
A Study of Sister March Struggle to Pursue Their Dream as Seen in “Little Women” (2019) Movie: Adler’s Individual Psychology Analysis

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini merupakan analisis terhadap perjuangan gender yang dipengaruhi oleh psikologi individu yang dialami oleh tokoh utama, Jo March, serta ketiga saudari perempuannya dalam film "Little Women" (2019). Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji dan mendeskripsikan bentuk perjuangan gender yang direpresentasikan oleh karakter Jo March dan ketiga saudarinya, serta untuk mengidentifikasi prinsip-prinsip psikologi individu yang tercermin dalam perjuangan mereka sebagai perempuan yang berusaha mengejar impian di tengah batasan sosial. Kajian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif, yang menguraikan sumber data dalam bentuk percakapan, transkrip, dan gambar dari film sebagai objek penelitian. Pendekatan yang diambil adalah psikologi sastra, yang memungkinkan analisis mendalam terhadap karakter-karakter dalam film sebagai representasi psikologis dari perjuangan gender. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori psikologi individu Alfred Adler dan teori Gender Struggle dari Paddy Macqueen. Penelitian menemukan 33 data yang berkaitan dengan perjuangan gender, yang mengindikasikan adanya pengaruh signifikan dari psikologi individu terhadap perjuangan yang dihadapi oleh Jo March dan ketiga saudarinya. Temuan ini tidak hanya memperkaya pemahaman tentang karakter-karakter dalam "Little Women," tetapi juga memberikan wawasan yang lebih luas mengenai bagaimana faktor psikologis dapat mempengaruhi perjuangan gender dalam konteks sosial yang lebih besar. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi terhadap kajian sastra dan gender, serta membuka ruang untuk diskusi lebih lanjut mengenai peran perempuan dalam masyarakat.

Kata kunci: *Film, Individual Psychology, Little Women, Perjuangan Gender.*

ABSTRACT

This research is an analysis of the gender struggle influenced by individual psychology experienced by the main character, Jo March, and her three sisters in the movie “Little Women” (2019). The purpose of this study is to examine and describe the form of gender struggle represented by the characters of Jo March and her three sisters, as well as to identify the principles of individual psychology reflected in their struggle as women trying to pursue their dreams amid social restrictions. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method, which describes data sources in the form of

conversations, transcripts, and images from the movie as the object of research. The approach taken is literary psychology, which allows in-depth analysis of the characters in the movie as psychological representations of gender struggles. The research utilizes Alfred Adler's theory of individual psychology and Paddy Macqueen's theory of Gender Struggle. The research found 33 data points related to gender struggle, indicating a significant influence of individual psychology on the struggles faced by Jo March and her three sisters. The findings not only enrich the understanding of the characters in "Little Women," but also provide greater insight into how psychological factors can influence gender struggle in a larger social context. This research is expected to contribute to literature and gender studies, as well as open space for further discussion on the role of women in society.

Keywords: Film, Gender Struggle, Individual Psychology, Little Women.

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, the patriarchal culture is still strongly embedded in the mentality of the people, where gender equality is not seen in everyday life. For example, if a woman smokes, stays out late, or dyes her hair anything other than black, she is considered "not a good woman", but these things are considered normal for a man.

Likewise, in terms of social life, women are considered unnecessary to have higher education because in the end they will only be at home, doing all the housework, including taking care of their children and husband if they are married, as if women have no other ambitions and desires other than getting married and becoming a mother and wife. But this is inversely proportional to men, they are required to go to high school, must have ambitions for their future and are considered inappropriate if they help do housework.

Social construction may play a role in the representation of women in people's lives. Personality differences between men and women lead to conventional gender roles created by society and shape gender concepts. Gender roles define masculinity and femininity in men and women and inform people about the type of behavior associated with a particular sex. Different interactions and environments result in these roles (Blackstone, 2003, p.335-337).

However, this misconception still exists in society. Many ordinary people don't know about it. It is clear that patriarchal culture affects social life, with a greater negative impact on women. Patriarchy causes social problems that hinder women's freedom and rights (Sakina, 2017). Therefore, women are only given domestic or household roles, while men have public roles, such as being the head of the family and the leader of the family (Omara, 2014).

Feminism is the struggle to eliminate sexual oppression and discrimination against women (Jenainati, 2007, p. 10). There are still many people who misunderstand women. They are considered less mentally and physically capable than men, and women are still often discriminated against in the workplace, in society, and in educational institutions. This is unfair because women and men should have equal opportunities to thrive in society (Tong, 2017, p.11-12).

Gender struggles are often influenced by individual psychological factors, and a person's character traits affect how they understand and deal with gender issues. In this regard, it is important to study how a person's personal experiences, principles and perceptions contribute to their struggle to achieve gender equality.

This study uses movies as objects, as a narrative medium, movie have the ability to depict gender struggles through characters and storylines that display individuals inner conflicts. By using an individual psychology approach to analyze films, researchers can investigate characters motivations, internal conflicts, and strategies when facing gender injustice. In addition, this includes how female characters fight for their rights, overcome stereotypes, and build true identities amidst social pressures.

This study uses "Little Woman" (2019) movie as the object of study. Little Women is a movie based on a novel by Louisa May Alcott published in 1868. Little Women itself had previously been made into a movie in 1994, until it was finally remade in 2019 with Greta Gerwig as the director. The movie tells the story of the March sisters, Meg (Emma Watson), Jo (Saoirse Ronan), Beth (Eliza Scanlen), and Amy (Florence Pugh). Four sisters living together with unique personalities with different dreams.

The movie tells the intricacies of their lives and the struggle to achieve their dreams as women in the 18th century. Little Women itself is a clear example of the struggle for feminism. At that time, it was still taboo for women to voice their opinions, cut their hair, let alone decide not to get married. At that time, women were only considered 'successful' if they had become a wife and mother. It was as if women had no other ambitions other than marriage and family. Little Women emphasized the issue of inequality between men and women. Greta Gerwig included the message that women also have choices in determining their own lives. Women don't have to get married to prove that they are successful in life.

The author is interested in analyzing this movie because based on the above understanding, the movie shows how gender injustice is very restrictive and makes it difficult for a woman to have ambition and express herself like a man, and it is still very much embedded in the mentality of Indonesian society, especially in rural areas, where people still adhere to patriarchal understanding and there are still many injustices against women in their lives.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study uses qualitative methods. According to Cresswell (2014:187), this method has important functions in analysis, data collection, and writing. The qualitative approach is a process of study and understanding based on methodologies that investigate social phenomena and human problems. The attention of qualitative study is more focused on human elements, objects, and institutions, as well as the relationship or interaction between these elements, to understand an event, behavior, or phenomenon (Mohamed, Abdul Majid & Ahmad, 2010). This study examines the character and personality of the main character from the film. This study collects data from analyzing the main character in the *Little Women* (2019) movie from the perspective of literary psychology.

This study is descriptive qualitative, which is to describe a certain social phenomenon which is the focus of study which aims to make a systematic description of the facts and phenomena of the object of study (Sugiyono, 2011: 69). In this study, the authors describe the principles of individual psychology from Alfred Adler's theory which is reflected in the main character in the "*Little Women*" (2019) movie. The principles of the individual psychology of Alfred Adler are inferiority feeling, striving for superiority, fictional finalism, creative self, social interest, and style of life.

Object of the Study

The object of this study is the "*Little Women*" (2019) movie. The movie is one of the literary works that depicts life and it is reflected in social life. Movies are also considered a powerful medium of communication to the masses it targets, because of their audio-visual nature, which lies in the power of vivid images and

sounds. Movies can illustrate that everyone has a character. The selection of this object is because the movie is one of the more expressive objects, easier to understand in analyzing the characters in the movie.

Data Collection

Data collection techniques that author do, through observation, documentation studies, and literature studies. It is intended that author obtain maximum information and accurate data regarding study problems. In this study used several data collection techniques, were as follows:

1. Watching the movie.
2. Reading the transcript of the movie.
3. Taking a note of the necessary part in both the primary and secondary data sources.
4. Observation.
5. Study Literature.

Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study uses qualitative descriptive analysis. The data analysis technique used in this study is the content analysis method, which is the analysis of the story content of the film to examine the personality of the main character in the movie. The study steps in data analysis are as follows:

1. Using the collected data, such as dialogue with the main characters, to formulate their character.
2. Analyzing the data by looking at the characterization of the main character and the film scenes and dialogues involved.
3. Discuss and conclude the findings.
4. Classifying the data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter describes the analysis of the movie “Little Women 2019”. First, it discusses the struggle of the main character Jo March and her three sisters who have the desire to be able to live a life of their own choosing. The second discusses the individual

psychology of the main character and her three sisters . This study focuses on the main characters and three sisters of the March family. This study describes the struggle of the characters in this film in realizing their dreams to live their lives and achieve their dreams in their own way. The first discussion uses the theory of gender struggle by Paddy MacQueen and the second analyzes the main character's personality using Alfred Adler's individual psychology.

A. Analysis of Women Struggle

The struggle in this study is a form of effort made by a woman in dealing with women's issues to protect women's rights and dignity from injustice in a patriarchal society. The meaning of struggle is an effort and hard work to make a change and achieve dreams, as in this film is the struggle of the March family sisters to fight for the equality of women in the public sphere, such as economic and social life. This also identify six personality principles reflected in the main character of this movie.

1. Struggle of Dream

Datum 1

This data show the struggle of Jo March to achieve her dream as a women at that time.

Jo March : *A friend of mine desired me to offer e story, by her, she wrote it, she'd be glad to write more if this suits.*

Mr. Dashwood : Not a first attempt, I take it?

In this movie, there is an interaction between Jo March and Mr. Dashwood at the Volcano Office. Jo wants to sell her writing to Mr. Dashwood.

Jo wants to sell her writing to Mr. Dashwood, but she does not say that the writing is her own work, she says that the writing is the work of her friend. “*A friend of mine desired me to offer a story, by her, she wrote it, she'd be glad to write more if this suits*” this sentences said by Jo, It show **Jo Struggle of dream** as said by Bryson in (Jonathan et al, 2022: 456) dreams are a form of struggle that focuses on women's desires to be achieved over personal will. Struggle that focuses on women's desires to be achieved by their own will. In this scene Jo's struggle to achieve her dream of becoming a writer, she had to keep her name a secret as the author of the story she offered to Mr Dashwood, because in those days it was very taboo for a woman to have a desire or dream to be what they wanted to be.

This scene also shows **Jo's Inferiority Feeling**, she has to say the writing is the work of her friend and keep her name as the author a secret. As said by Adler in his theory of inferiority feelings, According to Adler, feelings of inferiority are formed from an early age. Childhood experiences are very important in shaping later life development. Situations that are lived and found within are very important in the formation of one's personality. This is what makes Jo feel inferior, because at that time women still did not have the space to show that they could also work in the public world and have the desire to choose a life path according to their wishes. Because of this she did not have the courage to tell the truth and she only wanted to get paid for the stories she wrote so that she could help make ends meet for her family from the work she created.

2. Struggle of Fact of Life

Datum 2

Mr. Dashwood: We pay twenty-five to thirty for things of this sort. We'll pay twenty for that.

Jo March : *You can have it. Make the edits.*

In this scene, Jo handed the story to Mr. Dashwood and then Jo asked if her friend had a better story? And Mr. Dashwood replied that he would consider it and he advised to make the story shorter and more entertaining and if the main character is female, to make sure she gets married at the end of the story or dies. Jo was a little surprised to hear Mr. Dashwood's explanation, but she didn't argue for the sake of smooth business. *You can have it. Make the edits.* From this conversation, shows **Jo's struggle to deal with the realities of life or Fact of Life as a woman**. Often, efforts to survive in society are the result of a struggle to understand the facts of life.

This struggle becomes the benchmark for humans to survive in their environment. There are many things that help human life. In general, humans have two types of needs in their environment. The first is primary needs, and the second is needs or wants. These two needs help humans to survive in their environment, including knowing what they can and cannot do. Here shows that Jo chose to allow the publisher, Mr. Dashwood, to change the ending and cut the story written by Jo, because at that time she only wanted her writing to make money so that she could meet the needs of her family. In this scene, also shows the **Inferiority Feeling of Jo**, as a woman who does not have the strength to fight and argue according to her thoughts and in order to meet the economic needs of her family she can only follow and

agree to the wishes of Mr Dashwood to change the ending of the story she wrote and cut the story shorter.

3. Struggle of Affection

Datum 3

- Jo March : My students need me.
- Friedrich : Always working.
- Jo March : Money is the end and aim of my mercenary existence.
- Friedrich : No one gets ink stains like yours just out of a desire for money.
- Jo March : *Well my sister Amy is in Paris, and until she marries someone obscenely wealthy, it's up to me to keep the family afloat. Goodbye*

In this scene, Jo is at the boarding house after returning from the New York Publishing Office. She stands with her back to it, to warm herself, and produces a small notebook and begins to write. She is so engrossed with her writing that she doesn't hear the boisterous group of college students and professors, men and a few women, when they descend upon the room. She just keeps writing.

Friedrich came over and greeted Jo and talked to her, then Mrs. Kirkie came and said that Jo's student was waiting, Jo ended her conversation with Friedrich and stopped her writing and rushed over to her student. *Well my sister Amy is in Paris, and until she marries someone obscenely wealthy, it's up to me to keep the family afloat. Goodbye.*

This scene show **Jo Struggle of Affection**, Affection is a form of a person's feelings towards the things she likes. Everyone has different ways and criteria that represent their feelings and how they express those feelings (Erich Fromm 2013). Affection can also be interpreted as a form of conveying closeness, care, and attraction to others. In this scene, Jo shows her love for her family by going to New York to work as a private tutor for her two students and besides that Jo continues to hone her writing skills and sell her writings to increase her income so she can meet her family's needs.

This scene also show **Striving for Superiority of Jo** related to Adler's theory, Adler said that striving to be superior means that there is an inherent tendency in the individual to grow and master the challenges of life. In this scene, Jo strives to get out of her comfort zone

and goes to New York to try her luck. She strives to meet her family's economic needs and she also strives to realize her dream of becoming a talented writer and being known by many people.

This scene also show **Jo Style of Life**, According to Adler, personality is formed at the age of five or six, lifestyle can be interpreted as a person's way of achieving his life goals. Everyone has a different style of life, in this scene shows that Jo has a Style of Life that is diligent, industrious and always tries to be better in achieving her dream of becoming a writer. She always pours out ideas to write stories in between her other activities.

B. Analysis of Individual Psychology

1. Inferiority Feeling

Datum 27

Marmee : I hope I'm not disturbing your writing.

Jo March : I don't do that anymore. It didn't save her.

Jo March : *Women have minds and souls as well as hearts, ambition and talent as well as beauty and I'm sick of being told that love is all a woman is fit for. But, I'm so lonely.*

In the March house. Jo is putting away Beth's things, and arranging her little dolls and toys. Everyone is gone. Meg left by marriage, Amy left by a voyage to Europe, Laurie left because she rejected him and Beth was taken from this life. She places sheet music of Beth's into a trunk, the hurt in her heart almost. Marmee came over to her.

Then her mother asked her to send Jo back to New York to continue her dream of becoming a famous writer. And also because Jo seemed too lonely to stay at home. Her mother told Jo to meet her old friend in New York but Jo said that their relationship had ended because of selfishness, and Jo told her about Laurie who left because she was rejected by Jo and she said to her mother if now Laurie came back and asked the same thing as before, maybe she would answer yes, she looked very desperate because she felt lonely and she no longer wanted to write because she was disappointed because she could not save her sister Beth to stay with them. Jo stands and paces, anxiously. Crying, trying to explain herself to herself. *“Women have minds and souls as well as hearts, ambition and talent as well as beauty and I'm sick of being told that love is all a woman is fit for. But, I'm so lonely”*.

This scene shows **Jo's inferiority feeling** as a woman. Jo hates it because as a woman, they also have a mind, soul and heart, they also have ambition, talent and beauty, yet she feels lonely with all her ambitions. Jo feels inferior and wants to give up with all her ambitions she can't do much other than just being loved by someone.

This scene also shows **Jo's struggle of her dreams** is very difficult, she has to convince many people in order to prove that she can choose the way of life she wants, it is very difficult for her to do where the **facts of life** always assume that women are only to be loved and cannot be what they dream of, she hates that people think that woman do not have many opportunities to develop themselves.

2. Striving for Superiority

Datum 28

Jo try to find her way through the unfamiliar city, she isn't an expert at it quite yet.

She walks too slowly, stares too long, she's figuring out how to be what Aunt March said was impossible a woman making her own way in the words.

This shows **striving for superiority** of Jo, Adler says that striving for superiority means that there is an inherent tendency in individuals to grow and master life's challenges. Striving for superiority itself means making individuals move towards superiority or the ability to conquer their shortcomings because superiority in this concept means a struggle to achieve perfection. This show Jo striving for superiority she goes to New York and wants to prove that as a woman she is able to live a life according to her dreams. She went to New York to work as well as to improve her skills as a writer. This scene also show **Jo's style of life**, who wants to become a writer who can be recognized by the world, is to continue learning to improve her writing skills and never give up to be able to realize the life according to the path she chooses.

3. Fictional Finalism

Datum 8

Meg : I wish I had heaps of money and plenty of servants, so I'd never need to work again.

Jo : You could be a proper actress on the boards!

Meg : I can't be an actress.

Jo : They aren't all fallen women.

Amy : *I have lots of wishes, but my favorite one is to be an artist and go to Paris and do fine pictures and be the best painter in the world.*

In the Christmas morning, in the living room, the March sisters are enjoying their Christmas morning with joy, they also talk about their hopes and dreams for the future. “*I have lots of wishes, but my favorite one is to be an artist and go to Paris and do fine pictures and be the best painter in the world*”, it shows Fictional finalism of Amy, she has a dream of becoming a painter and going to Paris to do fine pictures and be the best painter in the world.

4. Social Interest

Datum 30

Mr. Laurence : I couldn't bring myself to the house doesn't seem right without her and I couldn't go in knowing she wouldn't be there.

Jo March : *I know I am not half so good as my sister, but I'll be a friend to lean on, if you let me.*

Jo trudges back, and is surprised to find Mr. Laurence standing alone, looking at the March's house. Jo approaches Mr. Laurence and greets him.

In this scene, they embrace, and as Mr. Laurence tries to explain, he begins to cry. Jo takes his arm tenderly, *I know I am not half so good as my sister, but I'll be a friend to lean on, if you let me.* He gratefully accepts her help and they approach the house together, an odd, sweet pair of friends. This shows **Jo's social interest**, Social interests are "the natural condition of human beings and the glue that binds society together" (Adler in Feist & Feist, 2006: 75). As social beings, humans cannot live without others. Social interests consist of individuals who help society to achieve the goal of a perfect society. Social interest is the relationship between individuals and society that shapes individual personalities to achieve goals (Adler in Lestari, A.R 2012). She really cares about the people around her and she is a person who easily gets along with others. This shows Jo's social interest, she really cares about the people around her and she is a person who easily gets along with others.

5. Style of Life

Datum 25

Jo : You will get better, father will get better. And we'll all be together soon.

Beth : We can't stop God's will

Jo : *God hasn't met my will yet. What Jo wills shall be done.*

In Beth's room. Jo sits vigil over a sick Beth, puts cold towels on Beth's hot forehead.

In this scene, show **style of life of Jo March**, Style of life includes several things, namely a person's goals, self-concept, and feelings towards others. Style of life in each individual there is a drive from within that regulates the direction of behavior and encouragement from the environment. Encouragement from the environment can increase or inhibit the direction of the inner drive. Style of life is influenced by each personality. **This shows that Jo has a style of life** that is always optimistic in everything, she is always optimistic that she can face everything and she is always optimistic that everything they face will get the best results. She will continue to strive to do her best and she is always optimistic about a good ending in all the efforts she makes.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

This study concludes that the gender struggle experienced and shown by Jo March is the most among her three sisters and Jo March's character also applies 6 principles of individual psychology proposed by Alfred Adler. All of that is shown by Jo who managed to realize her dream of becoming a famous writer. Jo managed to prove that a woman can also work and have a good career in the public domain by Jo successfully publishing her own novel and putting her name on her writing, and Jo managed to realize her dream of building a special school for girls and boys so that they can learn and go to school in a decent and comfortable place without gender differences. Meanwhile, Amy chose to stop her dream of becoming a reliable and famous painter just because she did not have the intelligence and persistence like Jo, she chose to marry a rich man because it was considered easier to realize, and Meg chose to marry the person she really loved, and chose to navigate life together with her husband and small family.

Suggestions

Some suggestions that can be considered by future researchers, first, researchers can analyze using the same theory from different objects, be it novels, movies, and so on. In study using individual psychology theory, it is suggested that researchers should pay more attention to character analysis in the object of research, for example if the object of research uses a movie, researchers need to know the story in the movie and be able to understand the characters played in the story, and can be connected to the theory used. Future researchers are also expected to have two points of view in analyzing the characters in the movie, namely by watching the movie itself and also reading the script of the movie to make it easier to analyze the characters in the movie. And this research is expected to contribute to literature and gender studies, as well as open space for further discussion on the role of women in society.

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