

**FEMINIST REPRESENTATION AS SEEN IN *LITTLE WOMEN* AND
PEREMPUAN BERKALUNG SORBAN: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

A GRADUATING PAPER

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Gaining the Bachelor

Degree in English Department



By:

Lisa Roslina

18101050008

STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
SUNAN KALIJAGA
YOGYAKARTA

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF ADAB AND CULTURAL SCIENCES
STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF SUNAN KALIJAGA
YOGYAKARTA
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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

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Yogyakarta, 26 Desember 2022

The signature,

Lisa Roslina
NIM: 18101050008



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SUNAN KALIJAGA
YOGYAKARTA



**KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SUNAN KALIJAGA
FAKULTAS ADAB DAN ILMU BUDAYA**

Jl. Marsda Adi Sucipto, Yogyakarta, 55281, Telp./Fax. (0274) 513949

Web: <http://adab.uin-suka.ac.id> Email: adab@uin-suka.ac.id

NOTA DINAS

Hal: Skripsi

a.n. Lisa Roslina

Yth.

Dekan Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya

UIN Sunan Kalijaga

Di Yogyakarta

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Setelah memeriksa, meneliti, dan memberikan arahan untuk perbaikan atas skripsi saudara:

Nama : Lisa Roslina
NIM : 18101050008
Prodi : Sastra Inggris
Fakultas : Adab dan Ilmu Budaya
Judul : **FEMINIST REPRESENTATION AS SEEN IN *LITTLE WOMEN*
AND *PEREMPUAN BERKALUNG SORBAN*: A COMPARATIVE
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Yogyakarta, 26 Desember 2022

Pembimbing

Dr. Danial Hidayatullah, S.S., M.Hum.

NIP: 19760405 200901 1 016



**KEMENTERIAN AGAMA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SUNAN KALIJAGA
FAKULTAS ADAB DAN ILMU BUDAYA**

Jl. Marsda Adisucipto Telp. (0274) 513949 Fax. (0274) 552883 Yogyakarta 55281

PENGESAHAN TUGAS AKHIR

Nomor : B-93/Un.02/DA/PP.00.9/01/2023

Tugas Akhir dengan judul : Feminist Representation As Seen in *Little women* and *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban: A Comparative Analysis*

yang dipersiapkan dan disusun oleh:

Nama : LISA ROSLINA
Nomor Induk Mahasiswa : 18101050008
Telah diujikan pada : Jumat, 30 Desember 2022
Nilai ujian Tugas Akhir : A-

dinyatakan telah diterima oleh Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

TIM UJIAN TUGAS AKHIR



Ketua Sidang
Dr. Daniah Hidayatullah, SS., M.Hum
SIGNED

Valid ID: 63c6208eda191



Penguji I
Dr. Witriani, S.S. M.Hum.
SIGNED

Valid ID: 63c609c3ad934



Penguji II
Ulyati Retno Sari, S.S. M.Hum.
SIGNED

Valid ID: 63c549d1bbdf4



Yogyakarta, 30 Desember 2022
UIN Sunan Kalijaga
Dekan Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya
Dr. Muhammad Wildan, M.A.
SIGNED

Valid ID: 63c62d0e89d6

FEMINIST REPRESENTATION AS SEEN IN *LITTLE WOMEN* AND *PEREMPUAN BERKALUNG SORBAN*: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

By: Lisa Roslina

ABSTRACT

Little Women is a literary work written by Louisa May Alcott. This novel tells about the struggles of four sisters who live in deprived economic conditions. While novels *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* is a novel written by Abidah El-Khalieqy, which tells about Annisa's life as the daughter of a kiyai from the Al-Huda Islamic Boarding School who suffers from gender inequality. This research aims to look at the level of struggle of the main characters Jo March and Annisa in fighting gender injustice, by looking at the level of their struggle it will show awareness in acting to get out of oppression and see the cultural implications of their struggle. The researcher uses liberal feminist theory from Mary Wolstencroft with a focus on educational equality, household economics, and gender politics. This study use narratology as a method to explain and express the struggles of the two female characters. The results of this study: 1). Annisa in the novel *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* presents a more feminist character compared to Jo March in terms of educational equality, economic and political gender 2). The cultural implications of the two main character struggles describe the existence of women who are independent, intelligent and not oppressed women. 3). Eastern culture practiced in *Women with Turbans* is more conservative than western culture and the Christian religious background in Jo March does not prohibit women's freedom. 4). The similarities between Jo March and Annisa are seen from their very heroic characteristics in fighting for and proving their existence as women, this can be seen from their independence in the family economy, and their love of reading books.

Keywords: *Struggle, Gender Inequality, Feminist Character*

FEMINIST REPRESENTATION AS SEEN IN *LITTLE WOMEN* AND *PEREMPUAN BERKALUNG SORBAN*: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRAK

Little Women merupakan sebuah karya sastra yang ditulis oleh Louisa May Alcott. Novel ini menceritakan tentang perjuangan keempat saudara perempuan yang hidup dalam kondisi ekonomi yang serba kekurangan. Sedangkan novel *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* adalah novel yang ditulis oleh Abidah El-Khalieqy, yang menceritakan tentang kehidupan Annisa sebagai anak kyai dari Pesantren Al-Huda yang mendapatkan ketidakadilan gender. Riset ini bertujuan untuk melihat tingkat perjuangan karakter utama Jo March dan Annisa dalam melawan ketidakadilan gender, dengan melihat tingkat perjuangannya akan terlihat kesadaran dalam bertindak untuk keluar dari penindasan serta melihat implikasi budaya dari perjuangan keduanya. Peneliti menggunakan teori liberal feminism dari Marry Wolstencroft dengan focus pada kesetaraan pendidikan, ekonomi rumah tangga, dan politik gender. Penelitian menerapkan naratologi sebagai metode untuk menjelaskan dan mengungkapkan perjuangan dua tokoh perempuan tersebut. Hasil dari penelitian ini: 1). Annisa dalam novel *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* lebih menghadirkan karakter feminis dibandingkan Jo March dalam kesetaraan pendidikan, economic and politic gender 2). Implikasi budaya dari kedua perjuangan karakter utama menggambarkan eksistensi perempuan yang mandiri, cerdas dan tidak menjadi perempuan tertindas. 3). Budaya timur yang dipraktikkan dalam *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* lebih konservatif dibandingkan budaya barat and background agama kristen pada Jo March tidak melarang kebebasan terhadap perempuan. 4). Persamaan Jo March dan Annisa dilihat dari karakteristik sangat heroik dalam memperjuangkan dan membuktikan eksistensinya sebagai perempuan, ini dilihat dari kemandirian dalam ekonomi keluarga, dan menyukai baca buku.

Kata Kunci: *Perjuangan, Ketidakadilan Gender, Karakter Feminist*

MOTTO

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.

(Adzariyat: 56).



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DEDICATION

My beloved parents, H.Hasan and Kamlah

They act in the rain, sun, and the hardest conditions.

My beloved Sirajudin, Rahma Wati, David and Rukayah

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Lastly, I know that this graduating paper is far from perfect. Therefore any comments or suggestions from all the readers will be accepted. I hope this paper can be beneficial for all.

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Yogyakarta, 26 December 2022

The researcher,



Lisa Roslina

Student ID: 18101050008

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The *Little Women* and *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* are two different novel in setting, storyline, and theme. However, Jo March and Annisa have similarities in characterizations. Jo March is a woman described as independent, intelligent, and has a firm stand. Jo March and Annisa have the same interest in literature, explicitly writing stories. They dare to do things that other female characters in novels do not in order to pursue their dreams. Jo and Annisa both dream of a free life/liberty as a woman.

Little Woman is a novel written by Louise May Alcott. This novel tells the story of a family who lives in an environment full of social conflicts. This novel invites the audience to see the condition of women in the 19th Century when the status and presence of women were still significantly underestimated. This novel takes a classic background during the Second World War. American Society still applied classic styles to everyday life in this era, such as tufted dresses decorated with knick-knacks and horse-drawn carriages. The clothes and jewelry describe the social status of that time. Social class is distinguished based on wealth, education, and power (heredity). The representation of wealth and power is very dominant because the setting of the novel's story takes place during the Civil War, those affected by the war and those who are not. It is primarily the lower-middle-class people who must suffer the most impact, as described by the March family.

The March family, who did not have sons, forced their father to take up state duties because he did not have sons, leaving his four daughters struggling to live independently in deprived economic conditions. One chosen path is through marriage, a form of open social stratification. One can switch from one stratum to another. Women, this happened to the March family. The March family only had female descendants; and therefore Jo March's father had to go to war. Women were prohibited from participating in war and writing was considered taboo, even though Jo March wanted to go to war with his father. Jo March did instead; she wrote even though it was secretly without his mother's knowledge.

Jo March is the second child of four sisters. She was a writer, armed with a writing utensil and a thousand words as her weapon; Jo slowly crosses boundaries and realizes her dream as a writer. She does not want to be stuck with marriage, and he is more focused on achieving his goals. Jo March left Massachusetts, United States, to try her luck in New York. Jo March's independent, stubborn, persistent, and intelligent nature made her survive even though publishers repeatedly rejected her writer. Jo March is a woman who cares about her family's situation. She often communicates and listens to her mother's story of facing life challenges because her husband left her because of the American war. Her mother formed a strong soul and was full of responsibility to the family. Jo March is one of those women aware of the shift away from social stereotypes and does not want to rely on herself as an object offered to rich and married men because her social status is a priority. Jo March realized that she could get out of the mainstream of women's lives by being literate, writing, and doing other jobs.

In various regions and eras, the stereotype of women is still an interesting issue. In Indonesia, gender issues are increasing day by day. This happened in the Indonesian novel entitled *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*, written by Abidah El-Khalieq. This novel has a romantic theme that tells about Annisa's life journey of the main character. Annisa is a woman with a good personality, brave, and religious. Annisa, who lives in an Islamic boarding school, still has strict patriarchal rules, whereas masculinity dominates social organization. Annisa, as the main character, feels different from her older siblings. They can learn many things they should not, such as learn to ride a horse, have the opportunity to choose what they want, get a higher education, and go to another city to study.

All her activities are restricted because she is a woman. Annisa feels she is not equal to her two brothers from here on out. Annisa tries to break the rules by learning what she wants, including riding a horse. Moreover, she was forced to marry Samsudin, the man her parents chose. During the marriage, she was subjected to sexual harassment and physical abuse. So, her marriage was not happy and ended in divorce.

The novel *Little Women* and *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* have similar heroine characters when viewed from the characterizations. Jo March in *Little Women* and Annisa in *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* are presented as intelligent, independent, and strong women. The report is very similar to that of Jo March and Annisa, which can reinforce characters in this novel.

Feminism in the characters of Jo March and Annisa is also supported by their struggle to demand equal rights between men and women in the novels. For

example, Jo March and Anissa do not want their lives to depend on men, and they choose to achieve their dreams because they feel they have the same rights and opportunities as men. However, they also do not limit themselves only because of the stereotypes of women embedded in the environment in which they live.

Comparing the two characters in two different novels with two nationalities is important because we can see the differences in their struggles. After all, we can see that the feminist challenge of culture in the novel is different from comparing these struggles. When a woman has the awareness to act on her previous situation, she is aware of fighting oppression. Therefore, she can be a little more advanced in fighting for her rights as a woman, both in domestic and social environments. On the other hand, when women cannot provide more profound struggles and problems, they will be increasingly trapped in a culture that is considered the second sex of men or a patriarchal culture.

Jo March and Anise's characters struggle to achieve their dream of living freely as women. This comparison shows that the two characters fight for their rights through more life problems. In addition, we can also see the culture of western society and eastern culture in responding to the existence of feminist figures such as Jo March and Anise. Western society (America) has begun to open up to women like Jo March, while Eastern culture remains closed and considers women's position far below men's. However, Jo March and Anissa *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* have differences and similarities in character.

Therefore, the writer wants to analyze the feminist character and women's struggle in representing the feminist character by using the Liberal feminism

theory by Mary Wolstecraft and John Stuart Mill in the novel *Little Woman* and *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*. Liberal feminism is a tool for knowing the root of gender inequality and giving men and women the same opportunity in domestic or public. Liberal feminism theory and narratology method helps researchers to solve the problem formulation by looking at struggles that represent the feminist character of Jo March and Annisa in the story.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study explained above, the researcher arranges the following question as follows:

1. What are Jo March's and Annisa's struggles against gender inequality in the *Little Women* and *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* novel?
2. Why do Jo March and Annisa struggle, and what are the cultural implications of such struggles against gender inequality in *Little Woman* and *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban's* novel?

1.3 Objective of Study

Based on the problem statement in this paper, this study aims to know the struggles of characters feminists in Jo March *Little Women* and Annisa *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* using the theory of liberal feminism and how the cultural implication of the struggles in the novel.

1.4 Significance of Study

The significance of this research is to be one of the references for literary studies such as theory application in graduating paper and their reflection in

comparative literature. It is not because of who is superior, but for understanding the cultural and human lives in the context of literary works and especially for the proposed research, the feminist characters of Jo March and Anissa.

1.5 Literature Review

The research has found fourth research related to the object, they are:

Melinda Septiana, a university Sanata Dharma Yogyakarta student in 2020, the first research the title of her thesis is "Liberal feminism, Depicted by Jo March as the Main Character in Greta Gerwig's movie Script Little Women." This research discusses how Jo March is the main character in Little Women and knows the main characters show feminist liberals. This research uses the feminist approach and theory of Character and Characterization, and cinematic point of view and then uses the library method. The study focuses only on the object and the main character Jo March. Therefore, the theory and problem are different.

Belladina Kusuma Indriani, a student from Muhammadiyah University Surakarta, 2021, writes the second research. The title of her Thesis is "Independent Woman portrayed in Jo March in little women movie (2019): a feminist approach". This research discusses women's independence towards Jo March's figure in Little Women movie (2019) using a feminist approach and Descriptive Qualitative method. However, this research also figures out the feminist values of Jo March Characters. The results of this research are two conclusions. First, there are four kinds of independence portrayed in Jo March: freedom in society, education, economy, and workplace. The second feminist value in Jo March's character is breaking the patriarchal system, woman's

emancipation, and breaking woman stereotypes. The difference of this research is about the theory and the main characters show character feminist in her struggles to break the gender inequality for equality in education, economics and politic, and the cultural implication of such struggles by using the narratology method and also comparative study.

Priska Valensia Liebertus, a student of University Sanata Dharma, 2021, write the third research. The title of her thesis is *The Fight against Gender Inequality in Greta Gerwing's Little Women movie Script Revealed by the Women Characters*. This research discusses the gender inequality that the women in the March family experienced and how they fight gender inequality. There are two objectives of this research. The first is how the women characters experience gender inequality. The second is how women fight against gender inequality. The method used is library research Theory Characterization and liberal feminism theory—the results of this research show two things. The first one shows the gender inequality that the women characters in the March family. Her analysis determines that women are expected to be feminine, gentle, and supposed to be married. Moreover, the second shows that women can be independent and make a good living by themselves, not depending on men and marriage. The difference of this research is about the theory and the main characters show character feminist in her struggles break the gender inequality for equality in education, economics and Politic and the cultural implication of such struggles by using the narratology method and also comparative study.

The fourth research is written by Farida Hannum Siagian, Dr. I Wy. Dirgeyasa T. M.Hum dan Indra Hartoyo. The title of the Journal, Feminism in Patriarchal Society, Reflected in The Main Character of Perempuan Berkalung Sorban Movie. The research used the descriptive qualitative method. The study results showed that the main character reflected the feminist variety. Based on the Feminist Thought book, there are three varieties of feminism Liberal feminism, Radical feminism, and Socialist Marxist feminism. The main character reflected the three kinds of feminism Liberal Feminism, Radical feminism, and Socialist Marxist Feminism. Annisa reflects that she wants to get equal with the man without any discrimination gender. Second, feminism in the patriarchal society is reflected in Annisa to represent the women's movement against all objections toward a woman. Each utterance of Annisa represents that she is against all forms of women's discrimination in private patriarchy and public patriarchy. The research focuses on the analysis of feminism in a patriarchal society. The main character can be interpreted through Annisa as the main character and sentences of the movie, and it is found that the main character reflected feminism in a patriarchal society. The difference is comparative study and, more specifically about struggles in education, economic and political and the implications of the struggles of Annisa as main Characters.

1.6 Theoretical Approach

To analyze this paper, the researcher uses liberal feminism theory, a variant of feminism. The central concept of liberal feminism is that both men and women have the same rights and opportunities. The research used the theory feminism

liberal that focuses on equality in education, economics, and politics by Mary Wollstonecraft's reading, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. It is inferred that women lacked liberty and did not have the freedom to make their own decisions. They were bound to the boundaries of their homes, husbands, and children (1996:173). It is Wollstonecraft who presents a sight of women being strong in body and mind, where she is not a captive in the domestic sphere. Mary Wollstonecraft emphasizes women's education, which is essential in the economic and social fields. Wollstonecraft strives to find a solution for women, and educational generalization is the solution. Equating women's education with men's education will make a woman an "independent woman," not just a doll and a toy for men.

In support of Wollstonecraft's idea - John Stuart Mill's and Harriet Taylor, who are first-wave feminists, insisted that a society could attain gender equality by providing women the same political and economic rights as men enjoy (Tong 2006:16). Mill points out that the society's double standards are hurtful for women and states that it does not justify to prohibit women from trying something, just because they are not capable of doing it similar to men. Mill specifies,

“What women by nature cannot do, it is quite superfluous to forbid them from doing. What they can do, but not as well as the men who are their competitors, competition suffices to exclude them from”. (Tong, 2009:19).

Meanwhile, Tong also conveys that liberal feminism is about women being equal to men. She mentions that the overall effort of liberal feminism is about “a just

and compassionate society in which freedom flourishes” (2009:13), where women and men can prosper equally. Meanwhile, men are free to develop themselves as optimally as possible. If women are given the same opportunities, they can develop themselves optimally as long as they are given the same education as men.

1.7 Methods of Research

Method of research is one procedure or technique in a study. Research methods involve data collection, analysis, and interpretation that the researchers propose for their study (Creswell, 2016:3). This part explains the types of research, data source, data collection technique, and data analysis technique.

1.7.1 Type of Research

The research used a qualitative descriptive method to find feminist Characters in the novel *Little women* and *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*. According to Creswell (2016:4), qualitative research is a method to explore and understand the meaning many individuals or groups ascribe to social or humanitarian problems.

1.7.2 Data Source

In research, the researcher uses two types of primary and secondary data. The preliminary data are taken from the novel *Little Women* and *Perempuan Berkalung Surban* as the source of data. Primary data contains details of the chapters and paragraphs in the novel. The main analysis focuses on Jo March and Annisa's struggles against gender inequality and what are the cultural implications

of *Little women* and *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*. The secondary data were from journals, books, articles, and other sources supporting the formal object and theory.

1.7.3 Data Collection Technique

In this research, the primary data is the novel *Little Women* and *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*. To collect the data, the research uses the narratology method. Using narratology helps researchers interpret the text in a novel. The researcher takes some steps to get the data that the researcher needs. First, read the novel script closely to find the data using liberal feminism theory. Second, make heading a category of lingual data and mark it using the liberal feminism approach to equality in education, economics, and Politik from the theory and then make practice, discourse, and symbol in the novel that shows Jo March and Anisa's struggles by looking at narration and dialogue in the novel related to the problem to answer the research question. Then, the research also collects supporting data from the internet and other sources. After collecting data, describe the context of the struggles of Feminist Characters in Jo March *Little Women* and Anissa *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*.

1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

The research does some steps to analyze the data in the novel using the liberal feminist theory and narratology method. First, the researcher reads closely and chooses the important data in the novel *Little Women* and Annisa *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*, then marks the words, sentences, and paragraphs that narrate

the feminist characters and show the struggles against inequality-related two variables in the novels. Second, the researcher links one data to another and analyses the aspects of feminist characters, such as the characterizations and the signs of the character with liberal feminism theory. Third, the researcher concludes all the analysis.

1.8 Paper Organization

The paper is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is introduction that consist of; the background of the study, research question, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, literary reviews, theoretical approach, method of research, and paper organization. The second chapter presents the intrinsic elements of the novel *Little women* and *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*. The third chapter consists of a discussion of the analysis. The last chapter contains the conclusion and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.1 Conclusion

The struggles of Jo March and Annisa in the story are in three categories; equality education, household economics, and gender politics in fighting gender inequality. The research uses the Liberal feminist theory from Mary Winstenraf, which finds the patriarchal tradition in the novel *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* is very conservative in that the Islamic religious doctrine does not defend freedom for women and its emancipation movement. The presence of Annisa as an intelligent woman who is a critic of the interpretation of texts in Islam makes equal rights between men and women in the public sphere. Annisa questions and protest the prevailing teachings. Meanwhile, the background of Christianity in the novel *Little Women* gives freedom of movement to women.

From the discussion of the comparison of the two characters in the story *Little Women* and *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*, the result Annisa more of a struggle against gender discrimination because of the challenges faced by Annisa as the main character since the beginning of the story getting discrimination at her parents and her environment. Then in fighting for her rights, Annisa spends more energy and thought. In contrast, Jo March's childhood was not pressured by the domestic culture of the story. Jo March, at a young age, faced challenges struggling when the pressure of the economy because his family was insolvent and as a result of the economic crisis due to the fraternal war. Then viewed from the characters and characteristics between the two characters have the same

Character as heroin, and they have struggled with their respective cultural contexts. Jo March and Annisa love read books and writing, so they have the power to influence her writing. Jo and Annisa have the same characteristic, such as tomboys, heroin, and independent women.

In fighting for educational equality between Jo March and Annisa, the researcher found that Jo March did not experience discrimination within the family or community. Economic limitations prevented Jo March from continuing her education because she was looking for money to meet her family's needs. Meanwhile, Annisa was not allowed to continue her education from the start and did not have the freedom to accomplish her goals. Following the economic struggle between the two, Jo March struggles to support her family by working at Aunt March, writing, and building a school with her husband from the wealth she has inherited. While the struggle of the household economist Annisa when her husband died, she became a mother who raised her child independently. For gender politics, the two characters lead to existence and gain freedom and gender equality in their environment.

From the results of the struggle between Jo March and Annisa, there is a picture of changes in a patriarchal culture in education, economics, and politics. This show that education changes people's perspective on how important education is for a better quality of life.

4.2 Suggestion

The struggle of female characters was represent feminist characters in the novels *Little Women* and *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* will be more interesting

to analyze from different perspectives using different theories of feminist radical, other feminist theory, and method in approach. Researchers suggest conducting a comparative study because there still needs to be more explored from the discussion on this topic about feminist characters and another topic.



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