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Malé ženy – komparace knihy a filmových adaptací z
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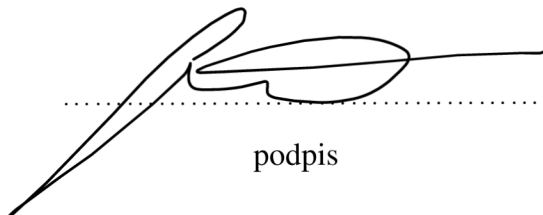
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ABSTRACT

The focus of this thesis is to introduce Louisa May Alcott's novel *Little Women* and to compare it with its two movie adaptations, one from 1994 by Gillian Armstrong and the second one from 2019 by Greta Gerwig. The thesis will aim to compare the different portrayals of women and their social roles in these works. The historical and cultural context, the differences in the plot, main female characters, and of the approach of female roles in the nineteenth century will be discussed. The last part will examine whereas the movie adaptations changed how the women in the nineteenth century were treated according to Louisa May Alcott's novel *Little Women*.

INTRODUCTION

My first involvement with *Little Women* by Luisa May Alcott came after watching its movie adaptation from 2019 by Greta Gerwig. Previously, I have always focused mostly on British authors and this awoke my interest in American nineteenth-century women literature. When I saw the movie from 2019, I looked up its different adaptations and found the novel which truly influenced my deeper studies. For my thesis, I chose to compare the current adaptation by Greta Gerwig from 2019 and the previous one from 1994 directed by Gillian Armstrong. Both adaptations carry the name *Little Women* and stick in the same era as the novel.

Louisa May Alcott built this novel on the life of four sisters who, in my opinion, represent the women of the nineteenth century, their roles, position in society, dreams, and finally, their clash with reality. With my thesis I would like to determine if my assumption was right and analyse if the portrayal of adaptations from 1994 and 2019 correspond to its original written work.

Louisa May Alcott was not the only American woman writer we know about, there were other names as Kate Chopin with her novel *The Awakening*, 1899, which focused on the consequences which occurred if a woman was unable to fulfil her role (Cullen-DuPont, 2000, p. 46). The first Women's Rights movement was known to start in this era, since until then women's rights were restricted to their duties such as taking care of their husband, caring for children, and staying home. These all were female roles considering that according to social classes women belonged to the private sphere of child-rearing and domestic work. (McCammon, et al., 2001, p. 53) As such, I chose to explore this aspect of the novel.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how the approach of roles, rights and positions of women differ in each adaptation. I observe how female characters were portrayed and whereas Gerwig or Armstrong altered women's role in society. I also compare the development of the movies' plot and characters with the original novel to obtain a deeper understanding. By means of a comparative analysis I list the different views and examples the two female directors picked to portray women in the nineteenth century in the *Little Women's* adaptations.

In the first chapter, I focuses on the life of Louisa May Alcott, her social status and family, to find a possible inspiration for her novel *Little Women*, in expectation that analysing

her life brings a deeper insight to her writing. In the second chapter, I deal with the historical background of the novel, in hope it will provide interesting information and details needed for a better understanding of the characters. Therefore, I study the roles of women in the nineteenth century and The Women's Rights movement. In the third chapter of this thesis, I will focus on the novel, its plot, characters and setting. In this part, I will present a detailed description to help me in a result, compare the original work of Louisa May Alcott with its two movie adaptations from 2019 and 1994. In the fourth chapter, my main focus is on Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* movie version with further details provided from Armstrong's 1994 adaptation. The main interest of the last chapter is on the portrayal of women roles in the two movie versions and how they differ from the original novel.

1 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Louisa May Alcott was an American female writer of the nineteenth century born in Germantown, Pennsylvania in 1832 to Bronson Alcott and Abigail May Alcott. She was the second child of four sisters and not long after she was born, her family moved to Boston.

Both of Alcott's parents actively supported Women's Rights movement, were dedicated abolitionists. Since her Transcendentalist father dedicated his life to the Women's Rights movement and teaching, Louisa May Alcott took the role of provider for her family with the money she earned by writing and working as a maid, governess, and teacher. (Cullen-DuPont, 2000, pp. 21-22)

She was home-schooled by her father, who led his progressive Temple School in Boston where he taught by reforming the prevailing methods used in the nineteenth-century education. When he married Abigail May, her family was supposed to oppose their marriage for his lack of money. (Phelps, et al., 1884, p. 30)

Alcott wrote more than 270 works, and she is considered being an American feminist writers, since her novels are mainly about women who struggled in their life and longed for independence. Her female characters suffer throughout the story, deal with different obstacles, yet in the case of *Little Women* they learn from their mistakes and after they accept their fate, live a fulfilling life.

At the age of sixteen, Alcott wrote her first novel called *Flower Fables*, which was not published until 1854, and started to teach in a little school. Despite teaching for fifteen years, for some time as a governess and at another time as a teacher in school, she claimed to dislike teaching and the only pleasant hour of her days was when she could tell her stories to young pupils. With the money she earned Alcott was able not only to keep her independence but also to support her family. (Phelps, et al., 1884, pp. 36-39)

In 1868, Bronson Alcott brought Louisa's collection of short stories to Roberts Brothers publishers, who the collection declined with a request if Mr. Alcott's daughter could not write a book, which would consist only of one single story for girls. For this request, Alcott wrote *Little Women*, which was published in two volumes, the first in 1868 and the second in 1869 (for her portrait from this age see Appendix 1). As an inspiration she used her own childhood and life. Even though the first part of *Little Women* was read by many readers, it was not until

the second part was published that Louisa May Alcott became famous. (Phelps, et al., 1884, pp. 43-44)

She died on March 6, 1888 in Boston, Massachusetts, at age of 55 just two days after her father's death. Throughout her life she stayed unmarried and never gave birth to a child, yet when her sister Abigail May died after a childbirth, Louisa M. Alcott adopted her daughter, Louisa May Niereker. Louisa May Niereker, also called "Lulu", was raised by Alcott as her own child. (Strickland, 1985, pp. 122-123)

The aim of this chapter was to obtain deeper knowledge of the author's life, her education and family. This information will be further used in upcoming chapters discussing Alcott's novel *Little Women* and its characters.

2 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

To better understand Louisa May Alcott's writing it is important to provide at least some general knowledge of the historical background of nineteenth-century America, its society, and movements of that time period. Alcott wrote and published her novel *Little Women* in the second part of the nineteenth century which was the era of the first feminist movement, the Civil War, and of the movement called abolitionism.

Abolitionism in America was a greatly discussed theme in the nineteenth century. It was an antislavery movement not only focused on the rights of slaves yet even on the abuse of the masters' power. The South was thriving since the production of cotton was mainly their slaves' job, while the North was actively protesting against enslavement and the abolitionists fought for the rights of African-American slaves. Early, before the 1830, abolitionists had fought generally against the enslavement, since 1831, they appealed on the fact that the lust for power was easily outgrown to a sexual lust and rape. (Walters, 1973, pp. 177-201) And as was already stated in the previous chapter, Alcott's parents belonged to the members of this movement and stood for the rights of slaves and against the abuse of power. The storyline of *Little Women* also corresponds not only to the era of the anti-slavery movement but also to the time of Civil War in America and its outcome few years after the end. Alcott herself suffered from health problems after her work in the Union Hotel Hospital during the war where she became ill and never fully recovered. (Strickland, 1985, p. 69)

However, with the protests against slavery originated the first Women's Rights movement and its smaller part the Women's Suffrage Movement (Dolton and Graham, 2014, p. 31). In the nineteenth century, gender roles of women and men varied. The society was according to gender divided into two spheres. The public sphere of politics and business was the sphere to which American men belonged, and women were a part of the private sphere of child-rearing and domestic work. This meant that women had no public voice and no formal power in politics. The Women's Rights movement allowed new opportunities for women as they now could work outside of home, which was previously doable only with their husband's consent. Women could also receive higher education, they did not have as many children as was before typical, and could obtain a place in charities or political activities. With time, society's belief that women's place was in home lessened since women were granted places in the public sphere as were factories, universities, offices and other professions formerly allowed only to men. (McCammon, et al., 2001, p. 53) This brought new possibilities for women as the

ability to earn their own income ensured their newly obtained economic independence since now they did not have to fully rely on their husband and family.

This chapter discussed the historical background of the era in which the novel *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott was written. Since the author used everyday life experiences, descriptions of the nineteenth-century American society and its rules in her novel (Strickland, 1985, pp. 139-156) historical background carries important information for better understanding of this thesis. The next chapter further uses this knowledge to examine the plot and historical setting of Alcott's novel.

3 THE NOVEL

This chapter will provide further knowledge about Louisa May Alcott's novel, *Little Women* by analysing its plot, characters and setting. The detailed plot description will grant the foundation for later comparison of movie adaptations and the characters' development is crucial for understanding of women's roles in the nineteenth century.

For the first time was the novel *Little Women* by Luisa May Alcott published by Roberts Brothers as two volumes in 1868 and 1869. The novel is written chronologically and depicts the life of four young girls from America's nineteenth century. As was previously stated in chapter one of this thesis, as an inspiration for this novel Alcott used herself, her childhood and life experiences.

Throughout the novel, are the four sisters, Margaret, Josephine, Elizabeth and Amy, called 'little women' by their father in his letter. Josephine also remembers, how he called her by that name, when he was still home: "I'll try and be what he loves to call me, 'a little woman,' and not be rough and wild, but do my duty here instead of wanting to be somewhere else," (Alcott, 2017, p. 11). The narrator, in the chapter *Domestic Experiences*, also calls Margaret 'a little woman' twice, and Amy is called 'a little woman' for the first time by Laurie, when he appeals to her to be sensible and leave, when her sister Elizabeth falls ill with scarlet fever. Later, Aunt March uses this term when Amy acts as a properly behaved lady, and finally, when Laurie talks about the youngest sister with Josephine: "A trifle, perhaps, she's such a captivating little woman I can't help being proud of her." (Alcott, 2017, p. 583)

The author essentially focuses on women, their duties and on the concept of society. The leading female characters portray four different types of women, Margaret's wish is to be rich yet struggles since her family and husband are poor therefore she can never obtain a status of wealthy woman, for this she represents women from the middle-class who desired to be a part of the noble society. Elizabeth is the only sister, who does not care about money, since she finds her happiness in family, and Amy discovers that if she wants to belong to the upper-class citizens with her origin from a poor family, she has to marry a rich husband as an economic proposal. Josephine is the reformer who fights for women rights, despises marriage and devotes her life to earn a living by writing. By the end of *Little Women*, Josephine's ideals of independence and married life combine and she realises that to be a mother and wife does not

mean losing her freedom and being unable to write and publish. This symbolises her personal growth and acceptance of society's rules. (Strickland, 1985, pp. 77-78)

3.1 The Plot of the Novel

The whole novel consists of forty-seven chapters and is separated into two parts which correspond to the two volumes in which the novel was first published. The second part begins in chapter twenty-four and the plot continues three years after the first one ended.

For the purpose of this thesis I have divided the description of the events of the novel's plot into two parts according to the *Little Women's* own separation to maintain the same structure used by Louisa May Alcott.

3.1.1 The Plot of the Novel's Part One

The first part of *Little Women* starts right before Christmas Eve and it depicts the life of four March sisters, Elizabeth, Josephine, Amy and Margaret. Their father is a soldier and chaplain in the Civil War and therefore it is up to their mother, Marmee, to raise her daughters to be kind, thoughtful women. Josephine, also called Jo, writes stories and plays, and keeps their Aunt March company to earn some money. Margaret tutors two children from the village to earn her part of living. Elizabeth, who everybody calls Beth, spends her days home, playing on a small piano and caring for her dolls. Amy attends school for girls and her sisters laugh at her prime behaviour and over-usage of complicated phrases.

As a Christmas present the girls each find her own copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan. As the story continues, Marmee often encourages her daughters to find the guidance in this book, to help them live a proper Christian life. Even though the March sisters often complain about their poverty, they do not protest when Marmee encourages them to give their Christmas breakfast to an even poorer family of Hummels. This generous deed is seen by their neighbour, Mr. Laurence, who is a wealthy businessman raising his grandson Laurie. As a gift, Mr. Laurence sends a feast to the girls' house.

At a New Year's Party, Josephine and Laurie meet when they both hide outside of a ballroom. They become friends and when Margaret sprains her ankle, Laurie escorts them home in his carriage. After this, the March family and the two Laurence men start to spend more time together, and Laurie with his teacher, John Brook, take Margaret and Josephine to a theatre

play. Upon their return, Josephine discovers that Amy, in her spite of anger, burnt the novel on which Jo worked. It is not until Amy almost drowns, that Josephine forgives her.

The March sisters live their life and enjoy summer. They meet the Vaughn siblings who are Laurie's friends from England, and Josephine sends her stories to a publisher, who accepts them and asks for more if she will continue with her writings.

By the end of summer, Marmee leaves for Washington after a telegram informing her about Mr. March's stay in a hospital came to their house. Elizabeth visits Hummles who are greatly sick, and after the youngest baby dies and Beth falls ill, they discover it is a scarlet fever. Amy is sent to Aunt March to stay safe and Elizabeth's health worsens. When the doctor proclaims she will probably die, the girls send for Marmee.

With Marmee's return, Elizabeth recovers yet she is never fully cured and stays weak. Amy again moves to her parents' house, and Mr. Brook confesses his love to Margaret. She firstly rejects his idea of marriage yet after an argument with her Aunt March, accepts and returns his feelings.

On Christmas Eve, Mr. March surprises his family by his homecoming and the whole March family, with the two Laurence men and Mr. Brook spend the evening together.

For a more detailed description see Appendix 2.

3.1.2 The Plot of the Novel's Part Two

The second part of the novel continues three years after the first one ended, when America deals with the outcomes of the Civil War. Mr. March is now a minister in his village, Margaret marries John Brook, Josephine follows her love for writing and publishes more stories. Amy focuses on painting and Elizabeth plays on her piano.

The March sisters deal with their everyday problems. Margaret, who married John, a poor man from the working-class, struggles with poverty and her duties as a wife. Josephine publishes her stories yet they are not the ones she longs to write, and mainly writes them just for the money they earn her.

When Aunt Carrol leaves for her trip to Europe, she chooses Amy as her companion, which saddens Josephine who wanted to see the world and get new experiences for her future writing. In Europe, Amy again meets Fred Vaughn and they spend time together.

Meanwhile in America, Josephine escapes to New York since she started to notice Laurie's affection towards her. There she meets a German professor Bhaer, who raises his dead sister's children and works as a teacher. He becomes a mentor to young Josephine and they start to get close. When she comes home for a visit and encounters Laurie, he admits to love her and offers her a marriage. She refuses his feelings and returns to New York. After their argument, Laurie travels with his grandfather to Europe. There he finds Amy and stays with her for some time.

Josephine and professor Bhaer have an argument about Jo's writings since he did not support her focus on sensational stories. He believes that she should write about the things she loves and cares about and not care about money she earns. When Elizabeth's health worsens, Jo returns home to keep her company.

Amy in France rejects Fred Vaughn's marriage proposal after she and Laurie have an argument about a marriage of convenience. Until then, Amy wanted to accept Fred's offer, only to secure her place in society and obtain money for her family. Laurie leaves for England to work for his grandfather and accepts his responsibilities and does not return to France until he gets a letter about Elizabeth's death.

When Amy and Laurie come to the March house, they are already married, Margaret and John have twins and Josephine writes her novel. When professor Bhaer visits her, she tells him about her feelings and he stays.

The novel ends after Josephine inherits Aunt March's house and opens her own school for children. Marmee celebrates her birthday and Jo is a successful writer.

For a more detailed description see Appendix 3.

3.2 The Female Characters

Based on the novel's summary in the previous chapter, this part will analyse leading female roles portrayed in Alcott's *Little Women*, the similarities and properties they shared with

women in the nineteenth century, and the importance of certain occasions that influenced characters' development.

For the purpose of this thesis, following major characters are discussed in deeper context to Alcott's *Little Women*, and some minor characters as Aunt Carrol, Hannah or Sallie Gardiner are omitted.

3.2.1 Josephine 'Jo' March

Josephine, who is called Jo by her family and friends, is an example of a woman, who longs for her independence and dismisses the concept of marriage. According to her Aunt March, this type of woman had no successful future in the nineteenth century. Jo is stubborn, ambitious, independent, and does not accept her role as a woman. She despises the rules which bound her to women duties, saying she would rather go to war and fight side by side with her father. Her behaviour and manners could be acknowledged as her want to be a man whose duty was to provide for his family instead of sitting home and doing housework and 'women's work'. Jo wears men's clothes, does not care about her appearance and with their father gone, she fulfils the role of the man of the family by writing stories and working as a governess. (Alcott, 2017, p. 4)

Generally speaking, Josephine is profoundly similar to Louisa May Alcott. Both of them were the second of four sisters, they wrote short stories and novels to obtain money for their family since their father was for his intellectual interests unable to provide sufficient income. Although Alcott and her character were not active members of the Women's Rights movement, they supported their goals with their own writings.

In her life, Josephine struggles with social standards. She wants to be rich, provide income for her family, and still be independent and unmarried which was at that time almost impossible. Only this was not how the society worked in the nineteenth century and throughout the story there are occasions where is the pressure of society on women acknowledged, whereas from the side of Jo's sisters, who disagree with her manners, calling her 'too boyish' (Alcott, 2017, p. 3), or from the publisher who refused to pay for her stories unless the female leading role was by the end married or dead (Gerwig, 2019). As is stated in *Changing Ideals of Womanhood During the Nineteenth-Century Woman Movement* by Susan M. Crucea, the only case, in which a woman could stay unmarried and take support her family, would be if she was rich or a man, since women were allowed to work only in time of necessity or for the benefit of

society. (Cruea, 2005, pp. 2-12) This is also reminded to Josephine by her Aunt March and her youngest sister Amy. Josephine clashes with the rules and taboos that bound women of that era.

She does not believe that women should be silent and not object when men do or say something just because they have higher status in society or wealthiness, as the rules dictated. She believes in the freedom of speech and longs for women to be equal to men. Because of this, she rebels against the rules that dictated women's lives, including proper clothes women were supposed to wear. This type of woman was described by Carol Mattingly in her *Appropriate[ing] dress : women's rhetorical style in nineteenth century America* as 'reformers'. (Mattingly, 2002, pp. 39-41) When Josephine discusses the reformers with her sister Amy, after Jo was disrespectful to Mr. Tudor, who is rich and has a higher social status, she argues:

"I do like them, and I shall be one if I can, for in spite of the laughing the world would never get on without them. We can't agree about that, for you belong to the old set, and I to the new. You will get on the best, but I shall have the liveliest time of it. I should rather enjoy the brickbats and hooting, I think."

(Alcott, 2017, p. 387)

When her older sister Meg has her wedding, Josephine offers her that they can run and live together, that she can work in a factory and clean the house. She hates that the society thinks women are good only for love, dismisses their talent, intelligence, and ambitions (Gerwig, 2019). She refuses to marry Laurie, despite them having similar sense of humour, him being acceptant and not forcing her to be a proper woman of that era, because she does not love him romantically and refuses to be in a marriage of convenience only because the society tells her so. In that time, Laurie symbolises the future Jo does not want, refusing to obey the society, wanting to be independent and manage everything alone. As Charles Strickland mentioned in his *Victorian Domesticity Families in the Lift and Art of Louisa May Alcott* (1985), before Alcott finished the second volume of *Little Women*, female readers wrote her letters demanding marriage of Josephine and Laurie. Yet Alcott openly declared her belief that a life as a liberal single woman is in her eyes better than marriage. (Strickland, 1985, pp. 77-80)

With their mother Jo shares many qualities, for example her short-temper, impatience, and the ability to calm and stop her anger. One time, when Amy almost drowns because she has been running after Josephine, who did not want to forgive her since she burnt her novel, Jo

later talks with her mother. Her mother admits that she is also short-tempered but after a long-time effort she learnt how to not let it show. In that moment, Josephine swears to do the same thing, to try and be more kind and non-judgmental.

However, her short temper and impatience does not make her an unkind woman. When her mother needs money for her travel to Washington, where their father lays ill, she sells her hair to help her, saying:

"It doesn't affect the fate of the nation, so don't wail, Beth. It will be good for my vanity, I was getting too proud of my wig. It will do my brains good to have that mop taken off. My head feels deliciously light and cool, and the barber said I could soon have a curly crop, which will be boyish, becoming, and easy to keep in order. I'm satisfied, so please take the money and let's have supper."

(Alcott, 2017, p. 209)

Jo does not accept her role as an adult woman until Elizabeth's death and the return of Laurie who is at that time already married to her sister Amy. Until this scene, Josephine tries to keep the 'straps' of her childhood so she would not have to obey the society standards and the pressure it puts on her. Elizabeth's death has a strong impact on Jo, who because of it decides to live her life differently. She starts to care about other people and becomes less judgmental and more considerate. By the end of the novel Alcott describes her happy life with professor Bhaer, who is the symbol of things Jo in her childhood feared. She is loved and loves a man, yet still earns her own living by leading a school for young girls despite her previous belief that a romantic relationship with man means the end of woman's independence. For many women in the nineteenth century was Jo's happy ending, independence while being married, and the capability to work for pleasure, an unattainable goal since women were not supposed to work unless their husband was unable to secure a comfortable living. (Cruea, 2005, pp. 2-3)

3.2.2 Margaret 'Meg' March

When being young, Margaret, also called Meg, longed for a wealthy life, full of luxury things and of a rich husband. She is intelligent, caring, materialistic, and in her role of the oldest sister, bossy. She cares about her appearance and proper behaviour and often complains when Jo does not act as she thinks she should and as was expected of a young lady. Overall, her love

for beautiful things, desire for wealth, does not stop her from being selfless, giving her mother all her savings when she needs to travel to their father in Washington.

In the beginning of the story, Margaret, the first-born daughter, who has got a name after their mother, complains to her sisters about their poverty. She is proud of her beautiful fair hands yet with their father gone she helped her mother raise her sisters. Since she remembers how easy their life was when they were not poor and she did not have to work, she often complains about their lack of money. Djankov and Reynal-Querol (2007) in their study explored reasons why the Civil War in America firstly started and the main cause for this conflict was according to their study the poverty in the nineteenth-century America, therefore the character of Margaret can be seen as the constant reminder of how people's poverty and misery affected their history.

According to Mattingly (2002) beautiful white slim hands, which were in the first part of the novel Margaret's treasured possession, a fair skin and expensive clothes, were some of the signs of the upper-class society and of wealthy families which could afford maids. Upper-class women did not have to do the housework, and were obliged to take care of their appearance and maintain their position. (Mattingly, 2002, pp. 10-12) Alcott's novel *Little Women* mentions how the March sisters in their youth belonged to the middle-class society and for Meg to long for a higher status was a dream which could have been fulfilled only by a matrimony with a wealthy man.

Meg never stops caring for her sisters and Elizabeth's illness makes her appreciate the blessing of good health the rest of them have. Her role as a wife and mother keeps her preoccupied and as the author herself, Meg starts to appreciate the value of nurture and maternal duties. (Strickland, 1985, pp. 121-123)

3.2.3 Elizabeth 'Beth' March

Elizabeth is a quiet, shy girl, who in her young age possesses the qualities her sisters earn years later. She appreciates the blessing of a simple life, never needing wealth to be happy. The precious possession she has is her family, dolls she inherited when nobody wanted them for their ugliness, and her music.

Her sisters call her 'Mouse' because she is quiet, kind and does not like to argue. It is mentioned that once, before the novel even started, Elizabeth tried to go to school with other

girls but was unhappy and since then her father had to teach her home. After his departure, Beth is schooled by her sister Josephine and in their house helps Hannah, their maid, with chores (Alcott, 2017, p. 49). She longs to stay with her mother and take care of her but later on, she falls ill with a scarlet fever.

For young women in the nineteenth century, it was not unheard to be schooled home by their family members or by hired governesses. Alcott herself was taught home by her father who earned money by his work as a teacher and principal of a school in Boston.

Eventually, she recovers from this illness, but her condition is never completely cured and some time later she becomes ill again and this time her health does not improve. With this knowledge her sisters try to make her as happy as she can be, filling her room with her father's books, her favourite dolls, Amy's drawings and with the piano she got from Mr. Laurence. (Alcott, 2017, p. 543) While helping as a nurse in a hospital for soldiers, Alcott became ill, and the same as Beth never healed properly and the deterioration of her health followed her until she died (Strickland, 1985, p. 69).

When her condition was not so severe she focused on knitting and sewing things for children that went around her window on their way to and from school. When she puts down her sewing needles, with an argument that they are too heavy for her, it is the sign of her upcoming death. Toward the end of the book Elizabeth dies as a twenty-three years old woman. Her death was hard for all the sisters. Meg starts to value different things than money and Jo accepts her role as a woman of the nineteenth-century society, confesses her love to professor Bhaer even though she always saw love as the end of her own independence. This makes Elizabeth's death in a lot of ways a new beginning for others.

3.2.4 Amy March

With her prim behaviour, her way of talking and manners, Amy is the one sister who acts as a lady from the upper-class society in the nineteenth century. She is the one who tries the hardest to act as a proper noble woman of the nineteenth century.

“She had an instinctive sense of what was pleasing and proper, always said the right thing to the right person, did just what suited the time and place, and was so self-possessed that her sisters used to say, “If Amy went to court without any rehearsal beforehand, she'd know exactly what to do.””

(Alcott, 2017, p. 334)

As was stated by Margaret Fuller Ossoli in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, if a woman acted as a proper noble lady she had better hopes for finding a rich husband and having a good life, and without a husband, she had no way to earn a proper living (Ossoli, 1845).

Amy is stubborn, ambitious, short-tempered and in many ways similar to her older sister Josephine, yet Amy, while younger, learnt how to control these imperfections. They argue, and are jealous of each other. Despite that, these two sisters have the same goals, to take care of their family. Even though still a child making mud pies, Amy was more of a realist than her older sisters. Young girls were often educated from their childhood how to behave and obtain proper manners of a lady. (Strickland, 1985, pp. 151-156)

There is one crucial difference between Amy and Josephine throughout the whole novel. Amy wants to accomplish all the things throughout society in an acceptable way which was through a marriage of convenience with a wealthy man. She is aware of the position of women and she is from her young age resigned with this fact, accepting it as her future, not as her sister Jo. Amy likes the old ways and does not belong between the women who wanted to fight for their rights and better place in society. She despises them the same as most of other upper-class women who were taught from their young age and lived by the social rules. Since the feministic revolution in the nineteenth century just started, being a reformer meant to be odd, ridiculed and disagreeable which was for Amy unacceptable. When Jo admits to like the new ways and by herself tries to make a change since she does not like, how men are allowed to say and behave like they please because they are considered superior to women, Amy declares: "I can't argue about it, I only know that it's the way of the world, and people who set themselves against it only get laughed at for their pains." (Alcott, 2017, pp. 386-387)

However, in the beginning, Amy's weakness is her eagerness to belong to 'their best society' and she often confused what were the admirable qualities in people, and that not everything depended on a position in society, property and propriety. She believed that a marriage to a wealthy man, his money and status, will keep her happy, not aware that her role will consist only of her being mother and wife, dismissing her love for art and dedicating her whole life to her husband. (Alcott, 2017, p. 334) Whereas, she does not like this fact, she knows that she will marry a rich husband and is not ashamed of it. She knew that a wealth to March's

family will bring only Jo's hard successful work as an author or her own marriage, and while still young she promises Margaret that she and Jo will provide for them. (Alcott, 2017, p. 203)

In the end, she marries for love and gains the property and social status she wanted as a young girl. With her husband Laurie, they live near the March family, and Amy becomes the sensible and non-judgmental woman who did not understand how she could ever think that money and position in society are the things that matter the most. When she speaks with Laurie about the poor old professor Bhaer, who came to visit Jo, she says: "If they love one another it doesn't matter a particle how old they are nor how poor. Women never should marry for money," successfully ending her story of personal growth. (Alcott, 2017, p. 601)

3.2.5 Aunt March

Is the kind woman who knows how a lady in the nineteenth century had to behave to earn her place in society. She is rich due to her heritage and therefore can be an independent unmarried woman who had to secure her money. The sole exception for a woman to be wealthy and not married was to inherit money from her family. Aunt March knows that if she would marry, her property and money would belong not to her but to her husband.

Firstly, she employs Jo to help her earn money, after Mr. March loses his wealth, and tries to educate her in good morals. Later on, when Beth falls ill for the first time, Aunt March allows Amy to stay with her in her home and be safe. She starts to like the girl, wants to be kind and help her, only does not know how, therefore teaches her in the same way her parents did her sixty years ago. (Alcott, 2017, p. 245) Therefore, she can be perceived as one of the women that did not know any better, were raised in old manners and despised the changes reformers wanted to achieve. Aunt March is strict, does not show her love and appreciation to what the girl does despite the fact she likes her around. Before Amy leaves her home, Aunt March gives her the turquoise ring Amy likes as a gesture of her affection and calls her 'a capital little woman'. (Alcott, 2017, p. 257)

3.2.6 Margaret 'Marmee' March

The character of Marmee is based on Louisa May Alcott's father who was known to be a Transcendentalist philosopher supporting abolitionist movement (Rappaport, 2001, p. 241), preferring unorthodox ways of teaching throughout students' active involvement in their educational process. (Alcott, 2017, p. 649)

She is sensible and wise. When her daughters do something she does not like or it is not right, she tells them stories with a moral meaning or asks what their father would think about their actions. When the girls did their experiment in chapter eleven, she let them do as they wanted and in the end gave them lessons so the girls would realise a life without obligations and work is not fulfilling and that everything works better when each person does their part of the chores.

Throughout the novel, Marmee encourages the girls to find their answers in *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan in hope it will offer them a moral guidance and the understanding that they are not alone in their struggles, since suffering is a part of human life and at the end the travel full of obstacles will bring them happiness and wisdom.

3.3 Settings

The first part of *Little Women's* story is set in an unspecified neighbourhood in New England. The place is based on Concord, Massachusetts, where people struggle with poverty. The exact year is never stated, only the seasons of the year and months, yet the Civil War is discussed on many occasions which sets the timeline somewhere in the 1860s. The chapter one begins with the events before Christmas Eve and the last chapter of part one ends one year later. During this final chapter the Civil War still had not ended.

The second part of the novel deals with the outcome of the Civil War, three years after the first part ended, and covers approximately fifteen years. Some chapters are again set in the March's family home, yet Amy is on her travels with Aunt Carol in Europe, and Jo leaves to New York to write her stories and earn a living as a working woman.

Some years are described in more detail than others which allowed the author to create a few time skips throughout some periods of the girls' life. That was important for displaying the personal growth of the March sisters during their life. When the first part started, Jo was fifteen years old, and in the final chapter she is a married woman somewhere about thirty years old. (Alcott, 2017)

4 MOVIE ADAPTATIONS

This chapter deals with two movie adaptations of Alcott's *Little Women*, and compares their portrayal of women in nineteenth-century American society. Firstly, it focuses on the newest adaptation from 2019 that was directed by Greta Gerwig, and secondly, on the adaptation by Gillian Armstrong from 1994. Both adaptations carry the same title '*Little Women*'.

4.1 Adaptation by Greta Gerwig from 2019

The first movie adaptation this thesis explores is *Little Women* from 2019 by Greta Gerwig. This is the last adaptation of *Little Women* that was filmed.

This chapter focuses on the differences between Gerwig's 2019 film version and Alcott's original two-volume novel from 1868 and 1869, firstly discussed throughout the alternations of plot, later of characters. It compares the usage of how some scenes were portrayed to maintain the individual development of the March sisters.

4.1.1 The plot of the Film vs. the Novel

The storyline of *Little Women* by Greta Gerwig is separated into two parts, where one deals with the past, when the sisters are young and live with their mother, which corresponds with the novel's chapters one to thirty-three, the second part of the story takes place in the present after the Civil War ended and people deal with its outcome.

The movie sticks to the same story as the novel does. It omits many scenes from the girls' childhood, from their everyday life and problems and focuses mainly on the details that are needed to explain the main story in the present timeline. The movie further changes the order of events to maintain the development of characters even with leaving out some of the scenes important for the personal growth of the sisters.

The movie starts in the present, seven years later than the book began, after the end of Civil War. All girls are now grown up and deal with problems the society presents to them.

The story starts with a scene, where Josephine comes to the *Weekly Volcano* office, looking for a publisher. This corresponds with chapter thirty-four in Alcott's novel *Little Women*. Jo brings her story, saying it is her friend's. It gets accepted but with one alteration,

the part where the sinners repent will be crossed. According to the editor the Civil War just ended and people want to be amused and not preached at.

In this scene Josephine announces that she came to the office of *Weekly Volcano* yet on the windows is written *Roberts Brothers Publishing*. In the nineteenth century, *Roberts Brothers* were bookbinders and publishers from Boston, Massachusetts. They published works of many famous female authors including Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. (Phelps, et al., 1884, p. 43) This scene was altered. In the novel, Jo does not come to the office, she sends her stories in letters and their communication is restricted only to the written form.

Meanwhile, Amy lives in Paris with her Aunt March, she takes painting lessons, participates in parties to secure herself a good name in upper-class society and waits to be engaged to a wealthy man named Fred Vaughn. Upon reading a letter from her mother about Beth's sickness, Aunt March appeals to Amy to stay and not go back to her family until she will be properly engaged with Fred whom she does not love but is supposed to marry for his status and money. At this point of the story, Amy is the only hope to secure money for the March family with Elizabeth's illness, Meg's marriage to a poor man and Jo not wanting to get married to keep her freedom. The March family does not own the wealth they once had so one of the daughters has to marry for them to not worry about poverty.

In the novel this differs. Amy is on her trip to Europe with Aunt Carrol and not with Aunt March. In Gerwig's movie adaptation Aunt Carrol is never presented and her role is replaced by Aunt March. They do not stay in Paris but in Nice and as Laurie meets Amy in the chapter *New Impressions*, she admits her worry for sick Beth and says that her family wants her to stay to enjoy her travels and is not pressed for the reason of securing her marriage.

Margaret lives in a small house, is married and with children. Her struggle for money is described when in a shop with her friend Sallie, Meg hesitates to buy silk for her new dress because her husband and children need new clothes.

The only girl that stayed with their mother and father in their family house is Elizabeth. She still plays on the piano which Mr. Laurence gave her and her health is slowly failing.

While in Boston, Josephine attends a theatre play when she sees professor Bhaer, and follows him to a pub where they enjoy their night by dancing. This did not happen in the novel. After this scene the movie goes seven years earlier to the novel's chapter one, where the girls

sit by a fireplace in their home and talk about a party Josephine and Meg plan to go that night and Jo crosses her path with Laurie for the first time. This was the first occasion when the timeline moved from present to past, when the Civil War was still raging and the novel *Little Women* started.

The movie goes back to the present where Josephine shows her short stories to a critic, Professor Bhaer, who shares his honest opinion that the stories are not good enough. When Jo runs from his house back to a place where she lives, she gets a letter from her mother asking her to come back home (Gerwig, 2019, 00:24:37-00:24:52). In *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott, Jo is already home and the letter is never sent.

The timeline is unchronological throughout the rest of the film, connecting the past with present when something important happens, or a similar scene appears in both timelines. Altered scenes are used on many occasions yet the main plot is kept the same. One of the major modifications is the relationship of Laurie and Amy.

In the novel, Elizabeth and Amy do not meet Laurie until the fifth chapter. In Gerwig's adaptation, Laurie comes back from the New Year's party with Meg and Jo, when the older sister sprains her ankle. They laugh, Mrs. March thanks him, and Amy falls in love with the older boy, according to her love confession in Paris (Gerwig, 2019, 01:14:43-01:16:20). This later affects the movie scene as Amy has trouble in school and in tears comes to Laurie since she is ashamed to go home and admit what she has done. This did not happen in the novel. The girl who had trouble in school for a funny drawing of a teacher was Amy's classmate, and the two youngest sisters officially meet Laurie after he comes for a visit with his grandfather and starts to play with them.

Throughout the movie, Amy wants to get Laurie's attention. One time, she tries to make a sculpture of her foot for Laurie and to give it to him as a present and reminder not to forget about her. Only originally, in chapter twenty-six called *Artistic Attempts*, it is just one of Amy's failed attempts of creating art while she discovers many art techniques. She never intends to give it to Laurie.

Further difference in their relationship from the movie's adaptation is the scene from New Year's party in Paris. At the party, Amy is angry at Laurie since she waited for him one hour in a hall before she decided to go to the party alone. In that scene they also have a fight

that in the novel does not follow until the book's thirty-ninth chapter and Laurie does fulfil his promise to pick Amy before the party that night and accompanies her as a chaperone.

Another part, where the movie adaptation from 2019 differs from the novel is in case of Elizabeth's illness. Mr. Laurence gives Beth her own small piano; in the novel this happens in the sixth chapter, when the girls' mother is still home with them. However, in the movie their mother is by that time with their father in Washington, and Beth starts to be sick with scarlet fever which she caught from Hummles. In the novel this does not get her first symptoms until the seventeenth chapter.

When a telegraph comes to March residence informing them of their father's illness and stay in a hospital in Washington, in the novel, Laurie is sent to Aunt March, to ask for money, which she gives them, and Jo still sells her hair since she feels guilty because she spent her savings on new winter clothes and has nothing to give her mother. "I was just crazy to do something for Father. It'll be good for my vanity anyway." (Gerwig, 2019, 01:12:37-01:12:46)

Although in the movie, there is a slight difference in what happens. Laurie is not the one to go to Aunt March. Marmee sends Jo, who comes back with her own money and short hair, saying she does not want to ask Aunt March for money, and announcing her independence and ability to provide for her family with whatever she can.

Throughout the novel and its movie adaptation, Jo and Amy's differences are widely discussed. Their rivalry and arguments are a topic of many accidents, for example when Amy burns Jo's unfinished novel and for that Jo later almost lets her drown in a river. The girls disagree on how women of the nineteenth century society should act and which behaviour is proper. Of course in the novel are many examples that were omitted in the movie since the novel focuses more on their daily routines and struggles they face. Yet the movie includes some altered scenes that on the contrary show their affection not included in the novel. After Jo cuts her hair to help their mother obtain money for her travel to Washington, later that night, in Alcott's novel, it is Meg who calms her sister when Josephine starts to cry, whereas in the Gerwig's adaptation, Jo is found on stairs by Amy, who hugs her and their relationship becomes little stronger (Gerwig, 2019, 01:13:06-01:13:32).

Another major change in the adaptation is Amy's journey to Europe with her Aunt March. Aunt March mentions the possibility of the travel to Jo when she still works for her, which makes the girl outspokenly glad, and later, after Margaret and John's wedding, Aunt

March tells Amy she will take her to Paris as her companion. In the novel this happened with many alterations, Aunt March never promised Jo to take her on the journey to Paris, since she is not the one who in the novel takes Amy to Europe. The invitation is firstly made by Aunt Carrol in chapter thirty.

The last altered scene this thesis will describe is the way of how Jo learns that Amy and Laurie got married. In the novel, they write them a letter about their engagement and Jo does not regret that she once rejected Laurie's proposal. However, in the movie, she does not learn the truth until they come back and Laurie tells her they are already married, leaving Jo confused, sad and stunned.

While Amy and Laurie spend their time in Paris, Laurie tries to convince Amy there are other ways to live a contented life than to marry into a loveless marriage for money. Only the situation for unmarried women was not an easy one. Amy proclaims she has to marry into wealth to secure her family and admits to Laurie she has to stop with painting and work on her other talents to become an ornament of society since she is 'just a woman'.

"I'm just a woman. And as a woman, there's no way for me to make my own money. Not enough to earn a living or to support my family. And if I had my own money, which I don't, that money would belong to my husband the moment we got married. And if we had children, they would be his, not mine."

(Gerwig, 2019, 01:05:47-01:06:11)

Something similar tells Aunt March to Josephine when they discuss Jo's unwillingness to get married and desire to make her own way in the world. Aunt March inherited money from her family and therefore did not have to marry, if she did her property would become her husband's. She warns Jo that women are unable to stay without a husband if they are not rich, which convinces Jo she needs to earn money to stay independent.

Since many scenes from the girls' lives are deleted in the movie adaptation, there are some additional ones which foretell the life of a married woman, therefore the situation and problems women of the nineteenth century faced would not be omitted. The major incidents and scenes important for the development of the story and characters were preserved and the happenings of everyday ordinary life were neglected.

4.1.2 The Female Characters in *Little Women's* Movie Adaptation from 2019

This chapter compares differences between the leading female characters in Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* adaptation from 2019 with the original novel by Louisa May Alcott. The main focus is on their behaviour, attitude and opinions which resulted in different personal development of each character.

Meg is the oldest sister and at the start of Gerwig's adaptation of the original novel *Little Women* by Alcott she already has a husband and children. She did not marry into wealth as she wished for when she was younger. They live in a small house and have problems with money for the life Meg used to live when her father was wealthy, and which she longed to have. This is the exact opposite of what she wished for in the Christmas scene, when they were all sitting in front of a fireplace: "It's dreadful being poor. I wish I had money and plenty of servants, so I never had to work." (Gerwig, 2019, 00:25:59-00:26:02)

However, Meg does not differ from the woman she is in the novel. Her qualities stayed the same and she evolves throughout the story and matures into the proper lady, who finds the true value of life in health and safety of her family, which makes her father proud.

The character of Elizabeth is the same in the novel as it is in the movie adaptations, her personal traits predominantly have not changed. She is the quiet sister, who is kind, sweet and shy. In the first scene, when her siblings are complaining about being poor, Beth says that the only thing she needs for her to be happy is for them all to be together and this is the truth until her end. (Gerwig, 2019)

The movie adaptation left the scenes where Beth gave up on trying to live her life in sickness as she was weak and dying, and left her to be more strong and her death therefore quicker.

Josephine and Amy are the two characters who are in the movie adaptation altered to create greater romance. Jo is the stubborn woman who rejects love and marriage, for the need to stay independent, yet after Beth's death she regrets she did not give Laurie a chance and writes him a love letter he never reads since he comes back already married to Amy.

In Amy's case her relationship with Fred Vaughn and Laurie is exaggerated. Amy is described as a girl who the whole time since they had met loves her sister's boy, Laurie. When they meet in Paris, Laurie is reckless, selfish and lazy. After the New Year's party, Amy changes, she is no longer enamoured with Laurie and starts to see his mistakes. When Laurie later comes and wants to speak with Amy about why she wants to be engaged to Fred Vaughn, they have an argument about the role of women in society. Amy tells him she does not have a choice because a woman in society is unable to earn the living by herself, and if she does earn some money, once she marries, they will be her husband's together with their children (Gerwig, 2019). With Amy's inner struggles, the movie adaptation tries to depict the roles of women in the nineteenth century, explaining what women had to do to obtain money for their family by sacrificing their interests and freedom by marrying a man who will secure all of this, in more detail.

One big alteration of characters in this movie adaptation is Aunt Carrol, who takes Amy to Paris. In the movie there is no such character. To Europe Amy travels with her Aunt March who impersonates both of these roles, in the beginning she employs Josephine and later she takes care of Amy in Paris, trying to help her find a wealthy husband.

Otherwise, the character of Aunt March from the movie adaptation from 2019 resembles the aunt from the novel. Both of them are unmarried, wealthy and kind but strict women who kept their place in society through money and prim behaviour. She tries to prepare the girls for their future, protect them from the fate of unmarried poor women, even when they do not understand her reasons. Once, when Josephine thanks her for her kindness but insists on making her own way in the world she objects: "No. No one makes their own way. Not really. Least of all, a woman. You'll need to marry well," foreshadowing the future that awaits the women in the nineteenth century that did not adapt to society's acceptable behaviour (Gerwig, 2019, 00:35:18-00:36:02). She is the character who resembles women from the nineteenth century, who were devoted to their place in society and obeyed the rules. In comparison with young Josephine, who represented female reformers who fought for their better place and rights.

4.2 Adaptation by Gillian Armstrong from 1994

This chapter focuses on the differences between Gillian Armstrong's film version from 1994, and Alcott's original novel published in two volumes in 1868 and 1869. Firstly, it will discuss the alterations of plot, secondly, the differences of the novel's and movie's characters.

Gillian Armstrong's movie adaptation of *Little Women* from 1994 is written chronologically, in comparison with Gerwig's *Little Women* which was separated into two major timelines, dealing with the childhood and adulthood of the March girls, which continuously overlapped. *Little Women* from 1994 begins with the voice of Josephine, who looks back on her childhood: "My sisters and I remember that winter as the coldest of our childhood," which puts her in the role of a narrator. Throughout the movie, she introduces different scenes and foreshadows what will happen.

4.2.1 The Plot of the Film vs. the Novel

The story begins on Christmas Eve in the family house of March sisters, in Concord, Massachusetts. Josephine works for Aunt March, Margaret takes care of the Kings' children, Beth is home-schooled and Amy attends a school for girls. All March sisters meet young Mr. Laurence on their first way to Hummels, when their maid Hannah tells them how much the German family struggles with poverty, and the story continues as the novel was written. Meg and Jo go to the dance party where Jo meets Laurie and he becomes friends with all March sisters. Amy is hit by her teacher for hiding pickled limes in her desk and Marmee decides that she will no longer send her daughter to a school where the teacher hits his pupils.

The sisters help Jo realise her plays and they accept Laurie to their club. When he and Mr. Brook take Meg and Jo to the theatre, Amy burns Josephine's unfinished novel and it is not until Amy's almost drowning they mend their relationship. Meg attends a debut ball with Laurie and later he reveals the truth that Mr. Brook kept Margaret's glove and carries it with him. When Jo helps Laurie to pick which books he will take with him to college, she speaks of her wish to be allowed to college.

The telegram about Mr. March's stay in a hospital in Washington comes and Marmee leaves her daughters. Same as in Gerwig's adaptation, Jo sold her hair since she did not want to ask Aunt March for money, yet in the novel, Aunt March helped them and Jo just wanted to do more for her father.

With Marmee gone, Beth visits sick Hummels and brings them food. When Jo gets a letter from a publisher, to whom she sent her work, and celebrates her first money earned by writing, she finds Beth sitting by her piano already sick with scarlet fever. Amy is sent to Aunt March. In the novel, Laurie promises he will come and visit her every day, otherwise she does not want to leave. This scene, in the 1994 adaptation, takes place in a carriage, when Laurie and

Amy are already on their way to Aunt March. On their way, Amy starts to complain about never being kissed and not wanting to die before it happens, and Laurie promises to kiss her before her death (Armstrong, 1994, 00:52:40-00:52:59). In *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott, this scene never occurred.

In the movie, Laurie is the one who sends for Marmee, when Beth's health worsens and upon her return home, her young daughter gets miraculously better and the March family prepares for Christmas. Beth is given her own piano by Laurie's grandfather, Mr. Laurence. These events are greatly altered since the order in which they happen does not correspond with the novel. In Alcott's *Little Women*, Beth started to visit old Mr. Laurence in his house, where she was allowed to play on his and Laurie's piano and not long after that he gave her one small one she could keep home. This happened long before her illness and Marmee's travel to Washington. In Armstrong's movie, Beth is firstly sick and then she receives the piano.

Meg discusses with Marmee the possibility of marrying Mr. Brook, yet in the novel, she refuses his marriage proposal when he asks her. That same night they are seen kissing on the porch by Jo. This shows another amplification of the romantic relationship between Mr. Brook and Margaret, in comparison with Alcott's writing, who did not.

Four years later the Civil War ended and the soldiers are seen coming home to their families, Meg is married to Mr. Brook and Amy focuses on her painting. When Laurie comes from London for a visit, he kisses Jo and confesses his love for her, she kisses him back and then rejects him. In the novel, this scene happened almost literally with the exception of the kiss. They have an argument, Laurie leaves and Amy with Beth comfort sad Jo, who mourns the loss of her friend. In Alcott's version the kiss never happened and when Laurie came back, Amy was already in Paris with Aunt Carrol and Jo met professor Bhaer in New York.

Same as in Gerwig's *Little Women*, Amy leaves for Europe with Aunt March and not with Aunt Carrol as it was in the novel. Jo, in spite of anger and envy for Amy's trip, decides to leave for New York and continue her writings. There she meets professor Bhaer from Germany. Jo shares with him a story about her parents, mentioning they are both transcendentalists and therefore she knows some German poems since her father read them to her. This is an important scene, since this conversation is not part of the *Little Women* novel yet it is information from Alcott's own life. As was previously stated in the first chapter of this thesis, Louisa May Alcott's parents, Bronson and Abigail May Alcott, were both members of a

group called Transcendentalists. Armstrong, with the use of their dialogue, created a relationship between these two characters and included other historical information into her twentieth-century movie.

Jo's two stories are published in Daily Volcano under the name 'Joseph March' and even though she is happy, professor Bhaer questions her reason for writing sensational stories if she herself has no interest in this genre. Heartbroken by his critique, she gets a telegram about Beth's worsening health and comes home.

In Paris Laurie meets with Amy, who is there with Aunt March as her companion and with Fred Vaughn. They speak about the possibility of her marriage with Fred and Amy admits she despises Laurie's behaviour. He leaves yet sends her a telegram to ask her to wait for his return after he takes a part in his grandfather's business.

Beth dies soon after Jo's return, only Amy and Aunt March are unable to return for the funeral. Josephine writes Laurie a letter, asking him to return home since Beth died. Upon this news, Laurie leaves his duties and seeks Amy in Paris.

In the attic in Concord, Jo finds a wooden box in which Beth kept all Josephine's poems and stories, and starts to write her novel about their own life and on the cover puts her real name.

Meg and John Brook have twins and Laurie comes back presenting Amy as his wife. Aunt March dies and Josephine inherits her house, also her novel is returned from the publisher under the title '*Little Women*' in a package personally delivered by professor Bhaer. He leaves before they see each other and when Jo runs after him with an umbrella he left behind, they confess their love and he stays with her to found a school in Aunt March's old house.

Little Women by Gillian Armstrong from 1994 includes important milestones of the girls' life with some minor timeline alterations. The plot was adjusted to be able to create almost two hour long movie yet the development of characters was not neglected.

4.2.2 The Female Characters in *Little Women*'s movie adaptation from 1994

This part of the chapter compares differences between the leading female characters in Gillian Armstrong's *Little Women* adaptation from 1994 with the original novel by Louisa May

Alcott. The main focus is on their behaviour, attitude and opinions which resulted in different personal development of each character.

The personality of Josephine 'Jo' March in Armstrong's movie adaptation could be said to be more similar than Gerwig's Jo. Armstrong wrote Jo to be the independent woman as she is in Alcott's novel. She cares about her writing yet not only for the feeling of enjoyment. In the Christmas Eve scene she argues how much money she could earn if her work was published. She stands up for women's right to vote in a room full of men and with Laurie complains about the misfortune of not being allowed to attend college.

Josephine longs to be a writer to take care of her family, and same as in the previously discussed works in this thesis, she mourns the fact that as a woman she does not have the same rights as men do.

Armstrong's character of young Margaret 'Meg' March, same as in the novel, in the beginning longs for a better life, where she will not have to work and care about money struggles. She is kind, helps her sisters yet is more selfless than in the novel. When she attends her debut ball, other girls from the upper-class ask why she does not have a silk dress, which is something Margaret in Alcott's novel and Gerwig's adaptation spends John's money on. Yet in Armstrong's *Little Women*, Meg points on the child labour that is used for the production of silk, which is something she and her family do not approve.

Meg marries John Brook and has twins yet otherwise her adulthood is not discussed. In the two previously mentioned works, Meg after her wedding struggles with the poverty they live in and often complains about their lack of money.

The character of Amy March is generally kept the same as in Alcott's novel and Gerwig's movie adaptation. In the first Christmas Eve scene, Amy speaks about getting married to a wealthy man even though she is younger than her sisters, since women's place in society was common knowledge not only for adults. In Paris, she is ready to accept Fred Vaughn's marriage proposal even though she does not love him, yet he represents wealthiness and higher status in society.

Amy's passion for painting is in this adaptation presented just briefly, more focused on her future in a successful marriage.

As it is in the novel, Elizabeth 'Beth' March is the kind and shy sister in the March family. She supports Jo in her writing, and when her sisters long for money, status or independence, Beth just wants them to be together and safe. After she dies, Jo finds her collection of Jo's old writings and it becomes the reason why, in the end, Josephine publishes her novel *Little Women*.

Beth's friendship with old Mr. Laurence is not portrayed in the same depth as in the novel and when he gives her his death-daughter's piano, there is no proof of them being close to each other as it was in Gerwig and Alcott's works.

Same as in the novel, Marmee March, the mother of three sisters, is a kind, loving and generous woman. She raises her daughters and guides them to be good and love each other. This is in the novel mainly her responsibility yet in Armstrong's movie she has a help in a role of their maid Hannah.

In the second chapter of Alcott's novel *Little Women*, Marmee appeals on her daughters to give their Christmas breakfast to their poor German neighbours, a family without a father called the Hummels, whereas in Armstrong's movie adaptation it is Hannah, their maid, how advices the girls that some people have less than they do. In the novel, Marmee is the main character that helps the girls to be better and to grow into the kind women her father longed for them to be. Here can be seen how Armstrong used the role of Hannah to help Marmee guide the March girls on the path of generous, charming and kind women they become at the end of the story.

5 ROLES OF WOMEN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY REPRESENTED IN *LITTLE WOMEN*'s MOVIE ADAPTATIONS

The final chapter of this thesis focuses on the different portrayals of women in both previously discussed movie adaptations, the one by Gillian Armstrong from 1994 and the second from 2019 by Greta Gerwig, and their comparison. The main aim is to decide if the nineteenth-century women's roles in these two adaptations were adjusted, their obligations to society omitted and their personal development altered.

As was already stated in the second chapter of this thesis, the roles of women in the nineteenth century society differed from the roles of men. Yet not only their duties varied, even their status and position in society was not equal. A wife of a wealthy man did not have the same position in society and the same property as her husband. Men were the ones who owned money and if their wife bore a child it also belonged to the man. This left women with less power and without property.

In the first scene of Gerwig's movie adaptation of *Little Women*, Josephine is nervously standing for a while outside of the publishing office. When she steps inside, there are no women in there. This was typical for that era, mainly because men and women had different roles and jobs. Women of that era already published their work, Alcott was not the only female author in the nineteenth century, however, the leading roles in society were still taken by men. Women were allowed to work but only in jobs the society allowed them. When a woman got married, it was the duty of her husband to obtain a living and she was not supposed to work. (Cruea, 2005, p. 2)

When Josephine gives Mr. Daswood her story, which is accepted, only not without some editing, the editor tells her: "We'll look at it. Tell her to make it short and spicy. And if the main character's a girl, make sure she's married by the end. Or dead. Either way." (Gerwig, 2019, 00:03:47-00:03:58)

This is another indication that the role of the nineteenth century woman was firmly bound with the status of her husband this movie introduces. Women were not supposed to be independent. After a wedding, a woman belonged to her husband, her wealth she got from her family was now her husband's, every income she earned belonged to her husband and if she was to bear his children, they also belonged to him. (Gerwig, 2019)

In Paris, when Amy rides in a carriage with her Aunt March, reading a letter from Amy's mother, Aunt March is against Amy's return to her family, unless she is properly engaged with Fred Vaughn. As is written in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* by Margaret Fuller Ossoli: "It is a woman's business to obey her husband, keep his home tidy, and nourish and train his children." After women got married, their hobbies and job, if they had one, became secondary to her family. (Ossoli, 1845)

The oldest of sisters, Meg, has her own new family, husband and two children, but her husband's wealth is not enough for her to live the upper class life her friends do. Agitated that she bought a fifty-dollar fabric for a new dress when her husband and children need winter clothes. This is an example that women were dependent on their husbands' wealth, because women were taking care of children and had no time for work. If their husband was not rich enough to pay for servants, it was the woman's job to take care of the household and their offspring.

The only exception for women not to be obligated to marry was to be rich yet the March family lost their money and therefore the sisters have to marry to escape the poverty which would follow them should they marry a poor man. Only a marriage with a rich husband in the nineteenth century did not mean the woman obtained a part of his property. After the woman and man were wed everything they previously owned from that moment belonged to the husband. (Sullivan, 2007, p. 15)

Another example presented in Gerwig's movie adaptation of how women were treated differently than men is when at the New Year's party, Laurie makes a scene and embarrasses Fred Vaughn, Amy's soon-to-be-fiancé, in front of everybody, and Amy is the one who apologises and is ashamed. Improper behaviour was acceptable for men but never for women, they were meant to be 'an ornament of society' as Amy later calls herself when discussing her future plans (Gerwig, 2019, 01:04:56-01:05:02).

Between the duties and obligation the women in society had was to make calls. Calls were social visits with important people, and when somebody came to a woman's house for a call, it was her duty to repay such a visit. In Alcott's novel *Little Women*, are Amy and Josephine, in the chapter twenty-nine called *Calls*, indebted to make six calls in one day since it was impolite and unacceptable by society and considered rude if they would not. Women would wear their nicest dress, do their hair and fulfil their role in society. This was a normal

occurrence in nineteenth century society and Louisa May Alcott is not the only female author who mentioned it in her novel. Kate Chopin in her novel *Awakening* also writes about the main protagonist's husband's anger, when he discovered that his wife was not home and many important women stopped in their house to make a call, which defiled his status with the women's husbands and fathers: "It is a woman's business to obey her husband, keep his home tidy, and nourish and train his children." (Ossoli, 1845)

Later on, Margaret indeed learns to appreciate the true value of things, her hands are not as fair as they used to be and she marries John, who is not a wealthy man she always wanted. In her marriage she learns to live a simple life of mother and wife and grows into a sensible person. Louisa May Alcott herself highly valued her role in the child-rearing of her adopted daughter, as was previously mentioned in the first chapter. Even though Alcott never married, the nurture and maternal duties carried a high respect in her life, similarly as it was for the character of Margaret. (Strickland, 1985, pp. 121-123)

Armstrong focuses on the problems of society as well as Gerwig, yet she also included politics and Abolitionism. While the anti-slavery movement was a great part of America in the nineteenth century, as was previously mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis, Gerwig's adaptation does not mention such problems of that era. Armstrong, on the other hand, discusses Abolitionism and the child slavery in American silk mills and points on the situation how upper-class society looked down on Meg when she opens the question of child labour. (Armstrong, 1994, 00:39:25-00:40:21)

Abolitionism was not the only movement Armstrong mentioned in her *Little Women's* adaptation. This thesis' second chapter also introduced the first Women's Rights movement which originated in that era. In the scene, where Josephine officially meets Laurie for the first time, at the dance party while they are both hiding outside of a ballroom, he speaks about his future and how he will leave for a college soon. In the nineteenth century, higher education was allowed only to men since before the Women's Rights movement, a woman's place was in the domestic sphere and therefore their special education was not needed. (McCammon, et al., 2001, p. 53)

The question of women's education was not the only problem Armstrong portrayed in her adaptation. In a scene, when Jo left for New York, she led a discussion with men on why were women allowed to vote. She argues the reason is that men are not better than women and

that being good has no role in whether a person can vote, that the right should belong to every human who lives in America. (Armstrong, 1994, 01:19:20-01:19:47) Women obtained the right to vote after the Women's Right movement, until then they had no power in politics since only men were a part of the public sphere. (McCammon, et al., 2001, p. 53)

To summarise this chapter, neither Gillian Armstrong or Greta Gerwig omitted the basic roles of women in the nineteenth century. Gerwig depicted the status of women in American society, their duties in a family life and dependence on marriage mainly by using the character of Josephine, Amy and Margaret. Armstrong also used the question of feminism yet she focused on problems such as slavery and political rights of women connected with their newly obtained right to vote.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to examine and uncover major differences of the representation of the women in America's nineteenth century in nowadays movie adaptations in comparison with their original portrayal in the *Little Women* novel by Louisa May Alcott. After exploring the movies, novel and literature connected to this task, I have come to the conclusion that both movie adaptations kept their focus on the roles of women. None of them omitted the importance of acknowledging the problems of the unequal society, the importance of money in that time, and problems connected to it.

A deeper analysis of the movie adaptation *Little Women* by Greta Gerwig from 2019 discovered that the plot was more based on romance than on ordinary life. The story did not focus primarily on the girls' life as they were young, their childhood and daily routines and struggles. The past and present, where adult life was depicted, intertwined. This moved the focus on the problems of adult women, which were in the nineteenth century restricted by society and had to follow specific rules of how to behave and what was allowed, rather than on their games, work and friendship when they were children. From their childhood were picked the important scenes which were connected with the story in present, and the scenes where the girls lived their everyday lives were in the most parts omitted.

The analysis of these two movie adaptations and the novel uncovered that movie scenes in Greta Gerwig's adaptation from 2019 were altered to create a lifelong love of Amy to Laurie, which was not written in the original novel. The romance seen in the movie was excavated in comparison with Alcott's novel where a romantic relationship of Amy and Laurie could not be seen until the last quarter of story. The usage of romance was used even by Gillian Armstrong who enhanced the relationship between John Brook and Meg March, and Josephine March and professor Bhaer. The romantic relationships between her characters were more physically based than in Alcott's novel, and they expressed their affection more openly through kisses and touching.

The purpose was to compare the portrayal of women characters. The results show that same as Alcott's novel depicted the life of all four sisters, Gerwig's adaptation also included the adulthood of all of them. In comparison with them, Armstrong focussed mainly on Josephine's life, her career of writer, relationships and the social taboos and rules she encounters. Josephine's voice provided the narration throughout the whole movie which ended

when she had found her happiness in love. Whereas Gerwig's *Little Women* focussed on the status of women in society, on the different gender roles, and poverty, Armstrong's adaptation included more than these problems. *Little Women* from 1994 further acknowledged the problems of slavery, Abolitionist movement in the nineteenth century that had fought for equality and against child labour, the question of recently approved law which allowed women the right to vote. This shows that even though the movie adaptations were generally more romanticised, the problems in nineteenth-century society were not omitted and both directors kept the idea of inequality between these two genders in their work.

Each adaptation depicts various examples from the original novel to create an accurate description of women's social status, their dependence on the need to marry and the value of wealth in America's nineteenth-century society.

For these reasons, *Little Women* from 1994 and 2019 can be taken as the movie representations of Louisa May Alcott's original novel portraying the life of women in nineteenth-century America.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The portrait of Louisa May Alcott from the years she wrote *Little Women*



(Phelps, et al., 1884, p. 31)

Appendix 2: The Plot of the Novel's Part One

The story starts before Christmas Eve. Four March sisters, Elizabeth, Josephine, Amy and Margaret, sit in front of a fireplace in their home and their mother, who they call Marmee, is currently at work. Their father, in the Civil War, fights and as a priest offers spiritual help to other soldiers. The sisters complain about the poverty, previously used to the wealth from the time when their father was rich and yet did not lose his property when he helped an unfortunate friend. They discuss what gifts they would want, however, in the end settle on a selfless choice and each of them buys their mother one gift and nothing for themselves. When their father is

not home, Marmee helps the poor and offers blankets and winter clothes to men who came back from war. She is selfless and the girls feel the need to please her with their presents.

On the Christmas morning, Mrs. March comes home and tells her daughters about the starving family of Hummels, a widow with her six children that live nearby, and asks if the girls could give them their Christmas breakfast. The girls agree and take the breakfast to their neighbours. Later that day, in the March house, the sisters play a short theatre play for little girls from the village. This is a play written by Josephine and the girls play even the men characters, and when they finish, downstairs is prepared dinner. Mrs. March tells them it is a gift from their neighbour Mr. Laurence, who is an old wealthy man that has lost his little daughter and now raises his grandson Laurie.

In the third chapter called *The Laurence Boy*, Margaret and Jo go to a New Year's party. Josephine meets young Laurie when they both hide from the people in the danceroom. They introduce and enjoy the night by dancing in the hall since Jo has a ruined dress and stained gloves and is therefore prohibited from dancing to not embarrass herself by her look. Young Mr. Laurence does not care. He is as spiritual as Josephine, they even rudely gossip about Margaret's dancing partner as Jo says: "He looked like a grasshopper in a fit when he did the new step. Laurie and I couldn't help laughing." (Alcott, 2017, p. 41). When Meg sprains her ankle, they have to leave and Laurie lends them his carriage.

In the next chapters, the girls live their everyday lives. Amy goes to school, Josephine works for Aunt March and Margaret for the Kings and Elizabeth plays with her dolls and keeps the house clean with their maid Hannah. Jo visits young Laurie when he is sick, and officially meets his grandfather. Old Mr. Laurence allows Beth to play on his piano, listens to her and after she gives him slippers as a gesture of gratitude he grants her a small piano she can have in her house (Alcott, 2017, pp.79-82). Laurie befriends the March girls and the two families grow closer.

Margaret and Josephine are invited to a theatre by Laurie and his teacher John Brook in chapter eight. A theatre was an expensive form of joy in that time and both girls are excited and dressed for this occasion in their best dress. When Amy asks to come with them, Jo dismisses her request. The girls argue and finish with a fight. Upon their return from the theatre Josephine cannot find her unfinished novel. Amy confesses she burnt it when she was hurt and angry. This evolves into a fight and Jo ignores her sister and her pleas for forgiveness. This was the first

grave disagreement the two sisters have and it does not end until Amy nearly drowns. The accident deeply touches Josephine's conscience, especially when she realises it was her fault since she knew that Amy did not hear Laurie's warning that the ice in the middle of the river is still thin, and decided to skate away and leave Amy in the middle alone. "She had cherished her anger till it grew strong and took possession of her, as evil thoughts and feelings always do unless cast out at once." (Alcott, 2017, p. 99).

At night, when Josephine sits with her mother next to her sister's bed, she swears to be more kind and to work on her short temper to prevent similar accidents occurring in the future.

The chapter nine depicts Meg's formal presentation to noble society. Meg tries to live like a girl from wealthy family for two whole weeks, fulfils her dream of not living in poverty, and by the end of this chapter, she sits with her mother and Jo in front of the fireplace and admits she did not enjoyed it as she expected, and is indeed happy to be home.

Meanwhile, June comes, the girls live their life, Jo writes other plays and stories. In chapter twelve, the March sisters meet four Vaughn siblings. Laurie writes the girls a letter and informs them that his friends from England will come and he wishes for them to meet.

As the summer ends, Jo and Laurie share their secrets and she admits to sending her story to a newspaper. This is the first time she shares her work with somebody else than her family and friends. Laurie additionally reveals he saw Margaret's glove in John Brook's pocket. This makes Jo incredibly angry as the idea that a man will come and take her sister from her is unacceptable. In the same chapter, a fortnight later, is Jo's story called *Rival Painters* published under the name 'Miss Josephine March'. This is the start of her career as an amateur author. Her family is proud of her and Jo decides to write and publish another story. She sees this as more than the publicity and praise of her family, whereas it is the first step of being independent, financially secured and able to take care of her family

"Jo's breath gave out here, and, wrapping her head in the paper, she bedewed her little story with a few natural tears, for to be independent and earn the praise of those she loved were the dearest wishes of her heart, and this seemed to be the first step toward that happy end."

(Alcott, 2017, p. 202)

With the upcoming winter, the sisters plan to go on a drive with Laurie but are interrupted by a telegraph from Blank Hospital in Washington, informing them of their father's illness and asking Mrs. March to come and nurse him to health. With this message is everything prepared for Marmee's departure, Laurie is sent to Aunt March to ask for money, Meg helps her to pack her luggage and Jo sells her long hair for twenty-five dollars since she feels guilty for spending her earned money on clothes.

"I hate to borrow as much as Mother does, and I knew Aunt March would croak, she always does, if you ask for a ninepence. Meg gave all her quarterly salary toward the rent, and I only got some clothes with mine, so I felt wicked, and was bound to have some money, if I sold the nose off my face to get it."

(Alcott, 2017, p. 210)

Later at night, Jo cries in her bed as she admits to Meg she misses her hair, however, she is glad to be able to help.

With their mother away, the girls and Hannah continue with their duties, Jo and Meg go to work and Amy helps in the house. Elizabeth visits the Hummels every day since the Hummel's children are sick. She begs Jo and Meg to go and see them instead of her since she herself does not feel alright. When both dismiss her plea, saying they do not have time. In the end, Beth goes alone. The same day, after her return, Jo finds sick Beth in their mother's room and the Hummels's baby dies of scarlet fever.

After Laurie speaks with Amy and promises he will visit every day, her sisters send her away to their Aunt March, so she would not get sick, and Jo is tasked with taking care of sick Beth. Meanwhile, the health of Mr. March gets worse and so does Elizabeth's. Doctor Bangs, who visits the young girl, appeals to Jo to send for their mother who later hurries home to take care of her dying daughter.

Upon chapter twenty, Josephine shares with her mother that Laurie once told her how Mr. Brook still carries with him Meg's lost glove. Jo is horrified when her mother admits she would give her blessing to their relationship since John is an honourable man who promised to earn a comfortable home for them to live in before he proposes a marriage

When Beth starts to feel better, Amy moves back home and on Christmas Eve their father surprises them, when he returns early without letting them know. They eat their

Christmas dinner as a family, with Mr. Laurence, Laurie and Mr. Brook, when their father starts to speak about the change in his daughters. He notices that Meg's hands are no longer so soft and beautiful, and says he welcomes this change since it means her vanity is no longer a problem. He admires how Jo no longer acts as a boy and becomes a selfless woman with better manners. In Beth he notices she is not the shy little girl he left there a year ago, and also praises Amy for her unselfish behaviour, the kindness she shows and for her patience.

In the last chapter of the novel's part one, Mr. Brook comes to Margaret and confesses his love to her. She rejects him with words that she is too young and even when he promises to wait and begs her to learn to love him she dismisses him. That is until Aunt March comes with a wish to see her nephew and is horrified to learn about what just happened. Both women start to argue and Meg in spite of anger tells her aunt she will marry whomever she wants and that she would be lucky to have Mr. Brook. Aunt March is unable to accept that her niece would marry such a poor man and promises to never leave her any inheritance and to not help her when they will need money.

Appendix 3: The Plot of the Novel's Part Two

The second part of the novel continues three years after the first part ended. The Civil War is over, Mr. March is the minister of their small parish as he was before he went to war, Mrs. March helps widowed wives of soldiers who never came home. John Brook served in the war for one year, was sent home after he was wounded, and now works as a bookkeeper and earns a living for him and Meg. Even Meg grew as a woman, and although she still envies her friend Sallie her big house and things she can buy only with a great amount of money, Margaret realised how lucky she is that John earned their house and property with his hard and patient labour. Josephine never returned to work for Aunt March, who now cherishes young Amy to whom she offers to pay the best teachers to give her painting lessons. Jo rather started to write and sell her stories to *The Spread Eagle* which publishes them and gives her a dollar for each. Elizabeth never truly got her full health back and therefore Jo took special care of her. Laurie left for college and often brought home his friends who were enamoured by Jo and Amy. The older sister still does not care about boys and love, more focused on acting as one then loving him, and Amy learns how to manipulate and obtain whatever she wants with her gift of grace.

In chapter twenty-five, Margaret and John marry. The wedding is simple, not as expensive as would Aunt March like and when she leaves the wedding, she again declares, they will regret it when the struggle for money comes.

The next three chapters focus on Amy, Jo and Meg's everyday life, their accomplishments and concerns. In the twenty-sixth chapter, Amy dedicates her time to different types of art as pen-and-ink drawings, painting, charcoal portraits and sculpting. The last one had an abrupt end, when she tried to make a sculpture of her foot but the plaster hardened rapidly then she expected and her foot had to be freed with the help of a knife. She also organised her first party for the girls who were in her painting classes which helps her understand that hosting a gathering is not an easy task especially if she does not have enough money.

Literary Lessons, depict Josephine's success in writing and publishing her stories. They are sold without a problem and it gives her the courage to write something bigger. She never expected the one hundred dollar check that came back from *The Spread Eagle* and the kind letter which was sent with it. She sends Marmee with Beth on a long holiday to sea and decides to publish her novel, which she hid in a fear of being judged. The publisher writes her to alter it, to make it shorter and leave out the descriptive scene where she explains why what is happening. She is not happy with the result but is paid three hundred dollars which is more than she ever got for her previous stories.

The twenty-eighth chapter is primarily aimed at Margaret's married life. Without a maid, she has to cook, clean and keep their little house intact. She tries to be the perfect wife to John yet her attempts are not always a success. She missteps many times while cooking meals she only ever saw how Hannah prepared. They argue and have to learn to tolerate the mistakes and faults each of them have. Still, with John's patience and Margaret's determination, they always solve their problems. Unfortunately, the arguments about house and cooking are not the only obstacles of the married couple. John is not the wealthy man Meg desired as a young girl and though he works until nights he does not earn enough money for more than a simple life. When she goes with her friend Sallie and buys silk for a dress which is too expensive for their expenses, they have a fight about finances when Meg complains: "I try to be contented, but it is hard, and I'm tired of being poor." (Alcott, 2017, p. 369). Being poor, John was always afraid he will not be able to give his wife the things she wants and even after she apologises, he is not able to forget about his failure as a husband who is supposed to provide for his wife. Everything is solved, when Meg takes the fabric to her friend and asks her if she would buy it from her. Sallie, being her kind friend, accepts and Margaret exchanges the earned money for John's new

greatcoat. After this experience their life is peaceful, their relationship is loving and soon Meg gives birth to twins.

In the chapter *Calls*, Josephine and Amy are obligated to do six calls they owe in one day. Amy forces Jo to dress properly and to do her hair. In front of each house, Amy educates Jo about proper behaviour, which always depends on the current family they visit. The first call does not end well, with Jo not talking and acting unsociable which was disrespectful on these visits. When they visit Mrs. Lamb, Amy suffers from her boring stories and she overhears as her older sister tells the young girls about their funny stories with pride and love she keeps for Amy. This is an important moment for the girls' relationship, because they never really praise each other and mostly just disagree. Only Amy does not see the amusing side of the stories, rather is embarrassed by them and when they finish the call, she is angry with Jo. The girls end their calls by visiting Aunt March where they also meet their Aunt Carrol.

When the time comes, Aunt Carrol needs to leave on her trip to Europe, together with her husband and daughter, and she chooses Amy as her companion. Amy sees this as an opportunity to work on her painting and to let her talent grow. Jo is disappointed when Aunt Carrol does not offer companionship to her, though she is the older sister, yet Marmee urges her to not be jealous and be patient, kind and let her sister enjoy her happiness.

In the chapter *Our Foreign Correspondent*, Amy writes letters from her journey throughout the different cities they visit. She describes their encounter with the Vaughn boys, Fred and Frank, in London, the things she saw and places they visited. Later, she writes from Paris, where they again meet Fred Vaughn who helps them to take care of things. From Heidelberg Amy writes about a possibility she misread Fred's behaviour, which she until now considered as an act of friendship yet since his departure she realised he might have courted her. In her letter she announces to her mother that if he were to ask her for her hand she will accept. "One of us must marry well. Meg didn't, Jo won't, Beth can't yet, so I shall, and make everything okay all round." (Alcott, 2017, pp. 417-418).

Back in their family home, Josephine starts to think that Beth has feelings for Laurie and tries to help them with their relationship, unaware that Beth might not be the one Laurie loves. When she urges him to focus his attention on one girl, she realises his feelings for her are more than just friendship. At night, Jo confesses to Mrs. March she wishes to leave for New York where she would work for Mrs. Kirk as a teacher of her children, and could obtain new

inspiration for her stories. Further, Jo admits she does not share Laurie's feelings, merely platonic love and friendship, and therefore needs to leave before she hurts him.

While Jo lives in New York, she writes her mother letters, shares her experience with the Kirk children and describes her meeting with professor Bhaer, who came from Berlin with two orphaned children who he adopted after his sister's death, and now earns his living by teaching. She emphasises that professor Bhaer is at least forty years old so her mother does not need to fear she would ever share with him more than friendship. Through the whole chapter *Jo's Journal*, Josephine writes more about her encounters with the professor and describes how they exchanged gifts for Christmas.

In chapter thirty-four, Jo experiences a writing crisis when the reviews for her next story are not what she hoped for. She begins to write sensational stories since it is what people after the end of Civil War read and *Weekly Volcano* wants to print. She writes them as an anonymous author, not able to share her name in a fear to be recognised by her friends or family. A bad conscience avows feelings of uneasiness and doubt, particularly when professor Bhaer criticises the 'newspaper brags'.

Chapter *Heartache* takes place within the home of Marchs, after Laurie graduates. Josephine comes back from New York for a visit and Laurie confesses his love to her. When she rejects him with an apology that she is unable to love him in the right way. He accuses her of loving professor Bhaer and they have an argument. Before long, Laurie and his grandfather leave for Europe. It is spring when Jo eventually returns home from New York. Beth's health gets worse. She feels her end is close and does not want to concern her family.

In Nice, Amy meets Laurie. She fears for Beth yet her family appeals to her to stay and enjoy her travels. They spend a lot of time together and Amy starts to see how Laurie changed to a lazy, careless and selfish man. They have an argument about his behaviour yet Laurie only dismisses her opinion. In that moment, Amy, who always acted properly and did not argue with a man of higher social status than was hers, tells Laurie: "You men tell us we are angels, and say we can make you what we will, but the instant we honestly try to do you good, you laugh at us and won't listen, which proves how much your flattery is worth." (Alcott, 2017, pp. 535-536).

Meanwhile, Elizabeth gets worse and gradually stops doing the things she loves. Jo spent every day with her and when the spring comes, Beth dies.

Chapter forty-one describes how Amy realises she does not want to live in a loveless marriage with Fred and rejects his marriage proposal. When Jo's letter comes to inform her about Beth's death, Laurie hurries back to Amy from Germany. Upon his arrival he sees Amy differently when her tender side captures him. They spend their days together and Laurie gently begins to imply his intention to ask Amy to be his wife. Once, when they rowed and each held one oar, Amy declares they pull together well, to which Laurie answers with an indirect marriage proposal: "So well that I wish we might always pull in the same boat. Will you, Amy?" (Alcott, 2017, p. 566).

Home, Jo mourns Beth's passing, writes her latest novel and thinks that marriage after all might not be such a bad thing when she sees how happy Meg is with her husband. She misses professor Bhaer since she feels alone and the empty room brings her only sadness, yet when the news about Amy and Laurie's engagement comes, she is pleasantly surprised.

After Laurie and Amy come back to the March home, they are already married, since Aunt Carrol did not want to let her travel alone, only with Mr. Laurence and Laurie. Upon their arrival, the happiness comes back to the March family, Jo finds new energy and happiness in life and when Laurie describes their future, how they will be happy, she feels young again as if her misery and pain again left her. (Alcott, 2017, p. 586)

The March family lives their life constantly and before the novel ends, professor Bhaer surprises Jo when he visits her. They spend time together and when he is about to leave they profess their feelings, pleased that the other reciprocates their love. (Alcott, 2017, pp. 631-632)

One year later, in the final chapter called *Harvest Time*, Aunt March dies and Jo inherits her house. In there she and professor Bhaer open school for young boys and spend their days by teaching and raising these young children. Amy and Laurie have a baby and Mrs. March celebrates her sixtieth birthday.

RÉSUMÉ

Hlavním cílem této bakalářské práce je představit román *Malé ženy* (1869) napsaný americkou autorkou Louisa May Alcott v 19. století, a porovnat jej s jeho dvěma filmovými adaptacemi. Předmětem zájmu se staly dvě stejnojmenná filmová zpracování, a to z roku 2019, kterou režírovala Greta Gerwig, a druhou premiérovanou v roce 1994 v režii Gillian Armstrong. Na základě komparace bylo primárním záměrem analyzovat reprezentaci žen a jejich postavení v těchto třech zvolených dílech. S využitím poznatků z historického a kulturního kontextu, rozdílů v narativech, konstrukce ústředních ženských postav včetně a jejich společenské roli, analýze umožnila dojít k závěru, že obě adaptace románové předlohy představují dostačující vyobrazení tehdejší společnosti, jak ji popsala Louisa May Alcott ve svém originálním románu.

ANNOTATION

Jméno a příjmení:	Kateřina Šimková
Katedra nebo ústav:	Ústav cizích jazyků
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Josef Nevařil, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2022

Název práce:	Malé ženy – komparace knihy a filmových adaptací z roku 1994 a 2019
Název práce v angličtině:	Little Women - comparison of the novel and film adaptations from 1994 and 2019
Anotace práce:	Bakalářská práce je zaměřena na vyobrazení ženských postav a jejich postavení v tehdejší společnosti v románu Malé ženy (1869) od Louisa May Alcott a jeho dvou filmových adaptací z let 1994 a 2019. Cílem výzkumu je zhodnotit, do jaké míry filmové adaptace odpovídají původnímu románu a zda byly jejich role a postavení žen v těchto filmech upraveny.
Klíčová slova:	role žen, práva žen, hnutí za práva žen, chudoba, sociální status, sociální třídy, sňatek, Amerika v devatenáctém století, občanská válka
Anotace práce v angličtině	This bachelor thesis focuses on a portrayal of women characters and their social status in Louisa May Alcott's novel <i>Little Women</i> (1869) and its two movie adaptations from 1994 and 2019. The aim is to analyse

	whereas these two movie adaptations depict an accurate portrayal of women's roles that is presented in the original novel.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	women roles, women rights, Women's Rights movement, poverty, social status, social classes, marriage, nineteenth-century America, Civil War
Přílohy vázané v práci:	Appendix 1: The portrait of Louisa May Alcott from the years she wrote Little Women Appendix 2: The Plot of the Novel's Part One Appendix 3: The Plot of the Novel's Part Two
Rozsah práce:	36 + 9 strany přílohy
Jazyk práce:	Angličtina