into the patriarchy. If a low-income Black woman were to choose to abandon societally-expected makeup and clothing choices, she could be ridiculed for looking unpresentable and lacking social stature. (Li, 2019)

Moreover, when the March sisters decide towards the end of the book to be traditional wives, this ultimately means that they are supporting the patriarchal standard of that particular community. In the end, it can be seen that they do not truly build a new path for women of that century, which compels the idea that women's genuine happiness rests in homemaking, and the second half of the novel titled "Good Wives" makes it even more pushed. As one critic states:

The novel’s second half, wherein the *Little Women* are married off and set to work as wives, is even more dismal than I’d remembered. It is obsessed with wifely duty — deferential to patriarchy and dismissive of female ambition of any variety other than

the maternal. Only Beth never even considers marriage, and she dies of an undisclosed lung condition (or maybe spinsterhood). (Kelly, 2018). This is consistent with choice feminism's worries that a woman's choice may strengthen an established social norm, making it more difficult for other women living in the exact same environment to make different choices. As a 2015 study states, "choice feminism" prioritizes "not the content but the act of choice itself, thereby diverting attention away from normative demands of gender" (Budgeon, 2015). All of these findings, when combined with the data gathered, demonstrate that the lives of the March sisters in the *Little Women* act as a prism through which the advantages and disadvantages of choice feminism can be readily observed.

Conclusion

"Choice Feminism" is a common topic in the feminist movement. At the initial stage, all appreciated this term as it is about the promotion of choices of all women. Hence, nobody found any negative side of it. Women of all strata appreciated it as they had been discussed in it. The term discusses not only European women but also women of other parts of the world irrespective of color, or race. Though, afterward, critics found some shortcomings in it. It did not promote the urgency of social change to empower women. Experts also found out that every woman cannot go for 'choice feminism' as it is limited to the privileged ones.

Little Women discusses the negative and the positive sides of choice feminism. Alcott portrays the pros and cons of choice feminism through the four March sisters and their experiences. These characters show how they have been able to cross the hurdles of their time (19th century) without getting any support from people and society. To reach their goals, the four sisters show their determination and willpower, which shows the hopeful sides of choice feminism. As a result, all women find the novel *Little Women* inspirational. This text portrays how to show respect for the choice of a woman. However, the March sisters' experiences also demonstrate the limitations of choice feminism and tell us that to establish them in society, women have choices; individuals must confront the existing social structures that impede their ability to do so. Women should take a close-up approach to politics, society, and even their families, using criticism as fuel to create arguments that would eventually lead to a just society where women's decisions are thoughtfully considered. The March sisters' lives highlight how important it is to fight against the prejudices and restrictions that restrict women's choices in order to embrace and uphold them. Only by taking a comprehensive approach can we hope to create a more just and inclusive future for all women, where the freedom and opportunities that the term "choice feminism" originally intended to offer will actually be fully realized. It is not bad to support the choice of women but real empowerment for all women can only be attained by tearing down patriarchal systems and expanding

opportunities outside of the boundaries of privilege, race, and social class. In conclusion, The March sisters' journey through *Little Women* functions as an example that although choice feminism can be uplifting, realizing its full potential will need a coordinated effort to change the environment in which these decisions are made.

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