

Liberal Feminism in Nancy Springer's Movie Script *Enola Holmes*

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Abstract: This study explores the portrayal of liberal feminism in Nancy Springer's *Enola Holmes* series, focusing on how the narrative challenges societal perceptions of women's intellectual and physical capabilities. Liberal feminism, rooted in the first wave of feminism, emphasizes equality through legal reforms and individual rights. The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing content analysis to examine the dialogues, actions, and character development within the series. Specifically, the method involves close reading of the text, followed by thematic analysis of Enola Holmes's defiance of Victorian societal norms. This includes her rejection of traditional schooling and pursuit of autonomy, which underscore the themes of gender equality and personal freedom central to liberal feminist discourse. Enola's relationship with her mother, Eudoria Holmes, who supports her unconventional path, is also analyzed to illustrate how the narrative advocates for women's rights to define their identities independently. By systematically analyzing key scenes, character interactions, and feminist subtexts, this study illuminates how Enola Holmes embodies the liberal feminist ideals of resilience, self-determination, and empowerment. The findings reveal Enola as a transformative figure challenging patriarchal constraints, inspiring reflection on gender roles and advocating for societal change towards equality and personal fulfillment.

Keywords: *feminism; gender equality; individual empowerment; resilience; self-determination*

INTRODUCTION

Feminism is an ideology that advocates for the equality of women and men across political, social, sexual, intellectual, and economic domains. It encompasses movements, theories, philosophies, and various efforts aimed at achieving gender equality and justice for women. There are three recognized waves of feminism, each addressing different issues and challenges faced by women. The first wave of feminism, emerging in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, focused on addressing social injustices and securing equal political rights for women, such as the right to vote and access to education and independence. This wave is characterized by liberal feminism, which emphasizes the importance of legal reforms and individual rights (Hooks, 2000).

The second wave of feminism, spanning from the 1960s to the 1980s, concentrated on issues like employment inequalities, sexuality, family dynamics, and reproductive rights. This wave is marked by the emergence of radical feminism, which critiques the systemic nature of women's oppression and calls for fundamental societal changes (Freeman, 2007). The third wave of feminism, beginning in the 1990s and continuing into the present, encompasses the globalization of gender equality and addresses the sexualization of women. This wave aligns with postmodern feminism, which challenges traditional narratives and embraces diverse perspectives and identities (Tong, 2009).

Within the development of feminism, various schools of thought have emerged, one of which is liberal feminism. Liberal feminism, representative of the first wave, argues that

society erroneously views women as inherently less intellectually and physically capable than men, leading to discrimination in education and employment. Liberal feminists believe that women's subordination stems from customary and legal restrictions that hinder their success in the public sphere. They assert that if women are properly educated and granted the same rights as men, they can achieve equally (Hasanah et al., 2020).

The scriptwriter of *Enola Holmes*, Nancy Springer, is an American author known for her work in fantasy, young adult literature, mystery, and science fiction. Born on July 5, 1948, in Montclair, New Jersey, Springer grew up in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, where she developed a strong interest in literature, particularly in the works of King Arthur and Robin Hood. Throughout her career, Springer has received numerous awards and nominations, including the James Tiptree Jr. Award, the Edgar Allan Poe Award, and the Carolyn W. Field Award. Her work continues to captivate readers across genres, solidifying her position as a leading author in the literary world. In writing *Enola Holmes*, Springer was inspired by the Victorian era's societal environment, particularly its formal language style, female empowerment, family dynamics, and social norms.

Despite being set in the 19th century, the struggle for the recognition of women's rationality remains relevant in contemporary society. *Enola Holmes* offers a unique narrative perspective by showcasing a female character as the rational one, diverging from the typical male portrayal in such roles. The emphasis on women's rationality, autonomy, and self-actualization aligns with liberal feminism. The patriarchal system, which prioritizes male dominance and seeks total control over women's lives, has effectively denied women the right to autonomy and restricted them from pursuing their own goals and aspirations. This aligns with the liberal feminist perspective that individual rights are justified as long as they do not infringe upon others' rights (Cott, 1987).

The primary goal of this study is to explore the portrayal of liberal feminism in Nancy Springer's *Enola Holmes* series, which challenges societal misconceptions about women's intellectual and physical abilities. In *Enola Holmes*, Springer eloquently highlights the struggles of women in a society that restricts their political freedom and participation in public life (Springer, 2020). The character of Eudoria, Enola's mother, exemplifies the courage and determination of women who defy societal norms. Her daughter, Enola, inherits these traits and uses them to solve a murder case, demonstrating her capabilities in both combat and problem-solving. The movie's conclusion emphasizes the importance of women's autonomy and the need for equal rights, as women should be free to choose their own paths without being limited by societal expectations.

Feminism is a concept that emphasizes the importance of gender equality and women's liberation in a society historically dominated by men. It is a movement aimed at achieving equality in all aspects of life, without discrimination based on gender. Feminism serves as a source of inspiration for women's liberation movements and aims to enable women to fully develop themselves. It demands equal rights for men and women in politics, decision-making, careers, and parenting. Feminism consists of various social, cultural, and political movements that strive for equal rights for men and women (Widya, T., & Asnani, 2020). It is seen as a struggle to achieve the same rights, opportunities, and dignity for women as men have in society (Saripelli & Davidson, 2014).

All forms of oppression and numerous acts of exploitation that virtuous women experience in various spheres of life must be dismantled by feminism. This approach is considered essential for assisting women in entering productive sectors traditionally dominated by men. For instance, women who want to pursue careers as fishermen or in other maritime-related fields should enjoy equal standing with men in these fields. Research has

found that "the masculine authority uses force against women to protect its power and dominance in the home and society. Thus, women become victims and submissive to men who use them for their own interests. Women are imprisoned so as not to mix with the outside world" (Hammood & Janoory, 2019)

Liberal feminism is a school of thought that champions the view that women should have complete and individual freedom. This perspective holds that freedom and equality are rooted in rationality and the separation of private and public spheres. Liberal feminism is part of a long tradition that begins with classical liberal thought, which respects human beings as rational, independent, and self-interested individuals (Purwarno et al., 2021). As a theory and movement, liberal feminism focuses on issues such as equality in the workplace, education, and political rights. Although it addresses issues in the private sphere, it tends to concentrate on questions of equality, specifically how private lives inhibit or promote public equality. Consequently, liberal feminists often support marriage as an equal partnership and emphasize a greater role for men in parenting (Maulid, 2022)

Liberal feminism also prioritizes issues like reproductive rights and access to abortion, sexual harassment, voting rights, education, fair compensation for work, affordable childcare, reasonable healthcare, and raising awareness about the prevalence of sexual and domestic violence against women (Hooks, 1984). The overarching goal of liberal feminism is to end gender discrimination in political, social, legal, and educational spheres. From a liberal perspective, regulations that discriminate against women and exclude them from the mainstream of politics and the economy, as well as unequal gender socialization practices are to blame for women's subordination (Putri et al, 2021).

Studies in liberal feminism aim to provide women with the freedom to live their lives as they see fit, free from societal and familial constraints (Bahri et al., 2022). Every woman has the right to define her own path in life and choose her partner. Women should have the opportunity to demonstrate their capability to hold leadership positions in any context and lead organizations or communities. In general, a woman should enjoy the same rights as a man.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research aims to explore the portrayal of liberal feminism Nancy Springer's *Enola Holmes* series, which challenges societal misconceptions about women's intellectual and physical abilities. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the representation of liberal feminism in Nancy Springer's movie script *Enola Holmes*, particularly as reflected by the main character. According to (Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, 2018), qualitative research design is an approach that emphasizes data collection and analysis.

The data collection procedure involves writing notes related to the data, marking and noting significant points, which include the main character's dialogues or actions, and gathering information from various sources. This method is used to describe the forms of attitudes towards liberal feminism in the *Enola Holmes* series. By systematically analyzing the dialogues, actions, and interactions of the main character, this research seeks to identify and articulate how liberal feminist themes are woven into the narrative.

The descriptive qualitative approach is particularly well-suited for this research as it allows for an in-depth understanding of the characters and the narrative. It helps to illuminate the ways in which the film script conveys messages about gender equality and challenges traditional gender roles. Through this analysis, the study aims to provide insights into the broader implications of liberal feminism as portrayed in contemporary media.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Woman Is Free to Choose Her Education

Throughout history, women have faced significant barriers to education due to societal norms and patriarchal systems, which limited their opportunities for growth. Feminist movements have emphasized the importance of empowering women to choose their educational paths. Education is a fundamental human right necessary for achieving gender equality. In the past, women's education often focused on domestic skills, neglecting intellectual and professional development. Pioneering feminist thinkers like Mary Wollstonecraft argued in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) that women should have the same educational rights as men, asserting that gender does not determine intelligence (Wollstonecraft, 1972). Wollstonecraft's advocacy remains relevant today.

Modern feminist perspectives, especially liberal feminism, stress that women should have the freedom to choose their education based on their interests and goals. This viewpoint holds that education is essential for empowering women to make informed decisions about their lives. Martha Nussbaum (2001) emphasizes that education provides women with the skills needed for independence and fulfillment. The United Nations supports this view through Sustainable Development Goal 4, which calls for inclusive education, ensuring women and girls have equal access to all levels of schooling (United Nations, 2015).

Research shows that when women can choose their educational paths, they feel more empowered and can contribute meaningfully to society. (Kabeer, 2005) notes that educated women are more likely to challenge traditional gender roles and participate in decision-making at home and in their communities. Studies also show that educated women tend to have better health outcomes, lower poverty rates, and increased workforce participation (World Bank, 2018). However, many women around the world still face challenges in accessing education, especially in developing regions where cultural and economic barriers exist. This highlights the need for continued efforts to ensure women have the autonomy to choose their educational paths, as it is a crucial aspect of human rights.

From a feminist perspective, education is not just about acquiring knowledge; it is also about liberation. (Freire, 1970) idea of conscientização, or critical consciousness, suggests that education helps women question and challenge oppressive systems while pursuing their dreams. By allowing women to make their own educational choices, society supports their personal and professional growth, enabling them to break free from traditional roles.

In summary, women's freedom to choose their educational paths is rooted in feminist thought, which advocates for gender equality and personal autonomy. The right to education is essential for women's advancement and contributes to their meaningful participation in society. This theme is vividly illustrated in Nancy Springer's *Enola Holmes*, where education serves as a powerful tool for the protagonist's journey toward self-actualization and defiance against societal limitations.

"She was not an ordinary mother. She didn't teach me to string seashells or practice my embroidery. We did different things. Reading, science, sports, all sorts of exercise, both physical... and mental. Mother said we were free to do anything at Ferndell..."

The lines above are spoken by Enola about her education reflecting the core principles of liberal feminism, particularly the idea that women should be free to choose their paths. Enola begins by stating, "She was not an ordinary mother," immediately positioning her upbringing as unique and challenging traditional gender norms. By emphasizing that her mother "didn't teach me to string seashells or practice my embroidery," Enola contrasts her

experiences with typical feminine education, which often revolves around domestic skills. Instead, she notes, “We did different things,” indicating a diverse and enriching curriculum that includes “reading, science, sports, all sorts of exercise, both physical... and mental.” This variety not only underscores the importance of intellectual and physical empowerment but also showcases her mother’s commitment to fostering a well-rounded education. Such an approach promotes the belief that women can—and should—engage in disciplines traditionally reserved for men, thus breaking societal barriers. The statement “Mother said we were free to do anything at Ferndell” encapsulates the liberal feminist ideal of autonomy. Enola’s freedom to explore her interests illustrates that education should be a personal journey, empowering her to become an independent thinker. Through the lines, Enola’s narrative not only highlights her mother’s progressive values but also emphasizes the transformative power of education, advocating for women’s rights to define their own futures.

In *Enola Holmes*, Enola’s journey of education reflects her autonomy and the empowerment afforded by her mother’s unconventional teachings. The following quotes illustrate how she embodies the principles of liberal feminism through her educational choices.

Enola’s mother’s emphasis on a well-rounded education highlights the unconventional approach she took with her daughter.

“She valued education. [scoffs] She taught me herself. She made me read every book in Ferndell Hall’s library. Shakespeare, Locke, and the encyclopedia, and Thackeray, and the essays of Mary Wollstonecraft. And I did it on my own account. For my own learning.”

This quote highlights Enola’s mother’s dedication to education, emphasizing a personalized approach that defies traditional norms for women. The mention of diverse and intellectually stimulating texts indicates a curriculum designed to provoke critical thought. Enola’s assertion that she pursued learning “on my own account” underscores her autonomy and agency in her educational journey, showcasing her desire for knowledge rather than conforming to societal expectations.

Enola’s mother encourages her to embrace her individuality and resist societal pressures as she says:

“Paint your own picture, Enola. Don’t be thrown off course by other people. Especially men!”

Here, Enola’s mother encourages her to assert her individuality and creativity. The phrase “paint your own picture” symbolizes self-expression, while cautioning against being influenced by others, particularly men, highlights societal pressures women face. This advice reflects liberal feminist values, advocating for women to prioritize their aspirations and forge their own paths, reinforcing Enola’s empowerment through education.

Enola’s rejection of a traditional educational setting underscores her desire for a different path.

“I didn’t want to go to Miss Harrison’s Finishing School for Young Ladies.”

Enola’s rejection of Miss Harrison’s Finishing School signifies her conscious choice to dismiss traditional female education focused on domesticity. This aversion illustrates her desire for an educational experience that aligns with her ambitions, reinforcing her independence and commitment to a more meaningful form of learning.

Enola's description of her unique educational routine highlights her mother's innovative approach.

"I'm not sure I ever described how a typical day's education worked with my mother. Historical perspective is the only way to begin a day. Then we'd lunch, and I'd work on my physics. Then after lunch, I'd focus on fitness... followed by fight combat."

In describing her daily education, Enola emphasizes a holistic approach that empowers her intellectually and physically. Starting with a "historical perspective" underlines the importance of context in learning. The inclusion of subjects like physics and fitness challenges traditional gender roles, highlighting her mother's commitment to preparing Enola for an active and confident life.

Enola's mother articulates the broader purpose of education in her daughter's life.

"I want you to live a full and vibrant life. Not with anger and endless questions, but with answers."

This line conveys the purpose of education as envisioned by Enola's mother. By advocating for a "full and vibrant life," she implies that education should lead to personal fulfillment. The distinction between living with "anger and endless questions" versus having "answers" suggests that education equips women to confront challenges, aligning with the liberal feminist perspective that emphasizes the importance of education for women's empowerment.

Enola's firm stance against conventional education is reiterated in her conversation.

"Well, you said you didn't want to come to Miss Harrison's Finishing School for Young Ladies."

This statement reiterates Enola's desire to reject conventional female education. It highlights her conscious choice to seek alternatives that resonate with her personal growth and ambitions, reinforcing her autonomy and individuality in the face of traditional expectations.

Enola's critique of institutional barriers faced by women reflects her awareness of systemic issues in education.

"The Royal Academy is an institution that has consistently neglected to include women. Mother wouldn't have suggested it as a meeting place."

Enola's critique of the Royal Academy underscores her awareness of systemic barriers faced by women in education. By pointing out its neglect of women, she highlights institutional exclusion and reflects a broader feminist critique. Her assertion that her mother wouldn't suggest it as a meeting place reinforces the importance of seeking inclusive educational spaces that empower rather than marginalize women.

Woman Is Free to Wear Any Kind of Dress

A woman's freedom to wear any kind of dress is a reflection of individual expression, social differences, and evolving societal norms, themes that resonate strongly in Nancy Springer's movie script *Enola Holmes*. The film presents a nuanced portrayal of a young woman navigating societal expectations while asserting her independence and identity. Throughout history, women's fashion has undergone significant changes, influenced by cultural traditions, social movements, and individual preferences (Entwistle, 2020). In *Enola Holmes*, the protagonist's clothing choices serve as a powerful symbol of her defiance against

traditional gender roles, reinforcing the tenets of liberal feminism, which advocates for individual rights and equality.

The relationship between a woman's clothing choices and her identity is complex and multifaceted; there is no inherent association between a woman's clothing choices and her marital status. Clothing choice is a fundamental individual right and a vital aspect of self-expression (Bennett, 2021). Enola's eclectic style embodies her spirit of rebellion against societal constraints, challenging the notion that women's clothing should reflect their marital status or conformity to societal expectations.

Fashion has always been a dynamic and evolving form of personal and cultural identity. In *Enola Holmes*, various social and cultural influences shape how Enola dresses, reflecting broader societal changes. For instance, the flapper dresses of the 1920s symbolized women's growing independence and the push for gender equality, while the conservative styles of the 1950s often reflected traditional views of domesticity and femininity (Rivers, 2023). Enola's choice of attire represents a departure from these historical norms, illustrating the contemporary understanding of fashion as a form of personal autonomy.

In contemporary society, the freedom to choose one's attire is a crucial element of personal autonomy and self-expression. It allows individuals to convey their unique identities, beliefs, and cultural affiliations (Klein, 2022). This freedom aligns with the principles of liberal feminism, emphasizing that personal choices, including clothing, should not be restricted by societal norms or expectations. The notion that a woman's clothing choice should be linked to her marital status is outdated and irrelevant in today's context. Modern perspectives on gender and individuality, as exemplified in *Enola Holmes*, recognize that what a woman chooses to wear is entirely her prerogative and should not be subjected to societal judgment or constraints (Smith, & Jones, 2022).

Overall, the evolution of women's fashion and the recognition of clothing as a form of self-expression underscore the importance of individual rights and the ongoing progress towards gender equality. In *Enola Holmes*, the protagonist's fashion choices highlight the need for continued advocacy for personal freedom and the dismantling of outdated societal norms that seek to limit individual expression (Miller, 2024). The film ultimately serves as a celebration of liberal feminism, illustrating how clothing can be both a personal statement and a tool for challenging societal expectations.

In *Enola Holmes*, Enola's choices in dress serve as a powerful statement about women's freedom and agency. The following quotes illustrate her rejection of societal expectations regarding clothing.

Enola's comment about a hat and gloves signifies her rejection of conventional dress norms.

"Well, I have a hat. It just makes my head itch. And I have no gloves."

This line suggests Enola's disregard for societal expectations surrounding women's fashion. By stating that her hat makes her head itch, she highlights the discomfort and impracticality of traditional female attire, such as hats and gloves, which were often seen as essential. Her choice to go without these items symbolizes a rejection of the oppressive norms that dictate how women should present themselves, reflecting her desire for personal comfort and authenticity over conforming to societal pressures.

The description of clothing as a means of liberation illustrates Enola's perspective on fashion.

"These clothes will not imprison. They will free. They will allow you to fit into society, to take part in its numerous pleasures. To catch an eye, to attract."

This quote emphasizes the dual nature of clothing as both a form of self-expression and a means of navigating societal expectations. Enola asserts that the right clothing can empower rather than restrict. By choosing garments that are liberating, she rejects the idea that women's clothing must be constrictive or limiting. Her belief that clothing can enhance one's ability to engage with the world around them speaks to the liberal feminist idea that women should be free to express themselves through their attire.

Enola's understanding of the corset highlights her autonomy in choosing what to wear.

"The corset: a symbol of repression to those who are forced to wear it. But for me, who chooses to wear it, the bust enhancer and the hip regulators will hide the fortune my mother has given me."

Here, Enola recognizes the corset as a symbol of oppression, yet she asserts her agency by choosing to wear it. This distinction illustrates her awareness of the societal constraints imposed on women, while also emphasizing that her choice transforms the corset from a tool of repression into a means of concealment for her mother's legacy. By redefining its purpose, Enola demonstrates that women can reclaim control over their bodies and their choices in fashion.

Enola's strategy of using disguise to navigate society showcases her understanding of societal perceptions.

"When looking to travel incognito, it's safest to travel as a widow. People are always anxious to avoid conversations about death. Widows scare them, and there's no better disguise than fear."

This quote reveals Enola's clever use of attire as a means to navigate societal interactions. By adopting the guise of a widow, she highlights how clothing can be a tool for self-protection and subversion of expectations. The notion that a widow can intimidate others illustrates her understanding of societal norms surrounding dress and the power dynamics at play, reinforcing her ability to manipulate perceptions through her choice of clothing.

Enola's assertion about dress choices emphasizes her agency in personal expression.

"You needn't wear my dress if you prefer not to."

This statement underscores Enola's belief in individual choice regarding attire. By explicitly giving another character the option to reject her clothing, she affirms that clothing should be a reflection of personal identity rather than a societal mandate. This sentiment aligns with liberal feminist values, emphasizing that women should feel empowered to make their own choices without conforming to external expectations.

Enola's choice of a specific coat signifies her defiance of traditional gender norms.

"I even wore my most porter-ish coat."

In this line, Enola's decision to wear a coat typically associated with a porter exemplifies her rejection of conventional feminine attire. By embracing a more utilitarian garment, she reinforces her independence and challenges the notion that women must adhere to traditional feminine styles. This choice reflects her desire to break free from gendered fashion norms and assert her individuality.

Through the quotes, Enola exemplifies a woman's right to choose her attire freely, rejecting societal constraints and embracing her identity through fashion. Each statement highlights her agency, reinforcing the theme of empowerment central to her character.

Woman Can Determine Her Future

The phrase "A woman can determine her future" encapsulates the essence of women's empowerment and agency, emphasizing the capacity of women to shape their own lives and destinies. This concept highlights the importance of autonomy and self-determination, reinforcing the idea that women are competent decision-makers whose choices can significantly influence their future trajectories. This expression resonates within feminist discourse, underscoring the necessity for women to assert control over their lives and challenge patriarchal norms that often restrict their opportunities and freedoms.

Historically, women have faced systemic barriers that limited their agency, often relegated to predefined roles within society. However, the rise of liberal feminism has championed the idea that women should have equal rights and opportunities to make choices about their lives (Tong, 2009). By advocating for women's access to education, career options, and personal development, liberal feminists argue that empowering women to make independent decisions is essential for achieving gender equality (Nussbaum, 2001). In *Enola Holmes*, this theme is vividly portrayed as the protagonist, Enola, navigates societal expectations and asserts her right to determine her own path, embodying the liberal feminist ideal of self-determination.

Moreover, the significance of this phrase is reinforced by contemporary scholarship emphasizing the link between women's empowerment and broader societal benefits. According to the (World Bank, 2021), empowering women and ensuring their participation in decision-making processes contributes to economic growth and social development. Women who have the freedom to make their own choices tend to invest more in their families and communities, creating a positive ripple effect throughout society.

Additionally, the idea that a woman can determine her future aligns with the principles of critical consciousness as articulated by Paulo Freire (1970). Freire's concept of *conscientização* encourages individuals to develop a critical awareness of their social reality and empowers them to take action against oppressive systems. This framework is particularly relevant for women, as it underscores the importance of recognizing and challenging the societal constraints that limit their potential.

In summary, the assertion that "A woman can determine her future" is a powerful affirmation of women's rights and autonomy. It reflects the ongoing struggle for gender equality, emphasizing the importance of self-determination and agency in shaping one's life. As illustrated in Nancy Springer's *Enola Holmes*, the journey of the female protagonist encapsulates the ideals of liberal feminism, demonstrating that the ability to make choices is essential for personal empowerment and societal change.

In *Enola Holmes*, the character of Enola exemplifies a woman's agency to determine her own future. Throughout the narrative, she embodies the struggle for independence, showcasing her resolve to carve her path in a society that often seeks to dictate the roles and destinies of women. The following quotes highlight her journey, illustrating how she navigates her choices and asserts her independence in an evolving world.

Enola's independence and capability are underscored by the statement, reflecting a profound recognition of her potential to navigate the complexities of the world on her own terms. It signifies not just a passing acknowledgment but a deep-rooted belief that she

possesses the skills and resilience necessary to thrive without relying on the support of others. By affirming her ability to handle challenges, it reinforces the idea that Enola is not merely a passive participant in her life but an active agent, capable of making choices that will shape her future. This faith is crucial, as it empowers her to embrace her autonomy and take charge of her destiny, paving the way for her to challenge societal norms and expectations.

"You'll do very well on your own, Enola."

This line conveys a profound belief in Enola's ability to thrive independently. It reflects not only her potential but also the support and confidence she receives from those around her. This faith is crucial as it encourages Enola to embrace her autonomy, emphasizing that she is equipped to face challenges and shape her future without relying on others. This acknowledgment of her independence empowers Enola to believe in herself and her capacity to navigate the world on her terms.

The following quote emphasizes the critical role of education in Enola's development and self-sufficiency.

"You are a young woman now, Enola. You need an education. Test me on anything you think I need to know to be sufficient for this world."

Here, the importance of education as a fundamental tool for empowerment is highlighted. Enola's insistence on acquiring knowledge reflects her commitment to being well-rounded and prepared for the world outside her home. This desire to learn not only reinforces her independence but also aligns with feminist ideals that promote women's access to education as a means to assert their agency. Enola's quest for knowledge signifies her determination to be self-sufficient and capable of determining her future.

This reflection on the dichotomy of choices emphasizes the importance of personal agency.

"There are two paths you can take, Enola. Yours... or the path others choose for you."

The contrast between the two paths serves as a powerful metaphor for the choice's women face in society. This quote underscores Enola's autonomy in making decisions about her life and future, asserting that she has the right to choose her direction. The acknowledgment that others may try to impose their choices on her reinforces the theme of self-determination, highlighting Enola's resolve to resist societal pressures and carve out her own identity.

Although spoken by Tewkesbury, this quote illustrates Enola's significant influence on others' perceptions of agency.

"I had these ideas about how we might progress the estate. But my family were set on me joining the army... and I realized I was scared, scared I would hate every second of the rest of my life."

Tewkesbury's struggle reflects the larger theme of self-determination and the pressure of societal expectations. Enola's influence encourages those around her, like Tewkesbury, to consider their desires and fears, prompting them to contemplate the paths available to them. His realization of the fear associated with conforming to expectations resonates with Enola's own quest for autonomy, showcasing how her journey inspires others to embrace their agency and explore their true aspirations.

This statement empowers Enola to prioritize her own identity and goals.

"If you wanna stay in London, be tough, be tough, live the life, but don't do it because you're looking for someone. Do it because you're looking for yourself."

Here, the emphasis is on self-discovery and the importance of pursuing personal ambitions rather than seeking validation through relationships. This encouragement embodies a feminist perspective that champions the idea of women living authentically and independently. By advocating for a life led by one's own desires, this quote reinforces Enola's journey of self-exploration and emphasizes her commitment to defining her future on her own terms.

This quote emphasizes the individuality of both Enola and her mother, highlighting their choices in defining their identities.

"Enola is on her own path, and so, for better or worse, is Eudoria."

The acknowledgment of both Enola and Eudoria pursuing their distinct journeys serves to underscore the importance of autonomy. Their choices reflect a broader commentary on women's independence, emphasizing that they can chart their courses free from societal constraints. Enola's determination to follow her own path, despite external pressures, is a testament to her character's strength and resolve, reinforcing the narrative's celebration of female empowerment.

This line encapsulates the idea of choice and agency against societal constraints. "The choice is always yours. Whatever society may claim, it can't control you." This statement powerfully affirms Enola's agency in shaping her destiny. It highlights the belief that despite societal expectations, women possess the fundamental right to make their own choices. This assertion of autonomy resonates with the liberal feminist ideals present throughout the narrative, emphasizing that Enola's journey is not solely about overcoming obstacles but also about claiming her power to dictate her future. It serves as a rallying cry for women to resist societal control and assert their independence.

This assertion reflects Enola's proactive approach to her journey and determination to seek knowledge.

"Trust me... to find the answers we need."

Enola's confidence in her ability to seek solutions showcases her determination to take charge of her destiny. By expressing trust in herself, she embodies the proactive attitude necessary for achieving her goals. This line highlights her resilience and her belief that she can navigate challenges independently, reinforcing her role as an active participant in determining her future.

This reflection on her mother's aspirations emphasizes the significance of personal freedom and purpose.

"Mother never wanted that. She wanted me to find my freedom, my future, my purpose."

Eudoria's desires for Enola underline the importance of autonomy in defining one's path. This statement reveals a legacy of empowerment, suggesting that Enola's journey is not just her own but also a continuation of her mother's beliefs in the necessity of personal freedom. The emphasis on finding one's purpose aligns with the overarching themes of

liberation and self-discovery, reinforcing that women, like Enola, can pursue their futures on their terms.

Through the quotes, Enola Holmes exemplifies a woman's right to determine her future. Each statement reinforces her agency, highlighting her proactive approach to life and her rejection of societal constraints, ultimately celebrating the empowerment of women in shaping their destinies.

Woman is equal to man

The issue of gender equality often ignites fervent debates, revealing deep-seated societal beliefs about the roles of men and women. A pervasive misconception is that women should confine themselves to traditional duties, implying that they cannot or should not exhibit behaviors typically associated with men. This viewpoint is fundamentally flawed; women are equally capable of taking initiative, engaging in logical reasoning, and tackling tasks traditionally considered male-dominated, such as problem-solving and decision-making. In Nancy Springer's *Enola Holmes*, this theme of equality is prominently illustrated through the character of Enola, who defies societal expectations by actively pursuing her goals and demonstrating that women can operate in domains historically reserved for men. Enola's character embodies the principles of liberal feminism, advocating for the autonomy of women to choose their paths and assert their identities in a patriarchal society. As pointed out by Tong (2009), liberal feminism emphasizes individual rights and the importance of equal opportunities for women, allowing them to engage in all aspects of society, including those that challenge traditional gender norms.

Furthermore, the argument for equality encompasses a broader spectrum of abilities, asserting that women can excel in various tasks, whether they are typically associated with men or women. For instance, cooking and managing household responsibilities are valuable skills that can and should be shared among genders, breaking down the barriers of traditional roles (Baker, 2018)

This perspective aligns with contemporary discussions about gender roles, as advocates for gender equality stress the importance of dismantling stereotypes that confine individuals to specific behaviors based on their gender. (Kimmel, M. S., & Ferber, 2017) emphasizes that promoting gender equality not only benefits women but enhances societal development as a whole, as it allows for a more diverse range of skills and talents to be utilized.

The assertion that "woman is equal to man" is vital in the ongoing struggle for gender equality. It underscores the necessity of fostering an environment where both women and men can freely express themselves, pursue their aspirations, and contribute to society without the constraints of traditional gender norms. By embracing this ideology, we can move towards a more inclusive society that recognizes and values the potential of all individuals.

Enola Holmes articulates a detailed recognition of her brother Sherlock's multifaceted talents, showcasing a blend of admiration and aspiration. By listing Sherlock's impressive abilities—ranging from detective work to various artistic and combat skills—Enola not only highlights his accomplishments but also subtly positions herself in relation to him. This acknowledgment serves to emphasize her belief in her own potential; she recognizes that intelligence, creativity, and capability are not confined to her brother alone. By framing her brother as "my genius brother," Enola underscores her understanding that she, too, possesses the capacity for brilliance, thereby reinforcing her pursuit of equality in her ambitions and endeavors.

"Sherlock Holmes. The famous detective, scholar, chemist, virtuoso violinist, expert marksman, swordsman, singlestick fighter, pugilist, and brilliant deductive thinker. My genius brothers."

This quote illustrates Enola's acknowledgment of her brother's diverse talents while subtly positioning herself as his equal. It emphasizes her awareness of the standards set by her brother's genius, suggesting that she aspires to match or even surpass those capabilities. By highlighting Sherlock's impressive attributes, Enola reaffirms her belief in her own potential, reinforcing that her gender does not limit her abilities or aspirations.

"She is not dangerous. She is remarkable and always has been. And if you still can't see that, then shame on you both!"

This statement highlights Enola's belief in the value of women's contributions and capabilities. By defending her mother's character and insisting on her worth, Enola asserts that women should not be underestimated. This proclamation challenges societal norms that diminish women's roles and emphasizes that women, like her mother, possess remarkable qualities deserving of recognition.

"But I don't want to go to a finishing school, Mycroft." "Well, what else are we going to do with you? You're a girl!"

This exchange underscores the restrictive societal expectations imposed on women during Enola's time. Enola's resistance to the idea of attending a finishing school reflects her desire for independence and equality. By rejecting the notion that her value is dictated solely by her gender, she asserts her right to define her own path and pursue her ambitions outside traditional norms.

"I am a lady detective. Please leave, before we make you leave."

In this powerful declaration, Enola asserts her identity and authority as a detective, challenging the traditional gender roles that often exclude women from such positions. By identifying herself as a "lady detective," she claims her place in a typically male-dominated field, demanding recognition and respect. This statement reinforces her equality and ability to operate on the same level as men.

"You're a man when I tell you you're a man."

This statement emphasizes Enola's power to define gender roles within her interactions. By declaring that she determines how others are identified, she challenges the patriarchal norms that dictate identity and worth based on gender. This assertion of control showcases Enola's belief in her agency and underscores her commitment to asserting equality.

"Unlike most well-bred ladies, I was never taught to embroider. I was taught to watch and listen. I was taught to fight. This is what my mother made me for."

This quote illustrates Enola's strong belief in her capabilities and equality. By contrasting her upbringing with that of traditional "well-bred ladies," Enola asserts that her mother equipped her with the skills necessary to navigate a challenging world. This highlights her strength and preparedness to stand alongside men, challenging societal expectations of women's roles.

"You have to make some noise if you want to be heard."

This statement emphasizes the importance of women asserting themselves in a society that often silences their voices. Enola's acknowledgment of the need to "make some noise" highlights the systemic inequalities women face. By advocating for visibility and active participation, she empowers herself and others to challenge societal norms, reinforcing the notion that equality must be actively pursued.

"What a woman you've become."

This remark serves as a celebration of Enola's growth and empowerment. It acknowledges her resilience and strength, positioning her as an equal to men. The statement reflects an appreciation for the multifaceted nature of womanhood, reinforcing that women can define their identities and capabilities on their own terms, contributing to the narrative of gender equality.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Enola Holmes emerges as a compelling and revolutionary figure within a narrative that boldly challenges the stifling norms of Victorian society. Her refusal to conform to traditional schooling and societal expectations not only symbolizes a quest for individuality and autonomy but also serves as a defiant stance against the deeply entrenched gender roles of her time. Through Enola's journey, the film resonates with profound themes of gender equality, illuminating the struggle for women's rights and their intrinsic right to forge their own paths. Encouraged by the progressive beliefs instilled by her mother, Eudoria Holmes, Enola embodies a spirit of resilience and self-determination. She becomes a powerful advocate for a world where women are not only afforded the freedom to pursue their passions but are also encouraged to define their identities on their own terms, unencumbered by societal constraints. Enola's narrative becomes a testament to the strength of individual agency and the transformative potential of challenging societal norms. Ultimately, Enola Holmes emerges not just as a character but as a beacon of empowerment within the narrative, inspiring audiences to question and transcend the limitations imposed by society. Her story encourages reflection on the ongoing struggle for equality and personal fulfillment, reminding us of the importance of embracing diversity, autonomy, and the pursuit of justice in all its forms.

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