

**THEME AND CHARACTERS IN LOISA MAY
ALCOTT'S "THE LITTLE WOMEN"**



SKRIPSI

**Presented to the Faculty of Letters University "45"
Makassar In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for
the S1 Degree At the English Department**

BY

SILVA PARANGGAI

45 05 051 031

FACULTY OF LETTERS

UNIVERSITY "45"

MAKASSAR

2009

HALAMAN PENERIMAAN

Berdasarkan Surat Keputusan Rektor Universitas "45" Makassar Nomor : SK.071/U-45/90. Tgl. 14 Agustus 1990 tentang Panitia Ujian Skripsi maka Pada hari ini...**Sabtu**... tanggal **.30 Mei 2009**

Nama Mahasiswa : **Silva Paranggai**
No./ STB : **45 05 051 031**
Jurusan : **SASTRA INGGRIS**
Program Studi : **BAHASA DAN SASTRA INGGRIS**

Telah diterima oleh Panitia Ujian Skripsi Fakultas Sastra Universitas "45" Makassar untuk memenuhi salah satu syarat guna memperoleh gelar Sarjana pada Fakultas Sastra Universitas "45" Makassar, dengan susunan Panitia sebagai berikut :

1. Pengawas Umum

- Prof. Dr. H. Abu. Hamid
- Drs. H. Husaen Hamka, M.Si.

2. Ketua : Dra. Hj. Hanyah Haneng, M.Si.

3. Sekertaris : Drs. Luffin Ahmad, M.Hum.

4. Penguji : 1. Dra. Hj. Hanyah Haneng, M.Si.

2. Dra. Nurhaerati

3. Drs. Lalu Abd. Khalik, M.Hum.

4. Hj. St. Haliah Batau, S.S., M.Hum.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The first the writer say to thanks and praise be to Jesus Christ without his abundant blessing and grace this skripsi could not be completed.

This skripsi is requirement of getting S1 Degree of Faculty of Letter University of "45" Makassar. The title of this thesis is "ANALYSIS OF THEME AND CHARACTERS IN LOUISA MAY ALLCOTT'S" The little women in this time, the writer allocates thankful to the persons which have great contributions in this writing, namely:

1. Drs. Herman Mustafa as the Dean of Faculty of Letter University of "45" Makassar.
2. Dra. Hj. Hanyah Haneng, M.Si as the first consultant and the Head of English Department, and Hj. Haliah Batau, S.S., M.Hum as the second consultant, who have willingly and kindly devoted their time to guide the write in composing and finishing this skripsi.
3. All of lectures and staffs in faculty of Letter who helped wishes in study.
4. For all my friends in the Faculty of Letters especially "05" (Ramli, Mujib, Firza, Lis, Adi) who had given the writers support

in finishing this skripsi and to the Ester Team (Abi, Berna, Merlin, Nini) who always support with the prayer.

5. My beloved parents, especially my mother and my siblings (Pina Liku, Yafed, Yanti, Micha and Maris) who always give moral, prayer and material support since the writer enrolled in this University till the writer finished this skripsi and getting S1 degree in Faculty of Letters University of "45" Makassar.

The writer realized that without their support, the writer can't do anything. Hopefully God bless them all. Amen.

BOSOWA

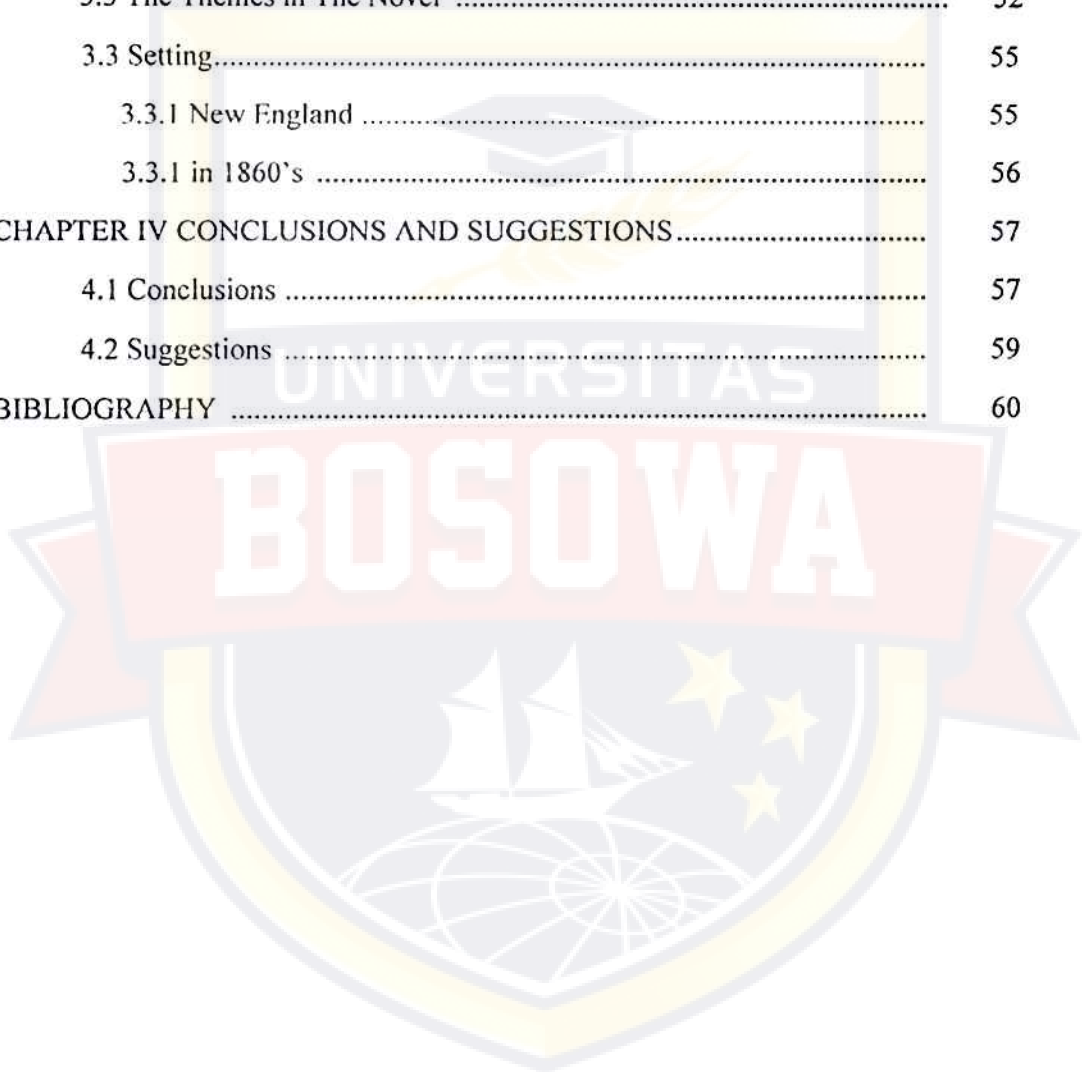
Makassar, May 2009

Writer

TABLE OF CONTENT

PAGE OF TITLE	i
PAGE OF APPROVAL.....	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
AKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENT.....	v
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Identification of The Problem	2
1.3 Scope of The Problem	2
1.4 Formulation of The Problem.....	3
1.5 Objective of The Study.....	3
1.6 Methodology	4
1.6.1 Collection Data.....	4
1.6.2 Data Analysis	4
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	7
2.1 Definitions	7
2.1.1 Novel.....	7
2.1.2 Character.....	8
2.1.3 Theme	10
2.1.4 Setting	11
2.2 Synopsis.....	13
2.5 Biography of The Author	14

CHAPTER III DATA ANALYSIS	17
3.1 The Structure of The Novel	17
3.2 Characters in The Novel	44
3.3 The Themes in The Novel	52
3.3 Setting.....	55
3.3.1 New England	55
3.3.1 in 1860's	56
CHAPTER IV CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.....	57
4.1 Conclusions	57
4.2 Suggestions	59
BIBLIOGRAPHY	60



ABSTRAK

Judul dari skripsi ini adalah *Analysis of Theme And Chaarcter in Louisa May Alcott's "The Little Women"*. Pada dasarnya novel ini bercerit tentang kehidupan para wanita yang bersaudara dalam menjalani kehidupan mereka. Masalah yang timbul pun terkadang harus dihadapi dengan lapang dada walalupun banyak hal yang dapat menggoyahkan persaudaraan mereka.

Selain menganalisa karakter-karakter di dalam novel ini, penulis juga menganalisa tema yang menjadi unsur cerita dalam novel ini juga. Dengan uini, penulis menyimpulkan bahwa novel ini mengandung tema; gender, feminisme, dan juga kemiskinan yang menjadi perhatian pengarang.



BOSOWA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The term "literature" has different meanings depending on who is using it and in what context. It could be applied broadly to mean any symbolic record, encompassing everything from images and sculptures to letters. In a more narrow sense the term could mean only text composed of letters, or other examples of symbolic written language (Egyptian hieroglyphs, for example). An even more narrow interpretation is that text has a physical form, such as on paper or some other portable form, to the exclusion of inscriptions or digital media.

As one of literary works, novel has its own charm in developing a story gaining the attention of the readers. Every story would never be interesting without the characters in it and for that reason also the writer believes it would be good to analyze the theme and characters in Louisa May Alcott's "Little Women".

1.2 Identification of the Problem

There are some problems in this novel, they are:

1. The women characters in the novel.
2. The conflict in the family.
3. The conflicts between the sisters.
4. The sisterhood in the novel.
5. The theme in the novel.

1.3 Scope of The Problem

Based on the identification of the problem, here are the scopes of the problem :

1. The women characters in the novel.
2. The conflict in the family.
3. *The theme in the novel.*

1.4 Formulation of The Problem

To broaden up the basic idea of this writing, the writer would like to propose some questions.

1. How are the women characters in the novel ?
2. Why do the conflicts occur ?
3. What is the theme in the novel ?

1.5 Objective of The Study

To answer to the research questions above, the writer would like to bring up the objective of the study.

1. To describe the women characters in the novel.
2. To trace out why such conflicts occur.
3. Explain the theme of the novel.

1.6 Methodology

The library research the writer has used is not only by reading the novel, but also by collecting as much as in formation she can get from different sources which are related to the research.

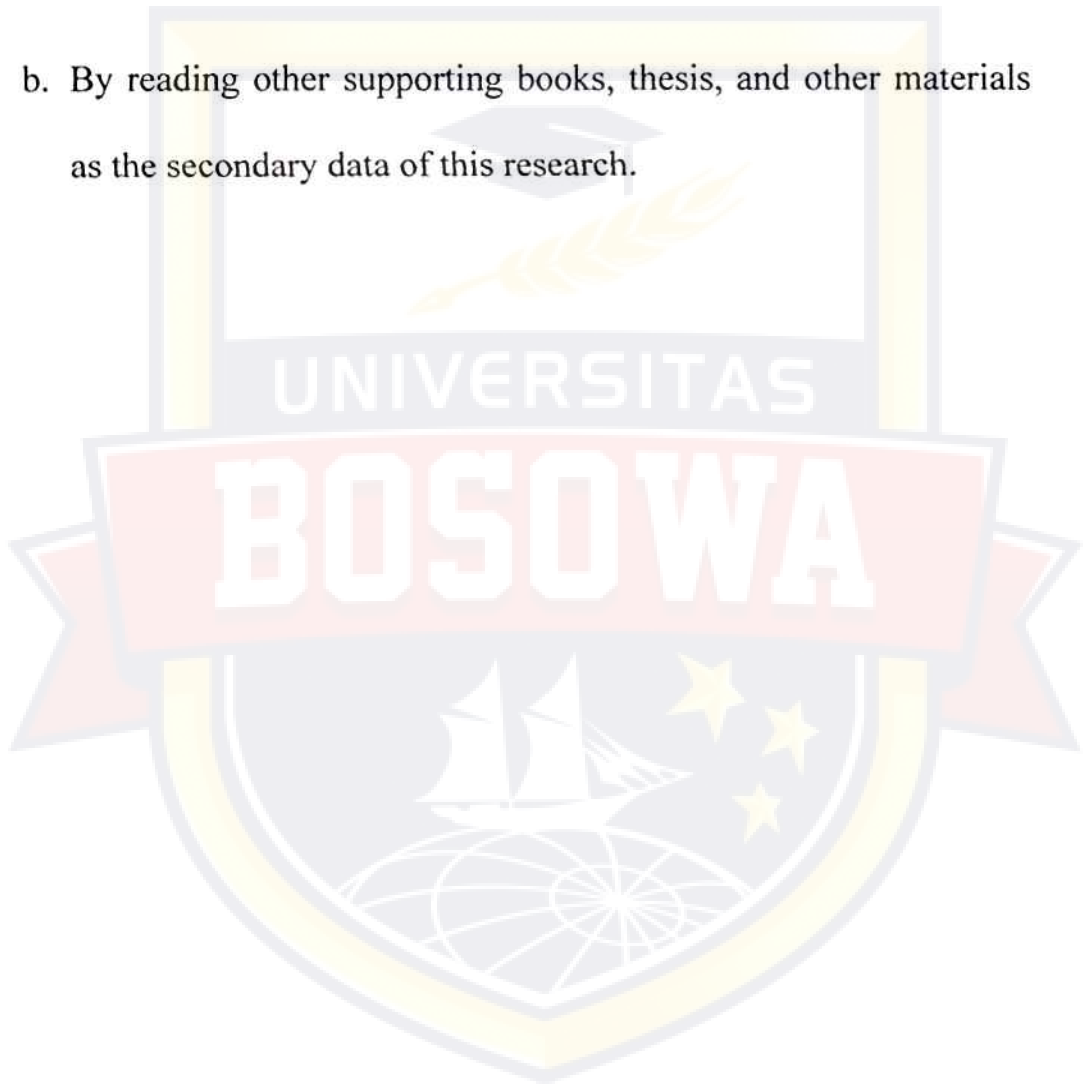
1.6.1 Collection Data

All the data are collected by the library research from two different sources : the short story itself and other supporting materials relevant to subject matter of the study.

1.6.2 Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the writer uses an approach in order to help her analysis in analyzing the plot and setting in the novel. The steps that the writer will follow are as of the following:

- a. By doing the scheming and scanning on Louisa May Alcott's "The Little Women" intensively in order to grasp the primary data.
- b. By reading other supporting books, thesis, and other materials as the secondary data of this research.



CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literary fiction is a term that has come into common usage since around 1970, principally to distinguish 'serious' fiction (that is, work with claims to literary merit) from the many types of genre fiction and popular fiction.

What distinguishes literary fiction from other genres is subjective, and as in other artistic media, genres may overlap. Literary fiction is generally characterized as distinctive based on its content and style.

According to en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literature,

“Literature is literally "an acquaintance with letters" as in the first sense given in the Oxford English Dictionary (from the Latin *littera* meaning "an individual written character (letter)"). The term has generally come to identify a collection of texts. The word "literature" as a common noun can refer to any form of writing, such as essays or poetry; "Literature" as a proper noun refers to a whole body of literary work, world-wide or relating to a specific culture.”

Technically, literature means "anything written." Even your grocery list would qualify. But the academic word usually means imaginative literature, which in turn means fiction as opposed to non-fiction. The term applies to novels, short stories, poems, plays, movies, and all TV shows that aren't news shows, documentaries, or interviews of real people.

2.1 Definitions

2.1.1 Novel

A novel (from French *nouvelle* Italian "novella", "new") is an extended, generally fictional narrative, typically in prose. Until the eighteenth century, the word referred specifically to short fictions of love and intrigue as opposed to romances, which were epic-length works about love and adventure. Literary theory of genres has not yet managed to isolate a "single definite, stable characteristic of the novel" that holds without reservations.

Novel can be understood as cultural instrument designed to confront intellectual and social crisis. This conflict embodied in Richardson and Fielding, who according to this method can be understood as representing alternative methods of doing the same thing.

During the 18th century the novel adopted features of the old *romance* and became one of the major literary genres. It is today defined mostly by its ability to become the object of literary criticism demanding artistic merit and a specific 'literary' style—or specific literary styles.

2.1.2 Character

Characters are usually presented through their actions, dialect, and *thoughts*, as well as by *description*. Characterization can regard a variety of aspects of a character, such as appearance, age, gender, educational level, vocation or occupation, financial status, marital status, social status, cultural background, hobbies, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, ambitions, motivations, personality, etc.

Reaske (1966:56) gave comments about the definition of character as follows:

“Some characters in a novel don’t change the beginning as the same kind of character as they are in the end. These passive characters are acted upon the events of the novel, they are usually static, or unchanging conversely, some characters are active. They perform act, they have a large part in the novel, and they usually undergo certain changes as the result of the action of the story. Instead of being static, they are considered dynamic.”

Type of characters, as quoted above, are called static and dynamic characters. The static character is the character that does not undergo the change from the beginning to the end of the story. On the contrary, the dynamic character provides emotional changes at the end of the story.

Both static and dynamic characters give the interlink role in constructing the unity of a story. This possibly related to the fictional story as the integral unity in literary works. Fiction serves you a story about a person or people that called “character”.

2.1.3 Theme

In literature, a theme is a broad idea in a story, or a message or lesson conveyed by a work. This message is usually about life, society or human nature. Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work. Themes are usually implied rather than explicitly stated. Deep thematic content is not required in literature; however, some readers would say that all stories inherently project some kind of outlook on life that can be taken as a theme, regardless of whether or not this is the intent of the author. Analysis of changes in dynamic characters can provide insight into a particular theme.

“Themes differ from motifs in that themes are ideas conveyed by a text, while motifs are repeated symbols that represent those ideas. Simply having repeated symbolism related to chess, does not make the story's theme the similarity of life to chess. Themes arise from the interplay of the plot, the characters, and the attitude the author takes to them, and the same story can be given very different themes in the hands of different authors. For instance, the source for Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Matteo Bandello's *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* gave the story the theme of "marrying without parental consent is wickedness and folly". (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/theme, 2008).

While thematic analysis is a primary concern of literary critics, a minority viewpoint holds that explicitly stating the theme of a work universalizes it in an inappropriate way. For example, many love stories end happily when the hero and heroine marry, thus the theme "Marriage equals happiness." Critics would point out that marriage rarely does simply equate to happiness and that marriage and happiness are individual and cultural intangibles that may or may not relate.

2.1.4 Definition of Setting

Generally, setting is a place and time where the story happens. Setting can be described as the space, which can be observed as the day, date year, season, period, and so on.

Landy (1972:160) explains more about setting in his book, "Insight: Study of A Short Story".

"The setting is location and period in which, a story occur. A story must take place and time, and therefore must have the same setting. But the importance of setting varies greatly from one story to another."

Further, setting has an important role in a story because one must always have the importance to know more about the character existence. This makes every aspect around the characters known as setting.

Setting has to integrate with other component such as theme. In other words, if setting in a play can be replaced without changing in influencing other character or thereof the drama, can be called integral.

The affectivity of a story in a drama is determined by the perception and appreciation of the author for the setting itself. Basically, setting has to create the mood and the soul of the story. Setting, in a story, becomes more alive because of the space, time, events mood of the character in the story, and the reflection of real life.

In addition, setting determines the character, which the character, determines the action. Both time and place create the same effect towards the whole characters in a story. The reaction of every character towards setting depends on some factors. Setting functioned as the force to revenge, which is the symbol of challenges. Setting must be considered as the logic and reasonable things.

Further, setting can be categorized into three principles. Firstly, setting creates freshness in a story or drama. Secondly, it creates the mood and encouragement for the characters. Thirdly, it creates the direct meaning of a story.

2.2 Synopsis

Little Women is the story of The Marches, a family used to hard toil and suffering. Although Father March is away with the Union armies, the sisters Meg, Jo, Amy and Beth keep in high spirits with their mother, affectionately named Marmee. Their friendly gift of a Christmas holiday breakfast to a neighbouring family is an act of generosity rewarded with wealthy Mr. Laurence's gift of a surprise Christmas feast. However, despite their efforts to be good, the girls show faults: the pretty Meg becomes discontented with the children she teaches; boyish Jo loses her temper regularly; while the golden-haired schoolgirl Amy is inclined towards affectation. However, Beth, who keeps the house is always kind and gentle. After certain happy times winning over the Laurences, dark times arrive as Marmee finds out about her husband's illness. Worse is to

come as Beth contracts scarlet fever in her Samaritan efforts for a sick neighbour and becomes more or less an invalid. The novel tells of their progress into young womanhood with the additional strains of romance, Beth's terminal illness, the pressures of marriage and the outside world. This is the story of their growing maturity and wisdom and the search for the contentedness of family life. It was written in 1867 and is a fictionalised biography of Alcott and her sisters. It has become a much loved classic tale and, while some of its issues seem outdated, many of the trials of the sisters are all too relevant today as evidenced by its continued following.

2.3 Biography of The Author

Alcott was a daughter of noted Transcendentalist Amos Bronson Alcott and Abigail May Alcott. She was born on the same day as her father, who started the Temple School; her uncle, Samuel Joseph May, was a noted abolitionist. Though of New England parentage and residence, she was born in Germantown, which is currently part of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She was the second born of the Alcott's four

daughters; Anna Bronson Alcott was the eldest, and Elizabeth Sewall Alcott and Abigail May Alcott were the two youngest. The family moved to Boston in 1834 or 1835, where her father established an experimental school and joined the Transcendental Club with Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.

During her childhood and early adulthood, she shared her family's poverty and Transcendentalist ideals. In 1840, after several setbacks with the school, her family moved to a cottage on 2 acres (8,100 m²) along the Sudbury River in Concord, Massachusetts. The Alcott family moved to the Utopian Fruitlands community for a brief interval in 1843-1844 and then, after its collapse, to rented rooms and finally to a house in Concord purchased with her mother's inheritance and help from Emerson. Alcott's early education had included lessons from the naturalist Henry David Thoreau but had chiefly been in the hands of her father. She also received some instruction from writers and educators such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Margaret Fuller, who were all family friends.

CHAPTER III

DATA AND ANALYSIS

Technically, literature means "anything written." Even your grocery list would qualify. But the academic word usually means imaginative literature, which in turn means fiction as opposed to non-fiction. The term applies to novels, short stories, poems, plays, movies, and all TV shows that aren't news shows, documentaries, or interviews of real people.

When you are asked to write an analysis of a short story or novel, you should use the skills of literary analysis. Critical papers analyze and explain some important points about a piece of literature. They do not repeat the plot. The following items will help you organize and plan your paper. You do not need to include every one of these items in every paper you write, but you should select the ones which are most necessary for your topic.

Often this involves taking a long-range view of cause and effect rather than a short-range view of cause and effect. For example, a newspaper story about asthma on the rise in urban slums might blame

cockroaches for the problem. But a fiction writer would look beyond the cockroaches to the human cause--maybe the greed of landlords and politicians. Can the facts demonstrate that human greed is the real cause? Maybe not. But fiction can show us why this is a plausible theory. At the same time, fiction isn't bound by the rules of rational argument.

A fiction writer is free to make us feel another person's pain without having to prove the pain exists, as a lawyer would have to. A fiction writer is also free to make us feel anger at social injustice, or pity at the waste of youth, talent, or life.

Writers normally don't try to explain the entire world in a single story. They pick some part of it to deal with, often to expose a particular problem that's bothering them. That problem could involve conflicts among individuals, conflicts of man with nature, conflicts of man with himself, or conflicts of man with his own society.

3.1 The Structure of The Novel

Little Women or, Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy is a novel by American author Louisa May Alcott (1832–1888). Written and published in two

parts in 1868 and 1869, the novel follows the lives of four sisters — Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy March — and is loosely based on the author's childhood experiences with her three sisters. The first part of the book was an immediate commercial and critical success and prompted the composition of the book's second part, also a huge success. Both parts were first published as a single volume in 1880. Alcott followed *Little Women* with two sequels reprising the March sisters, *Little Men* (1871) and *Jo's Boys* (1886). *Little Women* has been adapted to play, musical, opera, film and animated feature.

Alcott wrote *Little Women* during 1867 and early 1868, writing furiously for two and a half months. She drew heavily on her experiences growing up with her three sisters in Boston, Massachusetts and Concord, Massachusetts. The novel was first published on September 30, 1868, and became an overnight success, selling over 2,000 copies immediately. The critical reception was also overwhelmingly positive; critics soon began calling the new novel a classic. Readers clamoured for a second volume, and Alcott received many letters asking for a sequel.

In response to this demand, Alcott wrote a second part which was published in 1869. The second part picks up three years after the events in the last chapter of the first part ("Aunt March Settles The Question"). Both parts were called *Little Women* or, *Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy*. In 1880, the two parts were combined into one volume, and have been published as such in the United States ever since. In the UK, the second part was published under the title *Good Wives*, though Alcott had no part in the decision. Alcott followed *Little Women* at intervals with two novels that reprised the March sisters, *Little Men* (1871) and *Jo's Boys* (1886) which followed the lives of the girls' children.

Alcott's original work explores the overcoming of character flaws (many of the chapter titles in this first part are allusions to the allegorical concepts and places in *Pilgrim's Progress*). When young, the girls played *Pilgrim's Progress* by taking an imaginary journey through their home. As young women, they agree to continue the figurative journey, using the "guidebooks" — copies of the New Testament, described as 'that beautiful old story of the best life ever lived (chapter 1, see also chapter 19) — they receive on Christmas morning. Each of the March girls must

struggle to overcome a major character flaw: Meg, vanity; Jo, a hot temper; Beth, shyness; and Amy, selfishness. The girls must work out these flaws in order to become mothers, wives, sisters and citizens.

In the course of the novel, the girls become friends with their next-door neighbor, the teenage boy Laurie, who becomes a particular friend of Jo. As well as the more serious and sadder themes outlined above, the book describes the activities of the sisters and their friend, such as creating a newspaper and picnicking, and the various scrapes that Jo and Laurie (whose given name was "Theodore") get into. The story represents family relationships and explores family life thoroughly.

CHAPTER 1: PLAYING PILGRIMS

In this, the opening chapter, the reader meets the four main characters, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy. The girls are trying to decide what to get each other for Christmas. This year, however, their father is away at war and funds are limited. The girls finally decide that they will each buy a gift for Marmee instead of a gift for themselves. When Marmee returns home, the girls learn that she has received a letter from their father.

CHAPTER 2: A MERRY CHRISTMAS

The girls wake early on Christmas morning to discover that their mother has placed a different colored book under each of their pillows. They prepare breakfast and then sacrifice it to another family in need down the street. The girls then give Marmee her gifts and perform a play, *Operatic Tragedy*. Dinner comes as a surprise to the girls when they learn that old Mr. Laurence has provided them with ice cream, bonbons, and flowers.

CHAPTER 3: THE LAURENCE BOY

Jo and Meg attend a New Year's Eve party at Mrs. Gardiner's house. There is much commotion getting the two girls ready as they try to make the best of their old dresses and gloves. Jo tries to curl Meg's hair but only burns the ends off in a great tragedy. At the party, Jo meets Laurence, the grandson of old Mr. Laurence. He tells Jo that he would like to be called Laurie instead of his given name, Theodore, because classmates had teased him in the past. The girls return from the party and share their experiences with their sisters.

CHAPTER 4: BURDENS

In this chapter, the reader learns a great deal about each of the personalities of the little women. The narrator tells the reader that Mr. March lost his property while trying to help an unfortunate friend and because of this, Meg and Jo had found work outside the home to help support the family. Meg spends her days teaching small children as a governess, but could not help but yearn for a life in which she could go to parties, concerts, and spend her time in gossip. Jo spends time reading and caring for her Aunt March and wished that she could read all the books in her Aunt's library. Beth, the shy one, wishes that she could spend more time playing the piano instead of doing housework. Finally, Amy simply wishes that her nose was less flat. The narrator also shares that Meg was Amy's close friend and mother, while Beth and Jo were equally as close.

CHAPTER 5: BEING NEIGHBORLY

Jo can barely stand still and wishes to go next door and visit Laurie. She feels terrible that she has such wonderful sisters to keep her company and

that Laurie has no one. She ventures next door in order to read to the sick Laurie but ends up talking with him for hours. She tells him all about her sisters and the adventurous things they do, she wishes that he could join in their fun.

CHAPTER 6: BETH FINDS THE PLACE BEAUTIFUL

The girls spend much time over at the Laurence's home. Beth, however, fearing old man Laurence refuses to visit. Mr. Laurence speaks privately with Mrs. March about the possibility of Beth visiting the house and playing the piano, alone and undisturbed. Eventually Beth is able to visit the house and plays wonderful music for all to hear. In gratitude for Mr. Laurence's generosity she makes him a pair of slippers. Touched by her sincerity, Mr. Laurence gives Beth a small piano which once belonged to his deceased granddaughter. From this point on Beth and Mr. Lawrence shared a special bond.

CHAPTER 7: AMY'S VALLEY OF HUMILIATION

Amy explains to her sisters that she is deeply in debt with her classmates. It seems that a popular pastime of Amy and her classmates is the trading of pickled limes and Amy has not been able to provide her fair share. Meg gives Amy some money to purchase limes and Amy proudly announces to her classmates that she has 24 limes. After refusing to share her limes with the young Jenny Snow, Amy's secret stash of limes is discovered by Mr. Davis and she is punished before the class. When Mrs. March learns that her youngest daughter was smacked with a ruler and humiliated in front of the class she sends Jo with a note to Mr. Davis and decides that Amy will be taught at home. Laurie gives Beth a great compliment on her piano abilities.

CHAPTER 8: JO MEETS APOLLYON

Laurie invites Jo and Meg to watch *The Seven Castles of the Diamond Lake* and Amy wishes to come along. Jo is angered and annoyed at Amy and tells her that she cannot come. As Jo leaves Amy swears revenge on her. Upon arriving home Jo learns that Amy has burned a book that she

has been working on for many years. Jo is so hurt and crushed that she cannot ever forgive Amy. The next day Jo and Laurie go skating and Amy follows behind them in the hopes of telling her sister how sorry she is. As Jo and Laurie are racing on the ice, Amy slips through and Laurie rescues her. Jo feels terrible for not forgiving her sister sooner and the two sisters make up. Jo and her mother discuss their tempers and Jo vows to try to control hers more.

CHAPTER 9: MEG GOES TO VANITY FAIR

Meg leaves the family for a fortnight and stays with the Moffats. While staying with these girls Meg is introduced into the life of a young lady. She attends dinners, goes to the theater and tries on many new airs. Meg, however, is ashamed that her family is poor and that she cannot afford a new dress like the other girls. The Moffats dress Meg up for a ball and Meg places herself on display. Laurie attends the party and is not pleased with Meg's appearance or behavior. When Meg returns home she confesses to her mother that she was made to look foolish and that many gossipy things were said about her and her family. Mrs. March tells Meg

to never mind the gossip and to be true to herself by not pretending to be something that she is not.

CHAPTER 10: THE P.C. AND P.O.

The reader learns of the secret society which the girls have contrived. The Pickwick Club was a literary club formed by the four girls in their play. It featured a newsletter containing writings of the girls. Each girl assumed a separate identity, Meg was Samuel Pickwick, Jo was Augustus Snodgrass, Beth was Tracy Tupman, and Amy was Nathaniel Winkle.

CHAPTER 11: EXPERIMENTS

The girls decide to take a break from their work and try to experiment with laziness. The house falls into disrepair and the girls find being lazy, boring. Pip, the pet canary is discovered dead by Beth. All gather for the burial. Jo cooks a terrible dinner but everyone tries to be polite.

CHAPTER 12: CAMP LAURENCE

Laurence invites the girls to go camping with him and some of his English friends. The children enjoy a few nights in the forest.

CHAPTER 13: CASTLES IN THE AIR

The girls head off to the forest dressed in large hats to play Pilgrims Progress. Laurie sees them and follows. The girls explain to Laurie about Delectable Mountain and the Celestial City. Each of the children talk about what their dream castle would look like and how their dream lives would be. Laurie and Meg get into a small argument because Laurie insists that he does not need to go to college as his grandfather insists. Meg believes that he should obey his grandfather. The two resolve their quarrel and then all the girls decide that Laurie can be a member of the Busy Bee Society.

CHAPTER 14: SECRETS

Jo goes into town to see the dentist and runs into Laurie. The two of them decide to tell secrets. Jo tells Laurie that she has given two of her stories

to the newspaper and is waiting to hear whether or not they will be printed. Laurie tells Jo that her sister Meg has given one of her gloves to his tutor, Mr. Brooke. Jo is angry that her sister would do such a thing and she becomes very upset at the thought of Meg having a boyfriend. Jo fears that Meg will be taken away from the family and is in a mood for several days.

CHAPTER 15: A TELEGRAM

The March family receives a telegram that Mr. March is seriously ill. Mrs. March decides to leave at once to be by his side. Old man Laurence wishes to offer himself as Mrs. March's escort but because of his advanced age he offers Laurie's tutor, Mr. Brooke instead. Jo goes and has her hair cut off and sold so that she can provide the family with \$25.00.

CHAPTER 16: LETTERS

Each of the little women writes a letter to their mother.

CHAPTER 17: LITTLE FAITHFUL

Beth goes to visit the poor Hummel family to bring them food and supplies. Upon her visit she discovers that the baby is very ill and takes care of it while the older sister rests. While watching the child, it dies. The doctor is called and announces that the baby died of scarlet fever. He tells Beth to go home at once and take medication. Beth returns and is confined to bed, Amy is sent to Aunt March's house because of the fear of her contracting the fever. Amy does not wish to go but Laurie promises to visit her everyday. Meg and Jo begin caring for Beth.

CHAPTER 18: DARK DAYS

Beth's conditions becomes very grave. Mrs. March is sent for because the doctor believes Beth will die. Finally, the fever breaks.

CHAPTER 19: AMY'S WILL

Amy suffers at Aunt March's house but finds a friend in Esther, the maid. Esther tells Amy of the things she will receive when Aunt March dies.

CHAPTER 20: CONFIDENTIAL

Mrs. March returns home and visits the banished Amy who is overjoyed at seeing her mother. Jo and Marmee have a private talk about Meg and Mr. Brooke. Marmee tells Jo that while with him in Washington DC., Mr. Brooke told her that he means to get a job and then ask Meg to marry him. Jo is very upset at the prospect of losing her sister, but Marmee tries to comfort her.

CHAPTER 21: LAURIE MAKES MISCHIEF, AND JO MAKES PEACE

Laurie plays an evil prank on Meg by sending her a supposed "love letter" from Mr. Brooke. Laurie apologizes to Meg and her sisters, they forgive him. Laurie is also punished by his grandfather and decides to run off to Washington, DC. He asks Jo to go with him but she refuses. Jo gets Mr. Laurence to apologize for punishing Laurie and all is well.

CHAPTER 22: PLEASANT MEADOWS

Christmas Day arrives and Mr. March returns home. The girls are happy to see him. Sickly Beth plays and sings at the piano.

CHAPTER 23: AUNT MARCH SETTLES THE QUESTION

Meg and Jo discuss Mr. Brooke. Mr. Brooke visits the Marches and asks Meg if she will have his love, she refuses him and he leaves dejected. Aunt March talks with Meg and tells her that if she decides to love Mr. Brooke, she will inherit nothing. Meg is so angered that she decides to love Mr. Brooke. The first section of the book ends.

CHAPTER 24: GOSSIP

Here we meet the March family three years later. Mrs. March is aged a bit, Mr. March has come home to teach, and the entire family is awaiting Meg's wedding to Mr. Brooke. Beth, although no longer sick, does not retain her energy as she used to. Jo is pursuing her writing career, Amy has become quite the young lady, and Laurie is off at college.

CHAPTER 25: THE FIRST WEDDING

The wedding guests arrive and Meg has her simple wedding. Not needing all the fancy trimmings but preferring a small quiet wedding, Mr. March acts as minister and the family gathers round to see young Meg married. All have a wonderful time, even Aunt March.

CHAPTER 26: ARTISTIC ATTEMPTS

Amy spends much time trying out different mediums for her art. As a member of an art class she wishes to have her class over to the house for lunch. Realizing that the family cannot support a lunch for 14 girls, Amy agrees to make arrangements and pay for the affair herself. The lunch is rained out the first day and on the second, only one friend is present. Although Amy's day is a disaster, her family consoles her.

CHAPTER 27: LITERARY LESSONS

Jo attends a lecture where she gets the idea of writing stories for publication. She sends one of her manuscripts to a publisher and receives \$100.00. She decides to send Beth and Marmee to the beach. Her other

stories provide for the family as well, "The Duke's Daughter paid the butchers bill, A Phantom Hand put down a new carpet, and the Curse of the Coventrys proved the blessing of the Marches in the way of groceries and gowns". With this new found talent, Jo decides to wear her "scribbling suit", a black woolen pinafore and matching cap with a red bow, and write a book of some sort for money.

CHAPTER 28: DOMESTIC EXPERIENCES

Meg learns that married life is not as peaceful and easy as she might have imagined. She tries desperately to keep a good house and make jelly but these matters seem to get away from her from time to time. One night John brings home an unexpected dinner guest and Meg spends the evening sobbing. She spends too much money on a silk dress and a patient husband forgives her but she only insults him by declaring that she does not wish to be poor anymore. But, the couple works through their problems and 2 beautiful twins are born at the end of the chapter. John Laurence and Margaret "Daisy" are introduced into the world.

CHAPTER 29: CALLS

Amy and Jo make the social scene and visit several families. The reader gets a first hand glance at the differences in Jo and Amy's personalities. Amy, who has been looking forward to this outing has to convince her sister Jo to come with her. Eventually, an unhappy Jo agrees. The two visit from house to house where Amy is quick to guard her manners and behaves like a perfect lady. On the other hand, Jo enjoys telling stories and chatting with the boys more than talks about gossip with the ladies.

CHAPTER 30: CONSEQUENCES

Mrs. Chester decides to throw a fair to show off the girls artistic ability. May Chester shares with her mother her jealousy of Amy and her talent. Therefore, Mrs. Chester sees to it that Amy's table is moved away to a farther corner so that her girls can enjoy the spotlight. Amy tries to make the best of it and Jo convinces Laurie to bring his friends to buy all of Amy's floral arrangements. Even Jo attends and tries her best to fit in and make Amy happy.

CHAPTER 31: OUR FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

Amy writes several letters to her family and sisters. She is enjoying herself in Europe and traveling to many places. While abroad she runs into Fred Vaughn, whom she met the summer of Camp Laurence. In a private letter to Marmee, Amy says that if Fred should offer his love, she would not hesitate to take it so that the family could have a good marriage. She says that she does not love him, but would in time. In addition, she is quite impressed by his monetary worth since Meg made such a "poor" marriage, Amy does not wish to do the same.

CHAPTER 32: TENDER TROUBLES

Beth seems upset and Marmee wonders why, so she asks Jo to see if she can use her influence to find out. Although Beth does not tell Jo exactly what is vexing her, Jo believes that Beth has fallen in love with Laurie. Fearing that Laurie may like her instead, Jo asks her mother if she may move to New York for the winter. She thinks that the time away would be good for her writing and allow Laurie ample time to forget her. Marmee agrees and Jo tells Laurie that she will be leaving.

CHAPTER 33: JO'S JOURNAL

Jo recounts her adventures in New York by writing several letters to her family. She is having a wonderful time living with Mrs. Kirke. She also meets for the first time, Professor Friedrich Bhaer and begins to learn German.

CHAPTER 34: A FRIEND

Jo is enjoying her life in New York as a writer. She decides to take a story she has written to the Weekly Volcano. She explains to Mr. Dashwood that her "friend" has written a story and hopes that it will be suitable for publishing. He tells her that he will look at it and get back to her. Jo hears from him later and sees that her story has been completely changed but they are offering \$25.00 for it so she accepts. She continues to write sensational stories for the paper but refuses to have any name attached to them. *Jo and Professor Bhaer continue their friendly relationship.* He is still teaching her German and one night comes to teach her wearing a paper hat which the children made for him but that he forgot to remove. Jo lets him discover the hat himself and when he

does, they begin a discussion of the sensational story in the paper. Jo is thankful that it was not one of her stories and she decides to never write those kinds of stories again. Jo returns home for the summer.

CHAPTER 35: HEARTACHE

Jo returns and hopes that Laurie has gotten over her. She discovers in a walk through the woods that he has not and she feels that she has to tell him that she does not love him and will never marry him. Laurie is crushed and returns home to his grandfather. Wishing to have taken Jo on a trip to Europe, Laurie now finds comfort in the fact that his grandfather will accompany him. Laurie tries to recover from a broken heart.

CHAPTER 36: BETH'S SECRET

Jo takes Beth to the beach in the hopes that it will lift her spirits. Beth tells Jo "her secret", namely, that Beth is very sick and fragile and believes that she will die soon. Beth explains that she believes she was never meant to live long and that at 19 she is ready and willing to go. Beth hopes that Jo will tell their parents of Beth's secret so that they can

prepare. Upon arriving home, Jo realizes that she will not have to tell her parents because it is clear from looking at Beth that her time is nearing.

CHAPTER 37: NEW IMPRESSIONS

Laurie catches up with Amy in Nice on Christmas Day. The two spend time getting to know each other all over again. Laurie has grown into quite a young man and Amy has become a refined young lady. The two attend a Christmas part together and Laurie fills up Amy's book with his name for dances all night. The two are discovering new impressions in one another.

CHAPTER 38: ON THE SHELF

Meg and John fall out of sorts as Meg spends more and more time with the children and less with John. He begins to spend a great deal of time at the neighbors because he feels himself to be a burden. At first, Meg enjoys his time away from the house because it allows her the opportunity to care for the children more. Eventually however, she feels neglected and speaks with Marmee about her situation. Marmee tells

Meg that she needs to pay more attention to John and allow him to help in the raising of the children. Meg agrees and lets John help to discipline Demi who has gotten out of control. Meg is soon satisfied that John is capable of taking care of the children as well and the marriage returns to its even keel.

CHAPTER 39: LAZY LAURENCE

Laurie and Amy spend more time together in France. On day at a park Amy has had enough of Laurie's "lazy" behavior and severely reprimands him for it. She tells him that he needs to go back to his grandfather and get on with his life. Amy suspects that Jo is the cause of his troubles as she sees him playing with a ring which Jo had given him long ago. Realizing that Laurie suffers from heartache, Amy tries to be more understanding but insists that Laurie needs to be less lazy. By the end of the chapter Laurie sends word that he is leaving for his grandfather and Amy is pleased.

CHAPTER 40: THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

A special room is prepared for Beth so that she may spend her last days surrounded by beautiful things and wonderful people. She spends her days making small gifts for the children. Jo keeps a constant watch over her sister and writes a special poem about her entitled, "Beth". One night as Jo drifts off to sleep, Beth reads the poem and is touched by her sisters caring words. She realizes that her short life has made a real difference in people's lives and now Beth is ready to leave. Beth dies in her mother's arms.

CHAPTER 41: LEARNING TO FORGET

In an effort to cure his broken heart, Laurie tries to write music like Mozart but finds this task tedious and gives it up. Amy receives word from home that Beth has passed. She wishes to return home but her family urges her to stay, saying that she should spend her time mourning in Europe. Amy calls for Laurie and he packs his things and leaves from Germany to be at Amy's side. The two grow very fond of one another and love blossoms between them.

CHAPTER 42: ALL ALONE

Jo has a hard time dealing with Beth's death. She is deeply saddened and feels very much alone. Marmee and her father try to comfort her but Jo is still heartbroken. The family hears the news of Amy and Laurie's engagement. Marmee is worried that Jo will be upset at the news, but Jo confesses that she is not at all angry or upset. Marmee suggests that Jo write to help ease her pain and so Jo does. One evening she retires and looks through her old chest, she begins to reminisce about her winter stay with Mrs. Kirke's and her friendship with Professor Bhaer. Jo begins to realize how much she misses him.

CHAPTER 43: SURPRISES

Jo is saddened at the prospect of being an old maid, yet her sadness turns to joy when Laurie and Amy return from Europe and announce that they have married. The family is overjoyed, including Jo who is now more than happy to welcome Laurie as a true brother to the family. Yet this is not the only surprise of the evening for Jo soon discovers Professor Bhaer at the front door and invites him in to enjoy the festivities.

CHAPTER 44: MY LORD AND LADY

Laurie and Amy discuss their plans for the future. Laurie says that he means to get a good job and stop being so lazy. The two agree that they wish to use their wealth to help others who are less fortunate than themselves.

CHAPTER 45: DAISY AND DEMI

In this chapter the reader learns more about Meg and John's young twins. Daisy is the picture of beauty and bounces about playing house and confessing her love for everyone. Demi is likewise active and pursues the alphabet with his grandfather. He is very inquisitive and protects his sister from any harm. Both children praise and love their Aunt Jo and are jealous when their playtimes with her are cut short because of visits from Professor Bhaer.

CHAPTER 46: UNDER THE UMBRELLA

Jo goes on long walks in the hope of running into Professor Bhaer, she has not seen him for several days and wonders where he has gone. She

runs into him one rainy day in town and learns that his business is finished and that he will be leaving soon. The Professor has been offered a job in the west teaching and he means to take it and earn some money for himself and Franz and Emil. Jo is crushed by this news and Professor Bhaer seems to take notice. He spends the rest of the day shopping with Jo and eventually the two disclose their true feelings for one another. They agree to be married and Jo feels that she has finally found happiness in her life.

CHAPTER 47: HARVEST TIME

Aunt March dies suddenly and leaves Plumfield, her home, to Jo. Overjoyed by the generosity of the old woman, Jo searches for a way to make the home useful. Finally, she decides that she would like to open a boys home with her and the Professor as teachers. The home would provide a place for both rich and poor boys so that each could learn and grow up in a giving environment. Eventually Jo and the Professor have two little boys of their own, Rob and Teddy. Amy has a sickly young daughter, Beth, who she is constantly worrying over. At the annual

apple-picking at Plumfield, the family celebrates the sixtieth birthday of Mrs. March. The boys all climb trees and sing to her which makes her very happy. The family gives thanks for having one another and the novel closes.

3.2 The Characters in The Novel

Josephine "Jo" March, the star of the novel, is based on Louisa May Alcott herself. Jo is a tomboy and the second-eldest sister at fifteen. She is very outspoken and has a passion for writing. Her bold nature often gets her into trouble. She is especially close to her younger sister Beth, who tries to help her become a gentler person. At the beginning of the book, she is employed by her Aunt March as a companion, but when Beth becomes ill, Amy is sent in Jo's place. Jo cuts off her long, chestnut brown hair — "her one beauty", as Amy calls it — and sells it to a wig shop to get money for her mother to visit their father, a wounded Civil War chaplain. She refuses the proposal of marriage from family friend Laurie (despite many letters sent to Miss Alcott to have them married), and after Jo moves to New York, later meets and marries Professor Fritz

Bhaer. They have two sons, Rob, named after his grandfather, and Teddy, named after Laurie. The character of Jo is based on Louisa herself. Alcott later wrote, "Jo should have remained a literary spinster, but so many enthusiastic young ladies wrote to me clamorously demanding that she should marry Laurie, or somebody, that I didn't dare refuse and out of perversity went and made a funny match for her". Jo also has a bad temper and throughout the novel tries to control it with help from both Beth and her mother.

Margaret "Meg" March, at sixteen, she is the oldest sister. She is very pretty and somewhat vain about her looks, with smooth hair and small, white hands. She is the most responsible and helps run the household in her mother's absence. Meg also guards Amy from Jo when they have fights, just like Jo protects Beth. Due to the family's poverty she must work as a governess for wealthy friends, the King family. After having bad experiences with some rich people (first, the Kings' eldest son is disinherited for bad behavior, and later she visits her friend Annie Moffat and discovers that her family believes Mrs. March is plotting to match her with Laurie only to gain his family's wealth), Meg learns that

true worth does not lie with money. She falls in love with Mr. John Brooke, Laurie's tutor. She eventually marries Mr. Brooke and bears twin children, Margaret "Daisy" and John, Jr. "Demi" (short for Demi-John). A third child, Josephine (called "Josie"), is mentioned in Little Men.

Elizabeth "Beth" March, the second-youngest sister, at about thirteen, is a quiet, kind young woman and an exceptional pianist. She also enjoys looking after her dolls and cats. She is docile and shy to a fault; she is homeschooled due to her chronic shyness. At the start of the book, she is described as having a round, rosy face, shiny brown hair and appearing younger than her years. She is especially close to Jo, despite their very different personalities. Beth is the sister most involved with charitable works. While her mother is nursing their father in Washington, she contracts scarlet fever from the youngest child of the Hummels, a poor German family. She survives the illness but is weakened greatly, and eventually dies from the after affects of the illness. After Beth's death, Jo realizes that Beth was in love with Laurie; it was noted that while sick in bed, she looked out the window whenever Laurie was there.

Amy Curtis March, the youngest sister at age twelve when the story begins, and a talented artist, Amy is described as a pretty young girl with golden hair (in curls) and blue eyes (described as having the general traits of a "snow maiden"). Her nose has become rather flat, apparently after a small accident she had as a three-year-old when she was playing with Jo. Amy obsesses over this minor flaw, and in early chapters seeks to "cure" the flaw by wearing a clothespin on her nose while she sleeps. She cares about her family, but is also "cool, reserved and worldly" which sometimes gets her into trouble. Often "petted" because she was the youngest, she can be vain and spoiled and inclined to throw tantrums when things do not go her way. Her relationship with Jo in particular is often strained due to Jo's teasing ways, particularly when Amy tries to use big words which end up being used incorrectly much to author Jo's merriment. As Aunt March's new companion (who gets along with the old woman better than Jo ever did), she eventually travels abroad with Aunt March. During their travels, she meets up with Laurie in Europe and, shortly after Beth dies, they marry. Later, Amy gives birth to daughter Elizabeth (Beth).

Margaret "Marmee" March is the girls' mother and head of household while her husband is away. She engages in charitable works and attempts to guide her girls' morals and shape their characters, usually through experiments. She confesses to Jo after her big fight with Amy that she has a temper as bad and volatile as Jo's own, but has learned to control it to avoid hurting herself and her loved ones.

Robin March: Formerly wealthy, it is implied that he helped unscrupulous friends who did not repay the debt, resulting in the family's poverty. A scholar and a minister, he serves as a chaplain for the Union Army.

Hannah Mullet: The maid of the March family, an older woman, who (from a letter written in the first person in the text) is described as kind and loyal, if lacking in formal education.

Aunt Josephine March: Mr. March's aunt, a rich widow. She lives alone in her mansion and Jo is employed to wait on her each day. She disapproves of the family's loss of wealth through their charitable work while hoarding her own (except in a few select instances). Amy is sent in Jo's place to be Aunt March's companion while Beth is ill. They get along

very well, and eventually Aunt March takes Amy to study art in Europe.

Uncle and Aunt Carrol: Sister and brother-in-law of Mr. March.

Amy travels to Europe with them.

Theodore "Laurie" Laurence: A charming, playful, and rich young man who lives next door to the March family. He is often misunderstood by his loving but overprotective grandfather, who worries that Laurie will follow in his father's footsteps. His father was a free-spirited young man who eloped with an Italian pianist and was disowned for that. Both died young, and as an orphan, Laurie was sent to live with Mr. Laurence. After Jo refuses to marry Laurie, she flees to New York and he flees to Europe. While there, he falls in love with and marries Amy, who later gives birth to their daughter Elizabeth (Beth).

Mr. James Laurence: A wealthy neighbor to the Marches. Lonely in his mansion, and often at odds with his high-spirited grandson Laurie, he finds comfort in becoming a benefactor to the Marches. He protects the March sisters while Marmee is away just as if they were his own. He is an old friend of Mrs March's father, and admires their charitable works.

John Brooke: While a tutor to Laurie, he falls in love with Meg. When Laurie leaves for college, he works for Mr. Laurence as an assistant and accompanies Mrs. March to Washington when her husband is injured. Later in the book, Aunt March catches Meg rejecting John's declaration of love. She implies that Brooke was only interested in Meg's future inheritance and threatens Meg with disinheritance. When Meg sticks up for John, he overhears her and realizes she was in love all along, and together they defy Aunt March and become engaged. He serves in the Union Army and marries Meg after the war. He dies at the end of Little Men.

The Hummels: Very poor German immigrant family. Marmee and the girls, though poor themselves, try to help them. Their baby dies of scarlet fever and Beth contracts it while caring for the child.

The Kings: Family who employ Meg as a governess.

Gardiners: Wealthy friends of Meg's. Before the Marches lost their wealth, the two families were societal equals. The Gardiners are portrayed as goodhearted but vapid, believing in marriage for money and position.

Mrs. Kirke: A friend of Marmee's who runs a boarding house in New York. She employs Jo as governess to her two girls, Kitty and Minnie, for a time.

Professor Friedrich "Fritz" Bhaer: A poor German immigrant who used to be a well-known professor in Berlin but now lives in Mrs. Kirke's boarding house and tutors her children. He and Jo become friends and he critiques Jo's work, encouraging her to become a serious writer instead of writing "sensation" stories for weekly tabloids. The two eventually marry.

Franz and Emil: Mr. Bhaer's two nephews whom he looks after following the death of his sister.

Tina: The small daughter of Mrs. Kirke's French washerwoman: she is a favorite of Professor Bhaer's.

Miss Norton: A worldly tenant living in Mrs. Kirke's boarding house. She occasionally takes Jo under her wing and entertains her.

3.3 The Themes in The Novel

1. Social Concerns

Little Women, Alcott is concerned in with the maturation and socialization of girls. She treats the issues through the experiences of the four March sisters, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy, who range in age from twelve to sixteen when the novel begins. The ages of the characters at the novel's outset suggests that late adolescence launches a particularly important stage in the developmental process. From the outset it is clear also that strong parental guidance and a sheltered, domestic setting are essential elements. Additionally, as the earliest chapters suggest, the inculcation of cheerful and unselfish qualities will help young people endure war and shifting social and economic times.

2. The Role of Women in Nineteenth-Century America

In the nineteenth century, women were responsible for creating warm, happy homes for their husbands and children. While some families hired servants, most could not afford to hire help. The duties of

running a household were staggering. A woman prepared three rather elaborate meals every day. Housecleaning, laundry, mending, and ironing were all done with painstaking care. Daughters were expected to help with housework to expedite chores and also to learn skills for their own future households. Women were also accountable for the actions of the family outside the home. If a man took up excessive drinking or gambling, for example, his wife was blamed for not creating a suitable home environment.

3. Gender

Gender 1: Amy tells Jo to stop using slang words. Jo is lying on the rug. She sits up and puts her hands in her pockets, then starts to whistle. Immediately she is told to stop because it is boyish. She defiantly says that that's why she does it.

Gender 2: Jo says that it is bad to be a girl when she likes boys' games, jobs and mannerisms. She says that she is disappointed because she was born a girl. She wants to go fight in the war instead of staying home knitting and sewing.

4. Poverty

Poverty 1: The girls, upset because they are not getting Christmas presents this year because of the war and other difficulties, are brooding over the fact that some girls are rich, and some have nothing at all. They think this is unfair, and they think that having nothing is hard to deal with.

Poverty 2: On Christmas morning, the March girls find that their mother has gone to help a poor family after a person came begging at their house. She went to them immediately to see what was needed. Hannah says that their mother is one of the most giving people she has seen.

Poverty 3: After the party at the Gardiners', Jo says that fine young ladies probably don't have more fun that she and her sisters do, even though the March girls do not have the money to afford nice gowns, *gloves and other fancy things.*

3.4 Setting

3.4.1 (New England)

New England is a region of the United States located in the northeastern corner of the country, bounded by the Atlantic Ocean, Canada and New York State, and consisting of the modern states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

In one of the earliest English settlements in the New World, *English Pilgrims fleeing religious persecution in Europe first settled in New England in 1620, in the colony of Plymouth.* In the late 18th century, the New England colonies would be among the first North American British colonies to demonstrate ambitions of independence from the British Crown, although they would later oppose the War of 1812 between the United States and Britain.

In the 19th century, it played a prominent role in the movement to abolish slavery in the United States, hosted the first pieces of American literature and philosophy, was home to the beginnings of free public education, and was the first region of the United States to be transformed by the North American Industrial Revolution.

3.4.2 In 1860'S

Little Women is set in the 1860s in a New England town modeled on Concord, Massachusetts. Most of the action in Part I revolves around the March family home. With Father away, serving as a clergyman for soldiers fighting in the Civil War, the four daughters and their mother remain at home, struggling to live as comfortably as possible under the circumstances of suffrage.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.1 Conclusion

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work, such as women's struggle between familial duty and personal growth.

While on the surface a simple story about the four March girls' journeys from childhood to adulthood, *Little Women* centers on the conflict between two emphases in a young woman's life—that which she places on herself, and that which she places on her family. In the novel, an emphasis on domestic duties and family detracts from various women's abilities to attend to their own personal growth. For Jo and, in some cases, Amy, the problem of being both a professional artist and a dutiful woman creates conflict and pushes the boundaries set by nineteenth-century American society.

At the time when Alcott composed the novel, women's status in society was slowly increasing. As with any change in social norms, however, progress toward gender equality was made slowly. Through the four different sisters, Alcott explores four possible ways to deal with being a woman bound by the constraints of nineteenth-century social expectations: marry young and create a new family, as Meg does; be subservient and dutiful to one's parents and immediate family, as Beth is; focus on one's art, pleasure, and person, as Amy does at first; or struggle to live both a dutiful family life and a meaningful professional life, as Jo does. While Meg and Beth conform to society's expectations of the role that women should play, Amy and Jo initially attempt to break free from these constraints and nurture their individuality. Eventually, however, both Amy and Jo marry and settle into a more customary life. While Alcott does not suggest that one model of womanhood is more desirable than the other, she does recognize that one is more realistic than the other.

4.2 Suggestions

The writer realizes that this analysis is far from perfection, so it would be a good idea for her colleagues to analyze the novel for more details by using any approach in order to reveal the value of this novel. The writer would like to suggest that the study of theme and setting should be intensified among the English Department. And the interest in the reading the novel is very essential and should be increased for better understanding of literature.

Because, to analyze a literary text is to ask what that text means, to ask *how* and *why* it works. The analytical process is complex but it can be broken down into two basic activities: first, to divide the text into its constituent parts, its main elements and/or themes; and second, to explain how these parts are related, both to each other and to the text as a whole. The purpose of analysis is to make inferences about the meaning of the text, i.e. to make explicit in one's analysis what is merely implicit in the text.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Giddens, Anthony. 1992. *Transformation of Intimacy*. Jakarta : Fresh Book.
- Halsey, J. William. 1987. *School Dictionary*. London : Macmillan.
- Harjana, Andrew. 1995. *Kritik Sastra Sebuah Pengantar*. Jakarta : Gramedia.
- Johnson, Samuel. 1750. *The Rambler*. Washington DC : Washington Square Press.
- Kenney, William. 1996. *How To Analyze Fiction*. England : Monarch Press.
- Panuti, Sudjiman. 1991. *Memahami Cerita Rekaan*. Yogyakarta : Pustaka Jaya.
- Reaske, Christoper Russel & John R. Knot Jr. 1998. *Mirror and The Literature*. San Fransisico : Trifles.
- Sapirstein, Milton. *Paradox of Everyday Life*. 1995. New York : Department of English Harvard University.
- Semi, Atar. 1988. *Anatomi Sastra*. Bandung : Angkasa.
- Sumardjo, Semi & Saini K.M. 1997. *Apresiasi Kesusastaan*. Jakarta : Gramedia.
- Teeuw, A.1998. *Sastra dan Ilmu Sastra*. Jakarta : Pustaka Jaya.