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5.1 Movie Versions

Comparing and Contrasting the 1933 Movie and the Book

When I watched the 1933 version of Little Women it opened up with showing Mrs. March talking to a man in the clothing store and her feeling bad for not doing all she could when in reality she was. They went to four different scenes introducing the four girls in scenes from the book. The scenes were from events that happened later in the book, Jo reading to her aunt, Amy in trouble at school for drawing a picture which in the book she got in trouble for bringing limes, Beth at the piano playing with her cats all around and Meg, watching young children. I feel that the director started this movie like that because there was much to cover from the book and to do that the movie would have to be eight hours long. The first quarter of the movie which was around 40 minutes only covered materials from the first five chapters leaving the rest of the 42 chapters to be covered in a little over an hour. There were a few things in the movie that were portrayed differently than the book, but the things that were missing from the book is what I feel took away from the movie in a huge way.

When reading the book you were introduced to the hearts of the characters. The movie did not allow the viewer to do that. The main thing that I felt was taken away was from Mrs. March. In the book from the start to the end, Mrs. March taught her daughters morals and that what they have is better than what they wanted. In the book you were given this background and outlook of this woman who was almost angelic and gave all that she had to make those around her better. In the movie we never got to see a lot of Mrs. March like you do in the movie and I feel that is a big thing missing for the viewer.

Another main thing that was different between the book and movie was the development of Laurie and Jo. In the book it does a great job of showing how these two characters became such great friends and more than friends in Laurie's case. The movie just takes it from Jo and Laurie having fun and fencing to Laurie trying to kiss Jo and having her run to her leaving and Laurie expressing his true love. In the book it really shows how two characters from a young age find true friendship and how it developed from seeing each other every day, sharing multiple secrets and coming up with their own names for each other such as Jo calling Laurie Teddy, which was never used in the movie.

There were major events that were missing, such as Amy falling through the ice and almost dying, Meg going on a trip with friends and being dressed up and trying to make jelly and the troubles that she has with her twins and how they fixed it, Amy's trip through Europe and the real way that her and Laurie fell in love even after she ripped into him for being a "lazy boy", and how Jo inherited her Aunt March's mansion and instead of selling it opened up a school for boys with her husband the

professor and how she became a mom as well. I truly missed these events of the story because when reading the book I visualized what I was reading and as a viewer was wishing I could see what others perceived the events to look like.

The biggest of the missing events I feel was really disappointing was that of the life of Jo. In the book I felt like the book truly revolved around her and what she did and we missed so much. From her and Laurie's' relationship, her writing and how that had become, her moving to New York, her finding love and creating a place where boys could come and she could help like she did for her boy. I felt that the movie was about all of the girls on equal levels, as the book told stories of all four girls but spent most of the time dealing with how Jo turned from this little Tom-boy who could care less about girly things to this beautiful women who gave all of herself to make sure that those she loved were taken care of and eventually taking all her physical riches and turning them into loving riches.

When you see all these differences and interpretations of the story you have to ask yourself why did the director and writers take away or change things. I feel the main reason was because they needed to make this huge novel into a piece of work that when put onto film could be to the point and have the audience understand what is going on without having to tell the back stories of all the characters and to take out parts of the book that are important but can be addresses and not shown through comments made by the characters. An example would be when Jo tells Laurie don't forget his ice skates. This was said because if you have read the book you know that they go ice-skating and Amy almost dies by falling through the ice. Another example of how the director gets parts of the story in without showing them is when there are two babies sitting on the bed with Beth as she is passing shows the viewer that Meg has had children. The director could not use ever event from the book but wanted to inform the viewer of other events and was successful in doing that by comments and having certain things in the scenes.

All in all the movie that was released in 1933 did do a great job of telling the story from the outside in but that is what takes away from the book because as you read it you are hearing the story from the inside out. I feel the director did a great job of telling the story by using the techniques that I talked about previously. The movie was more straight forward and broad and I feel like the director did this because he was looking out for his audience and wanted to tell a story that would be easy to relate to and follow. I prefer the book to the movie just because I felt part of it but the movie as well is a great piece of work that everyone should enjoy.

Comparing and Contrasting the 1994 Movie and the Book

When I watched the 1994 movie version of Little Women I was so pleasantly surprised at how well the director and writers put this film together and stayed true to the book and its characters. From the start of the film I felt as though I was reading the book and the events in there sequence made it more interesting because I could follow along with the movie and know exactly what was going to happen

next and was sitting on the edge of my chair waiting and hoping that certain things from the book would make it on the screen.

When comparing the movie and the book the first thing that I would say made the movie so much like the book was that the movie really did a great job of letting you see the inside of the family's development. You were welcomed into the homes and hearts of Mr. March, Jo, Amy, Meg and Beth and saw how they were so different but put all they had to help each other in what ever they need. You saw the bond between the girls as they are part of the "Pickwick" club and would give their left arm, or best friend to help their sisters; like Jo did for Beth The movie also should you just like the book did of how great of a mother and mentor Mrs. March was to her daughters. By watching the movie it felt as though you were there when she taught her daughters about life and when she calmed their fears and tears by stroking their hair.

The next thing that I thought was great about the 1994 version of Little Women was that we were welcomed to see how the friendship of Laurie and Jo came to be. The director did a great job and really showed in a great way how Laurie and Jo went from strangers to best friends and turned from Jo and Laurie to Jo and Teddy. The funny moments in the book, with them dancing by themselves in a way that made fun of the "proper" people to playing in the snow with Laurie as a pull horse, made you see just how happy they made each other. The director welcomed the audience to peep into their relationship and see how Laurie fell in love with Jo with small details that were added, such as a pear in the mailbox. Also the director did a great job of showing the torment inside Laurie when Jo broke his heart and said she could only love him as a friend.

The director really made the movie in a way that ran parallel to the book but in away that was easy for the audience to follow along and see these characters develop. The Director really did a great job of fitting all the major events of the book into the movie so lovers of the book were not disappointed if something from the book was missing. The only things that I did see that were missing, was the marriage and development of the school that Jo and Professor had and the relationship between Mr. Brookes and Meg and how they raised their children and how they developed into a loving couple that worked together. These were missing from film but I can see why they were not put in because they were not really crucial to get the overview of the book.

The final thing that I feel was great that the director did was really keeping the focus on Jo and let her lead as the star of the movie just as she is the star of the book. What the film offers the viewer that the book could not was a closer look at how Jo truly acted. As I read I saw Jo as this silly girl who looked more like a boy than a girl but the movie gave me and other viewers a look at Jo that the book did not give. When Jo came in after cutting her hair for money for her dad it really gave me a great perspective on what she looked like. The actress who played Jo (Winona Ryder) gave something to me about the mannerisms and attitude that Jo had that I as a

reader could not come up with on my own. Winona Ryder was directed very well as she gave me a new and better look at Jo March.

The 1994 Little Women movie was a great movie that I truly feel is a “classic” movie. I feel that this book did not hinder what Alcott put on her pages but instead brought another view, greater details and through the great acting of the actresses and actors made me love the story of Little Women even more. This movie to me is one of the best film versions of a book that I have ever seen and am thankful to the director Gillian Armstrong for doing a wonderful job of staying true to the book.

Comparing and Contrasting the 1933 and the 1994 Movie Versions of Little Women

After watching both the 1933 and the 1994 film versions of Little Women I was shocked of how enjoyable the two films were. The films even though made to show what was written in Alcott book were very different in styles, acting and portrayal of the text. I will be discussing in this section how each of these movies were different and how the differences either hindered it from being a great display of the book or if it made it a great rendition of the classic. The biggest differences that I see in the two films where: Development of family values and relationships, missing important events, relationships between Jo and Laurie, and how the directors portrayed the characters and their emotions and how the audience was considered with the development of the story.

The first difference between the two films was with the development of relationship between Mrs. March and her daughters and between the four girls; Jo, Meg, Amy and Beth. In the 1933 version the director in my opinion did not do a great job in this area. Mrs. March was not seen as a great mentor and mother to her children and that aspect was forgotten and not addressed. The 1994 version on the other hand did the opposite. This version made Mrs. March into this great mother who taught her daughters moral and how to live a life happy and content with what you have. In this version the director and writer used a lot of quotes from the book that Mrs. March used to teach her daughters and in the 1933 version they did not use the quotes. In the 1933 version as well the director did not really focus on how much these four girls that were so different loved each other so much. The biggest part that the director in the 1933 version did to show this was when the girls were doing a play in their home. This is not the case in the 1994 version when the director used every opportunity to show the girls relationships. The director did this by showing the passion in them when they were reading the Pickwick newspapers and acting like men, playing in the snow, singing together and wanting the best for each other. I feel the greatest way that the director in the 1994 version truly showed how much they cared was the scene where Beth was getting sick and Jo came home to see her. In this scene it truly showed you the passion between the girls and the actresses really put the emotion out there and you could see through the film the love they truly have. In the 1933 version I feel that the director did not put much effort into

this very important event in the book and really just created that event as not such a big deal. I feel the 1994 version did a better job of showing the relationships in the March family.

The second big difference was in events that were missing in the films. The biggest missing event in the 1994 version was the end of the book when Jo and the Professor marry and open the boy's school. In the 1933 version of the film the director and writers left out so many events that I feel took away from the story. Like I stated earlier in the paper the director took the majority of the movie to show just what happened in the first 5 chapters and must have been forced to leave out a lot. The 1933 version left out Amy in Europe and how her relationship with Laurie was created, how Amy almost died on the ice when Jo was mad at her, Jo marrying the professor (not in 1994 either) Laurie and Jo spending time together and much more. I feel the directors outlook on the story were completely different where the older movie was to portray a story of a family and their ups and downs where as the newer movie's director gave a story of a family where we saw their ups and downs but also we shown their lives and why they became who they became and why their family was full of love even when they had their backs against the wall.

The third difference was in the 1933 version of Little Women the relationship between Laurie and Jo was really put on the back burner. In the book you read how these two were like two peas in a pod and their relationship was on a different level. The older movie did not do a good job of showing the emotions between the two were as the new movie does. The director of the 1944 version on the other hand did a wonderful job. Jo and Laurie were highlighted through out the start of the movie and you could just see their chemistry developing. This biggest area that I feel made the difference was in one single word; Teddy. In the 1933 version not one time did Jo call Laurie by the name Teddy, which she alone would call him because that was her name for him. The book really put an emphasis on this and the director left this out and even though it was a small thing to leave out, for those though who have read and loved the book it is a big thing to leave out because it truly shows the love between them.

The forth difference in the two films were how the director portrayed the girls. When I read the book I visualized Meg, Amy, Jo and Beth as young youthful girls because that is what is shown in the book through the words that Alcott used. In the 1994 version I feel that the director really created this vision. Amy at the start of the book was portrayed as a child just like in the book and the others even though older still had that youth about them. In the 1933 version the girls were represented as older girls. The actors looked like they were in their mid to late 30's and that is not what I feel they should be addressed as. I am not sure why the director did this other than maybe in that era it was common to use older actors to play younger rolls. I feel that by using younger actresses like those in the 1994 version it really made it more real as they got older as the movie went on, such as Amy did when the movie moved into part 2 of the book and a new actress was used for Amy.

As I have stated here in this paper both movies did a good job of portraying the book Little Women but in my opinion only the 1994 version did a great job. Again this is my opinion and I am not a film critic but I am a person who has read and fell in love with this book. Both the book and the two films have created a vision in my head of a story of four girls who turned into women and how their family even though poor in wealth, was rich in love. I recommend that if you are a lover of the book to watch these movies because they give you a visual representation that can either add to your vision of the text or create a whole new idea.