

# FEMININE MYSTIQUE

1. “ FEMALE
2. Characteristic of or appropriate or unique to women
3. Of, relating to, or constituting the gender that ordinarily includes most words or grammatical forms referring to females
4. Being an unstressed and usually additional final syllable after the final complete foot in a line of verse
5. Of rhyme : having an unstressed final syllable
6. Having the final chord occurring on a weak beat”

(“definition of contemporary,” 2019)



# TAMING OF THE SHREW

“The explicit and implicit subjects of this play—arranged marriages, the authority of fathers and husbands, the obedience expected from daughters and wives, the economic helplessness of most women—were issues and experiences that touched the lives of everyone in Shakespeare’s audience. While modern interpreters may see *Shrew* as a high-spirited comedy about role-playing of game-playing, they suppress the knowledge that men, not only on stage, but off, wrote the play and assigned the roles, chose the game and made the rules.” (Fursman, n.d.)

Petruchio (Kevin Black) and  
Katherina (Emily Jordan) from the  
2003 Carmel Shakespeare Festival  
production at the Forest Theater.  
(2003). Retrieved from:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/  
The\\_Taming\\_of\\_the\\_Shrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Taming_of_the_Shrew)





“Shakespeare’s plays open themselves up to a world of interpretation. Whether in discourse, historical context, symbolism, or intentions to leave the audience in conflict with themselves, there is no dispute about his plays lending themselves to every reader’s response. My response to reading “The Taming of the Shrew” was a strange one. I understand that this play is meant to be one of Shakespeare’s comedies, and one of his most popular ones at that; however, there seemed to me to be an awkward seriousness in Petruchio’s treatment of Katherine that bordered on something darkly misogynistic rather than comedic. In that response, it seems as though I’m not alone. “The Taming of the Shrew” has faced many feminist critiques assessing patriarchy, misogyny, woman as commodity, and subordination of woman’s story within a larger, more “serious” frame of class.

In both *The Taming* and *Pygmalion* there is a similar frame of a subordinate figure, the characters of Christopher Sly and Alfred Doolittle, who transcends his own social status. (Pederson 17). Such a frame, but in comparison to *The Rape of Lucrece* rather than *Pygmalion*, is explored by Annabel Patterson in her essay “Framing the Taming,” in which she invokes Ann Thompson’s introduction to *The Taming of the Shrew* in the Cambridge Edition, stating that, “Thompson emphasizes the complex meta-theatrical effect whereby the taming plot is mimetically and hence ontologically subordinated to the Sly plot, so that the woman’s story must be regarded as less ‘real’ than it seems.” Patterson explains that in the framing of *Taming of the Shrew* there is a direct correlation between Sly’s superior/inferior, master/subject class distinction and that of the subordination of wife to husband, as delivered in Katherine’s final speech.” (Furstnau, n.d.)

# “FROM WOMEN’S EYES THIS DOCTRINE I DERIVE. THEY SPARKLE STILL THE RIGHT PROMETHEAN FIRE. THEY ARE THE BOOKS, THE ARTS, THE ACADEMES...”

(W.Shakespeare, Love’s Labour’s Lost)

“Patterson also touches upon Christopher Sly’s wordplay, as “in the quarto text, “comonty” is replaced, correctly, by ‘commoditie’ --that is to say, goods, merchandise, a possession, or, in a more abstract sense, advantage, profit, self-interest.”. She continues, “This canny mistake of Sly’s is intensified by a second misunderstanding so that ‘stuff’ as abstract matter or content becomes, in Sly’s materialist thought, household ‘stuff’ or furnishings. Both terms, we soon learn, define Katherine’s marriage to Petruchio.”. Patterson observes, “Sly has somehow perceived, or made perceptible to others by unintentional wordplay, that the play he is about to see is not only ‘about’ the commodification of women but is itself a commodity”. Similarly in “The Taming of the Shrew: Shakespeare’s Mirror of Marriage” by Coppelia Kahn, she describes the ever-present attitude of women as commodities through the eyes of the merchant, and Kate’s father figure, Lord Baptista: “Baptista is determined not to marry the sought-after Bianca until he gets an offer for the unpopular Kate, not for the sake of conforming to the hierarchy of age as his opening words imply, but out of a merchant’s desire to sell all the goods in his warehouse”.

Not only were women in the Renaissance something like “chattel” to use for a sort of bargaining between fathers and suitors, but the qualities that made them either desirable or undesirable as wives leads to the notion of a rightful patriarchal judgment of who a woman should and should not be, that men have a right to reject or “tame” qualities in a woman that they find unattractive. These unattractive qualities usually involve a dominant, mouthy woman such as Katherine. In “Misogyny is Everywhere,” Phyllis Rackin observes, “Reminders that women were expected to be chaste, silent, and obedient probably occur more frequently in recent scholarship than they did in the literature of Shakespeare’s time;” however, she explains, “the connections between female speech and female sexual transgression are retraced and the anxieties evoked by the possibility of female power are discovered in play after play.”. Rackin goes on to discuss the importance of history in literary studies, but that “the historical records of the past are often man-made and shaped by men’s anxieties, desires, and interests”. ” (Furstnau, n.d.)





# JANE AUSTEN

“While it may be universally acknowledged that Jane Austen’s novels still impact women’s, and men’s, lives today, the question of whether Austen is a feminist icon is something readers and critics have debated for as long as her novels have lived.”<sup>1</sup> (Solingen, 2017)

Portrait of Jane Austen based on an illustration by the writer’s sister. (n.d.). Retrieved from: <https://revistagalileu.globo.com/Cultura/noticia/2017/07/jane-austen-11-fatos-que-voce-precisa-saber-sobre-escritora.html>





“Some have argued Austen and the characters in her novel may not fit the feminist idea men and women have today. Austen was well aware of the expectations and norms of the women of her time. Women were expected to marry, and their living situation depended largely on their male relatives. But the author herself lived a conventional life. (Her brother even wrote after her death that her life was “not by any means a life of event.”)

Although Austen created spirited and strong female leads, some well-read Austenites and critics argue that none challenged social norms or believed that men and women should be treated as equal in every scenario. The evidence is in her stories. Austen’s characters accepted the “universal truth” that they must marry and that their lives were very limited to the boundaries of their home. Characters that pushed the boundaries of what a woman was allowed to do were punished.

In the late 1700s and early 1800s women were not supposed to write novels, and certainly not supposed to be published. Female novelists of the time were still considered “ludicrous and indiscreet,” many taking male pen names so their work was not shunned in bookstores. Not only did Austen go against this norm by writing and publishing novels, but her stories centered on women with resolve. Her characters did the best they could in the circumstances they found themselves in. They fought for their own happiness and their right to choose.

While none of Austen’s characters exhibited an overt feminist desire to challenge and go against a societal norm, Austen herself did. By choosing not to marry and writing novels instead, Austen challenged the notion that unmarried women could not support themselves. Her novels served as vehicles into a realm women had not crossed alone before: the public.” (Sohngen, 2017)





# LITTLE WOMEN

“This paper discussed feminism in the Little Women movie directed by Greta Gerwig in 2019. This movie is adapted from Louisa May Alcott’s novel which was written initially in 1868. This study aimed to find out how feminism is described through the leading character. The other objective is to search the types of feminism on the main character refers to Tong and Botts’s theory. The writer used descriptive qualitative methods which content analysis of the movie. ”(Dewi & Medina, 2020)

Sony Pictures. (2019). Timothée Chalamet and Florence Pugh as Laurie and Amy in Greta Gerwig’s Little Women. Retrieved from: <https://www.vox.com/culture/2019/12/27/21037870/little-women-greta-gerwig-ending-jo-laurie-amy-bhaer>

“This dialogue is between Jo March and Friedrich Bhaer in their boarding house, in New York. From the scene, Jo was preparing to bring a book and went to the place she was teaching, but Friedrich continued to talk to Jo. The scene shows that women can play a role in the work environment as same as men. Based on the dialogue, Friedrich said “always working” implies that women should not work in the workplace, but the role of women should be in the domestic environment. However, Jo wanted to end the oppression that women are only suited to the domestic environment. Women do not have to always be in the domestic environment and women deserve to get the opportunity to work in society. A woman feels able to make choices and decisions for her life. The decision is not only through marriage to a rich person, but the decision can be working in society.

Liberal feminism focuses on the elimination of inequality between women and men in the legal, political, social, workplace and educational settings. Liberal feminism is characterized by a focus on equality. It argues that men and women should be treated equally. If women are given the same educational, occupational, and political opportunities as men, they will realize their true potential and no longer be subordinate to men. It can be said that liberal feminism was a struggle for women for civil service and economic opportunities. There are two data reflected in this category.

Jo :“My students need me”

Friedrich : “Always working”

Jo :“Money is the end and aim of my mercenary existence”

Friedrich : “No one gets ink stains like yours just out of a desire for money”

Jo :“Well my sister Amy is in Paris, and until she marries someone obscenely wealthy, it's up to me to keep up the family afloat” (Dewi & Medina, 2020)

The above scene shows the struggle of women in the economy to get the opportunity in terms of work just like men. Men assume that women are not competent at work. Based on the theory of feminism by Tong and Botts, this scene is categorized into a liberal feminism type. Liberal feminism focuses on gender equality and equal opportunities between women and men.

The next dialogue between Jo and Mr. Dashwood also supports this type of feminism.

Jo :“I want ten percent of royalties.”

Mr. Dashwood : “Five point five percent and that is very generous.”

Jo :“Nine percent.”

Mr. Dashwood :“Six percent -- and that's it.”

Jo :“If I'm going to sell my heroine into marriage for money, I might as well get some of it.”

This scene shows a dialogue between Jo March and Mr. Dashwood who negotiated the royalties of Jo's book. Jo stated that she wanted ten percent for royalties, but Mr. Dashwood offered a lower royalty of only five percent, and for him, it was a generous thing. The publisher should have given female writers royalties as much as they gave to male writers. Jo as a female writer who sells her work for money should get more royalties. Jo's action in the scene shows how she was trying to get the royalties she deserves as a writer. Jo tried to equalize the royalties of female writers as same as male writers.” (Dewi & Medina, 2020)



“Marxist and socialist feminism is a struggle to demand right and justice, abolish the system of ownership. That means Marxist feminists are concerned with the division of labour making women remain in the domestic sphere and men in the workplace. Socialist feminists move to rely on the class as the only category to understand the subordination of women to men. The data shown to this type is below.

Aunt March : “You mind yourself, dearie, one day you’ll need me and you’ll wish you had behaved better”

Jo : “Thank you, Aunt March, for your employment and many kindnesses, but I intend to make my own way in the world.”

Aunt March: “No one makes their own way, not really, least of all a woman. You’ll need to marry well

The dialogue above is when Jo visited Aunt March’s house. It shows that Jo wanted to be free to determine her life in the way she wants. She thinks that women have the right to make their own choices without depending on others. Aunt March considered Jo must marry someone rich; she is not sure that Jo can open her way to get her dream because she thinks women can only rely on men. But, Jo was sure of the path she chooses and would not accept oppression because of the capitalist system. Jo did not want to get married because she feels she does not want to be the private property of her husband later and she believes that women can be independent women.

This dialogue refers to a type of Marxist and Socialist feminism, which ends the oppression of women caused by the system of property rights of men. Marxist and socialist feminists focus on the division of labour between women and men, so that women are not always in the domestic sphere, such as getting married and becoming a wife, then taking care of children, and then having the opportunity to work at the workplace. Marxist and socialist feminism rely on their class to clarify how women are oppressed in a capitalist country.” (Dewi & Medina, 2020)

“Radical feminism is the struggle of women in ending women’s oppression based on the sex and gender system. Radical feminism believes that actual gender or gender equality is not possible in a patriarchal system. This system is full of oppressive patriarchal norms, assumptions, and institutions, true emancipatory reform is only possible through radical rearrangement of society that eliminates male supremacy. According to Tong and Botts, radical feminism is split into two general camps, one of which is radical-libertarian feminism. And this data below describes radical-libertarian feminism.

Marmee : “Where did you get the money?”

Jo : “I only sold what was my own.”

Beth : “Your hair!”

Meg : “Oh Jo, how could you?” Beth : “Now your hair is off.”

Amy : “Your one beauty!” Hannah : “You look like a boy.”

Jo : “It doesn’t affect the fate of the nation, so don’t wail.”

This scene is at the March family home when all were busy preparing for the departure of Marmee (March’s mother). She prepared to visit her husband who was sick when volunteering for the civil war. Jo appeared in the middle of preparations for her mother’s departure with twenty-five dollars as train fare. Jo let her hair cut to sell and earn money as the train fare for the mother. In that era, cutting hair was taboo for women, but Jo did not care about the gender standards that exist at that time. Although the people around her were surprised and thought of her as a boy, Jo did it of her own free will. The dialogue explained that Jo sells her long hair because of her own decision, other people have no right to prohibit it for any reasons. Jo showed the masculine side of the way she cuts her hair which is short as a man’s. In that era, women usually do not look like men. Women who are shown in that era are feminine and elegant in their behaviour and appearance.

This type of radical libertarian feminism encouraged women to become androgynous – that is, to embody both (good) masculine and (good) feminine characteristics or, more controversially, masculine and feminine characteristics, good or bad, to their liking. Radical-libertarian feminists claimed that exclusively feminine gender identity is likely to limit women’s development as fully human persons.” (Dewi & Medina, 2020)

“Psychoanalytic feminism is the way women act originated or rooted in the female soul, especially in the way women think about themselves as women. This reflects in Jo’s statement below when she was at March’s house:

Jo : “Women have minds and souls as well as hearts, ambition and talent as well as beauty and I’m sick of being told that love is all a woman is fit for.”

Jo cried and tried to explain herself about women’s thoughts. The dialogue above illustrates how Jo felt so sick with what people say about women that is only suitable for romance. She thinks that women have ambitions and talents to make them have rights and equality with men in society; the way women act and think comes from their souls. But she felt that she has no rights and equality as a woman.

This data can be categorized into psychoanalytic feminism type. Psychoanalytic feminists argue that the basic explanation for the way women act comes from within their souls, specifically, from the way they think about themselves as women. Psychoanalytic feminists claim that gender identity, gender injustice, is rooted in a series of experiences of childhood and early childhood. These same experiences are the cause of society’s privileging things “masculine” over things “feminine”. In psychoanalytic feminist estimates the causes of individuals who see themselves in masculine or feminine terms, consider themselves to be boys or girls.

Postmodern feminists invite every woman who reflects on their writing as a form of the voicing of various types of women’s inequality. This challenges women to write for their beliefs and voiced the views of the world. Postmodern feminism is the women’s struggle through writing to obtain feminist goals inequality and rights without pressure.”(Dewi & Medina, 2020)

“This data without dialogue (1:52:28-1:54:20) whereas the scene is in March house at Jo and Meg’s room. She was writing in her room only lighted by a candle. She was reconnected with her childhood, and out of the depths of despair has found hope and inspiration. It illustrates Jo’s writing process which eventually produced a book to publish. After rejected by the publisher frequently, this time the writing was approved by the publisher and she was able to print her book. Writing is Jo’s desire; through her writings, Jo hoped to inspire women to be able to change the way women think, talk, and act. Putting down their words in writing, women have voice, identity, and media as men have in expressing themselves.

The Little Women movie was set in 1861-1871, that year there was no word “feminism” or even the feminist movement, therefore women at that time naturally have their feminist views. Although the story was produced many years ago, the basic aspect of feminism that alludes to this movie is still relevant nowadays. This movie also indirectly sends messages which can inspire the audiences whereas women have the right and decision to choose what they want to live. It can be seen from this movie through Jo’s decision to go to New York and start her life by becoming a great writer and teacher. It also gives the message to people that perseverance is an important aspect to pursue the goal and never give up to achieve it. It demonstrates in the movie where Jo is consistent in writing. Even after her 35 stories were often rejected by publishers, Jo continued to write with a new story. Helping each other especially among members of a family is also a value sending in this movie. As shown in Jo’s character that always helps her sister and her neighbours who are in a difficult situation. Everyburdens and trouble would be handled together which made it easier to resolve and reflect the important person each of them..”(Dewi & Medina, 2020)



