



**WOMEN'S ROLES IN THE 19TH CENTURY DEPICTED
IN *LITTLE WOMEN*
BY LOUISA MAY ALCOTT**

A THESIS

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the S-1 Degree Majoring Literature in English Department
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University**

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PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer honestly confirms that she compiles this thesis entitled “Women’s Roles in The 19th Century Depicted in *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott” by herself and without taking any results from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3 and in diploma degree. The writer additionally ascertains that she does not use any material from other publications or someone’s paper except from the references mentioned.

Semarang, July 2021

Anastasia Windy Adellia Putri

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease.”

– **Quran (94:5)**

“When it’s hard, take a look back at what you’ve been going through. Don’t forget how rewarding it was. You’re the most beautiful person in the world.”

– **Kim Taehyung**

“I have come to love myself for who I am, for who I was, and for who I hope to become.”

– **Kim Namjoon**

*This thesis is sincerely dedicated to
my beloved parents, siblings and friends.*

Thank You

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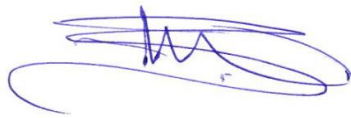
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ABSTRAK

Tesis ini berjudul *Women's Roles in the 19th Century Depicted in "Little Women"* by Louisa May Alcott. Tujuan dari penulisan tesis ini adalah menganalisis peran wanita dalam kehidupan sosial pada abad 19 yang digambarkan di dalam cerita. Analisis unsur intrinsik yaitu meliputi analisis karakteristik tokoh utama dan tokoh pendukung, latar, dan konflik, sedangkan analisis unsur ekstrinsik meliputi analisis peran wanita yang ada di dalam cerita. Penulis menggunakan metode kontekstual dengan pendekatan sosiologi untuk menganalisis unsur intrinsik dan unsur ekstrinsik cerita melalui kajian pustaka. Teori yang digunakan dalam tesis ini adalah teori peran gender. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa standar peran gender yang ditetapkan di dalam masyarakat mendorong tokoh utama untuk berusaha membentuk perilaku mereka sesuai standar sosial dan peran mereka sebagai wanita pada abad 19 yang masih tradisional. Beberapa peran wanita yang harus dilakukan yaitu berpenampilan seperti seorang wanita yang dianggap layak, mampu melakukan pekerjaan rumah, dan mampu menyeimbangkan peran wanita sebagai seorang istri dan ibu. Simpulannya, peran wanita dalam kehidupan bermasyarakat sebagian besar dipengaruhi oleh status gender yang dimiliki, budaya, dan standar sosial yang berlaku pada waktu tertentu.

Kata kunci: Peran gender, Peran wanita, *Little Women*, Louisa May Alcott.

ABSTRACT

This writing entitled *Women's Roles in the 19th Century Depicted in "Little Women"* by Louisa May Alcott has the purpose to analyze the women's roles depicted in the novel. The analysis of the intrinsic elements are used to analyze the characteristics of the major and minor characters, settings, and conflicts of the story while the analysis of the extrinsic elements are used to analyze the women's roles depicted in the story. The methods that are used in the study are the contextual method with sociological approach for analyzing the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the story and library research to compile the data. The writer uses gender roles theory. The result of this writing shows that the defined women's roles force the characters to act and behave according to those standards in the 19th century to fit in the society. Some of the women roles they have to fulfill such as dressing up like a proper lady, being able to do house chores, and balancing their roles as a wife and a mother. In conclusion, women's roles in society are mostly influenced by their gender, culture, and the applicable social standards in the current time.

Keywords: Gender roles, women's roles, *Little Women*, Louisa May Alcott.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Literature is the imitation of life. Through literary works, readers can learn about the sociological aspect of the story such as the social background of the story or the writing technique the authors used, such as how they put a particular characteristic of the characters of the story which can be analyzed through psychological or sociological approach.

By reading literature, the readers may learn the complexity of human mind and the ways we can understand it. Literature may give the example cases of human's complex and complicated thought and action which in fact do exist in our real life. The author's works also tend to give some moral lessons to the readers based on the current setting and characters development they used. The setting will be including of setting of time, place and environment, which are concluded into one simple thing called society.

Little Women is a novel written by Louisa May Alcott in 1868. This book is Alcott's most successful work and tells about four daughters of a middle-class family living in New England. Those four daughters are Margaret, Josephine, Elizabeth and Amy. They are the main essence of the story and hold the important role of how Alcott depicted the women roles in her novel.

There are two previous studies analyzing the *Little Women*. The first one is *Girlhood and Little Women*, an essay by Julia Mickenberg. This essay discusses about the struggle of Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy to live their childhood in the middle-class family and how the novel brings moral assumptions to the young people about class, gender, nationality, and marriage.

The second previous study of *Little Women* is an essay entitled *Gender Stereotyping in Little Women: Let Us Be Elegant or Die!* written by Clare Bender. This essay explores the feminism and gender stereotyping in the novel. The essay focuses on how the characters of Laurie and Jo portrayed Alcott's feminist belief system but does not explain thoroughly about the other characters.

The writer chooses to analyze Louisa May Alcott's novel *Little Women* because the story depicts the implementations of women's roles during in the 19th century. The women's roles are depicted through the March sisters' growth and lives from girls to women. From the novel, the writer finds that although the sisters already have their own personalities, they still have to deal with the social standards as they are growing into women. Their roles as the part of the society are changed, especially as a woman.

There are some differences between this study and the two previous studies on *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott. This study focuses on analyzing the implementations of women's roles, the causes of women's roles' emergence, and the consequences of the women's roles through the March sisters. While the

other studies discuss the novel from the moral and feminism perspectives, this study uses gender roles from sociological approach as the main theory.

1.2. Research Problems

- a. What are the causes of the emergence of women's roles in the story?
- b. What kinds of women's roles are depicted in the story?
- c. What are the effects of not fulfilling the women's roles in the story?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The purposes of the study are as follows:

- a. To analyze the causes of the emergence of women's roles in the story.
- b. To describe how the women's roles are depicted in the story.
- c. To analyze the effects of not fulfilling the women's roles in the story.

1.4. Methods of the Study

In this study, the writer uses contextual method with sociological approach and library research to analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott. The writer uses the library research to collect the data, information, and opinion of experts which are related to the subject of the study (George, 2008: 6). The writer will analyze the characters, settings, and conflict of the story for the intrinsic elements. For the extrinsic elements, the writer will analyze the implementation of women's roles that are depicted in the novel.

1.5. Organization of the Study

CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

In chapter 1, the writer explains about the background of the study, research problems, objectives of the study, methods of the study and organization of the study.

CHAPTER 2 : THE AUTHOR AND HER WORK

In chapter 2, the writer explains about the biography of Louisa May Alcott and her works and the synopsis of *Little Women*.

CHAPTER 3 : THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In chapter 3, the writer mentions the theories of intrinsic and extrinsic elements used to analyze the novel. The intrinsic elements consist of characters, settings, and conflict of the story. While for the extrinsic elements, the theories will consist of the gender roles and women's roles from the sociological view.

CHAPTER 4 : ANALYSIS

In chapter 4, the writer explains and discusses about the analysis of the intrinsic elements and the extrinsic elements based on the theories explained before and the novel itself.

CHAPTER 5 : CONCLUSION

In this chapter, there will be the summary of the analysis' result in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 2

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT AND *LITTLE WOMEN*

2.1. Biography of Louisa May Alcott

The following information about Louisa May Alcott and her works were taken and being paraphrased from the book of Susan Cheever entitled *Louisa May Alcott: A Personal Biography* published in 2010.

Louisa May Alcott was born on November 29 1832, in Germantown, Pennsylvania. Alcott is an American writer. She spent her life with her parents and her sisters in Orchard House. Her father, Amos Bronson Alcott, was such an assertive figure and he was a big influence for her as he took parts on almost all Louisa's life decisions. Louisa always liked writing and the idea of being a writer. She learned how to write from her father and her friends such as Henry David Thoreau and Theodore Parker. She once had A. M. Barnard as her pen name. Louisa's first novel was *Moods* which was published in 1861 but the book was not very popular among people. In 1868, she wrote *Little Women* with the memory of her own childhood and the thought of the revival of children's literature. The characters in the *Little Women* were created based on her own family, especially she and her sisters. *Little Women* was a great success of her writing career. Some of her works are *The Inheritance* (1997), *The Mysterious Key and What It Opened*

(1867), *An Old Fashioned Girl* (1870), *Little Men* (1871), *Under the Lilacs* (1875), and *Joy's Boys* (1886).

2.2. Synopsis

The March was the lower-middle class family lives in New England, America. Mr. and Mrs. March had four beautiful daughters with each of them having different personalities. The daughters were Margaret—Meg, Josephine—Jo, Elizabeth—Beth, and Amy. Mr. March had to leave his beloved wife and daughters to serve in the army during the Civil War.

Living with only their mother—they often called her Marmee, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy must start to learn to be independent young women. Meg was the first daughter of the family. She was a sixteen year-old young woman. She took the role as the elders together with Jo to lead and take care of their younger sisters. Meg was such an elegant and calm girl who always dreamed of possessing a good life as a proper lady. She fancied luxury more than her sisters did. Jo, a fifteen year-old tomboyish girl, did not really like the idea of being a girl and had the thought that she had to replace her father's role in the family to protect her mother and her three sisters. Jo did not like both to dress up and to behave in a lady-like way. Having an easy going personality, it was easy for Jo to be friends with her neighbor named Theodore “Laurie” Laurence whom she always called him as Teddy. They both were very good best friends who cared for one and another. The third sister was Beth. She had the weakest health condition among them all. She was the calmest, the kindest, the warmest and the most beloved one in the family. Beth's sisters took such a good care of her. Beth who loved music

more than anyone else in the house always brightened up the night with her skill in playing melodies with the old piano at the corner of their living room. Amy, the youngest daughter, was twelve years old and she was rather spoiled and selfish. Amy thought that her sisters and everyone else had to put her on their top priority. Marmee was a caring and loving mother for the March sisters and she was always being there to guide her daughters growing up every single day and to teach them about life lesson as women.

While having different personalities, each of March sisters got their own struggles to find out and understand their roles and responsibilities as women both in the family and in the society. Growing up together for a long time, however, made the sisters loved each other very dearly despite the little fights and arguments they had. Everyday Meg and Jo had to work and earn money to help their mother while Beth stayed at home and Amy went to school. Living in the lower-middle class family made the sisters did not have many friends or many opportunities to experience the life of being noble girls who went to parties or owned pretty things.

The time passed and the March sisters were growing from girls to being adult women. Meg finally knew what love was when a man named John Brooke confessing to her about his feeling. They got married once Meg turned twenty years old and the couple had twin babies named Demi and Daisy. Getting married and having babies were such a turning point in Meg life because she had to balance her duties of being a wife, a mother, and a housekeeper. As for Jo, after turning down Laurie's love confession, she decided to take the opportunity to

work as a teacher in New York to get new air and inspirations for her writings. There she met Professor Friedrich Bhaer, a man whom she found attractive despite his unfortunate condition. Jo married to Professor Bhaer, had two sons named Rob and Teddy, and they lived in her aunt's house which was being inherited to her. Beth's health was getting worse after she was ill from scarlet fever. Years later, Beth passed away and left her parents, sisters, and those who loved her with a very big loss. Amy, the youngest in the family, finally learned how to be an independent and graceful woman. She was taken by her Aunt March to accompany the old lady travelling around the world and to study painting in Paris. In Paris, Amy met with heartbroken Laurie who was quite shocked by Amy's change. They fell in love and then got married. Amy became a very sweet and dedicated wife for Laurie and a loving mother for her daughter Beth. At the end, all the March sisters became good wives and mothers for their little families just as their mother taught them.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Intrinsic Elements

In analyzing the novel *Little Women* written by Louisa May Alcott, the writer uses characters and characterizations, setting, and conflict as the intrinsic elements. The analysis of characters, setting of time, place, and environment and conflict will help the writer to understand the story better before analyzing the novel further.

3.1.1. Characters and Characterizations

Card explaining his idea about characters in his book *Characters and Viewpoint* (1988: 4) says that the characters in fiction are people who are living the life and doing stuff just as what real life people do. The lives those people are living, the stuff they do and their behaviors reflect their personalities. Those are, simply said, the factors that will help the readers to understand the characters better. For instance, when the character steals something, she or he is a thief, or when a woman helps a beggar, she is a kind-hearted person.

Characterization is the author's way to portray and develop the characters' images including their appearance, personalities, behaviors, and traits while characters are the product of characterization. The characterizations can be in the form of the character's physical appearance, their mental condition, and their behaviors in the social life (Aquino, 1976: 112). There are two types of

characterization, direct characterization and indirect characterization. Direct characterization is when the author reveals the characters' images by stating it directly using narrator or the other characters' statements (Charters, 2011: 58). On the other hand, indirect characterization is the way the author shows the characters' images using their look, actions, and thoughts (Burroway, 2000: 54).

There are two types of character, major and minor character. Major characters are the center of the story and they appear in almost most of the story. Minor characters are called the supporting characters and they briefly show up in the story (Pope, 2005: 134-135).

3.1.2. Setting

Setting of the story is including time, place, and social environment which are used as the background of the story. Kennedy and Gioia (2007: 12) say that the matter of time is related to the day, month, or year when the main events happen in the story while the matter of places is associated with the region, country, island, or nation. According to Holman (1960: 453), the setting of social environment deals with norms, cultures, and customs in the society in the current time and the current place that is used as the background of the story.

3.1.3. Conflict

Generally, conflict can be understood as an event or an incident that is normal to happen to everyone's daily life. Conflict occurs for different causes and reasons (Kennedy, 1966: 28-29). Stanton, in his book entitled *An Introduction to Fiction*, says that in fiction, conflict is a problem that occurs to the characters that

makes the story appears to be more interesting to read. Conflict can make the readers feel some kind of emotions such as anger, sadness, and empathy (1865: 16).

According to Dibell in *Plot* (1988: 5-6), conflict is a part of plot that build the story. Plot contains of some conflicts as the main events and resolution as the settlement. Conflicts are divided into internal and external conflict. Internal conflict is the conflict happening between a man and himself while external conflict is the conflict happening between a man and the people or society around him.

3.2.Extrinsic Elements

The extrinsic element that will be used for analyzing the novel *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott is gender roles. The term of gender roles used here is referring more to the explanation of women's roles in nineteenth century in America in particular. The women's roles theory used in this writing is influenced by the "True Womanhood" culture in the 19th century.

3.2.1. Definition of Gender Roles

Linda Lindsey states in *Gender Roles: A Sociological Perspective* (2005: 4) that sex is related to male and female while gender is related to being masculine or feminine. It is explained further that sex differentiates human mainly based on their anatomy and reproductive systems they were born with. On the other hand, gender is more related to society, culture, norms, and psychological behaviors according to someone's status as male or female. Another idea of the definition of

gender and sex is stated by Ruth A. Wienclaw. She states that sex is the biological destiny prescribing individual's natural ability such as pregnancy for a woman while gender, on the other hand, shapes individual's characters and roles in their social life. Gender as in social and psychological traits is generally correlated with the roles of being male or female (Wienclaw et al., 2011: 33-34).

According to Kretchmar, as cited from Wharton (2005), there are three general characteristics of gender defined by sociologists. They explain that gender is a learning process of individuals in their social lives; gender is both personal and social characteristics; and gender is a social structure which is creating inequalities between both males and females together with another status they possess (Wienclaw et al., 2011: 42-43).

Discussing about gender, this subject can also be related to gender roles. Roles, as Lindsey states, are the manners and deeds people expected to see from someone based on their status in the society. Therefore, based on the definitions of gender and roles above, gender roles generally can be defined as society's expectation towards its members about what they should do and how they should act as a male or female guided by the norms and culture applied in that society in the exact period of time (2005: 2-3).

Sylvia DeBiaggi, in her book *Changing Gender Roles: Brazilian Immigrants Families in the US*, states that gender roles are the way individuals perform and act in daily basis as a male or a female in general according to norms and culture they believe in (2002: 39). DeBiaggi, citing from Fowlkes (1987, p.

513), says that gender roles are formed by cultures. Its concept consists of the relationship between society, individuals, and cultures where those three aspects will always change in every period of time. In consequence, the standard of gender roles and the role itself never stay the same forever and are influenced by individuals' cultural beliefs (2002: 39-44).

Wienclaw explains her idea that gender roles are being taught to children right after their birth and that is one of the main reasons why they grow up behaving according to the social standards. It means that gender roles are not only done because society expects it to be done but it is part of someone's personalities. The expected roles are bound by the cultures and norms (Wienclaw et al., 2011: 34-39).

In order to spread the understanding of gender roles in society, gender roles socialization is needed. Generally gender socialization is done and has the purpose to give better education to society members about the appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and about the concept of gender roles itself (Wienclaw et al., 2011: 35). Linda Lindsey states that gender socialization is individual learning process about proper acts and behaviors as a male or female. It requires the individuals to change their personalities and manners to the more acceptable ones based on their gender (2005: 65).

Gender socialization can be done by having individuals learning more about both genders through their daily activities. There are some theories explaining gender socialization which see this matter from different approach.

Wharton (2005), as cited by Kretchmar, has the social learning theory where children are the models formed by society. He believes that children are forced since they were young to behave in an exact way to fulfill the gender requirements. On the other hand, there is moral development theory which states that children's views of appropriate and inappropriate gender roles will change as they grow older. This theory has the idea that once children have understood the roles of being male or female, they will show the appropriate and acceptable manners in their daily activities. As a respond to both theories, gender schema theory comes to make children not only believe that males and females' behaviors are completely different and cannot be reversed but also that males and masculinity are way more superior and acceptable than females and femininity (Wienclaw et al., 2011: 43-45).

Doing gender socialization will need agents as in people who are doing the socialization to all society members. Lindsey (2005: 65-66) states that family is the primary agent of gender socialization to help the daughters and the sons learning about anything related to gender roles. Family, who is also the member of society, is formed and ruled by society itself based on norms and culture. Sharing the same idea with Lindsey, Kretchmar constricts the idea and says that parents are the ones who hold the most important role as the gender socialization agents to their children. For instance, on daily basis, parents will not give a doll to their son as well as they will not give toy cars to their daughter (2011: 46-47).

Besides getting knowledge about gender from parents, children can get the gender socialization from their playmates. This is studied through peer group

approach. People who study gender through peer group point of view are focusing on children's interaction. Based on the study, boys and girls tend to play with the same-sex groups. As a result, children learn about norms, roles, and appropriate behaviors from their same-sex friends. These same-sex playmates result in gender segregation on how girls and boys find it hard to affect each other because of the boundary between them (Wienclaw et al., 2011: 48).

As cited from Burn (1996), in some places, traditional gender roles are still applied to men and women in general. Even after the period of modern time, men are urged to be tough, dashing, manly, aggressive, and to use their power while the roles of women are to be tolerant, patient, passive, sensitive, and full of affection (Wienclaw et al., 2011: 50).

Those characteristics of men and women were also part of the idea of ideal women in the nineteenth century. Linda Lindsey (2005: 139) says that in the nineteenth century the new idea of ideal woman was spread through magazines and literature. This idea is called "True Womanhood" which is related to woman's submissiveness and domesticity.

3.2.2. The True Womanhood in the 19th Century

Barbara Welter, in her journal *The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860*, says that The True Womanhood is a cult that was spread during the nineteenth century in America, especially for young women. The main idea of The True Womanhood is about the domesticity of a woman which includes about woman's personalities, behaviors, manners, and roles. This idea of women's domesticity is

hardly challenged by anyone because it is an obligation and challenging it means that the person disrespects the religion, the society, and the country. The True Womanhood is there to make women uphold the domestic duties and responsibilities. The True Womanhood requires women to have four virtues to be able to be called as perfect women. The four virtues are piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. The four virtues are what make a woman is worth to be pronounced wife, mother, sister, daughter, and a woman itself. These virtues manifest into woman's characters which are used by herself, her husband, and by the society to judge her value as a woman (1966: 151-152).

The piety, or religion, is one of the most important things that women should possess for it is believed that God has made women to be the most special creature and should be protected. Religion is the source of women's strength in which without it they are helpless, lost, and unhappy, and her piety is what a man is looking for. Another reason why religion is very much valued is because religion also has the belief that women's place is at home. Being as important as piety, purity or women's innocence is the virtue that women should take care of. Women are seen as unworthy and unfeminine, they are not considered as women even, without her purity. Therefore, True Women are very much urged to protect her valuable purity for it will bring her a terrible consequence if she loses it (Welter, 1966: 152-158).

A woman will have to protect her purity until her marriage even though marriage itself is the end of her innocence. She has to accept this and submit herself to her husband. A true woman will know her place as a passive and

submissive part in the relationship. Her submissiveness is seen as one of the most feminine aspect of her. Women's submissiveness means that women should never do anything that is not ordered by her husband or voice her opinion when it is not asked. As a woman submits herself also to her fate, it is obvious that she has to accept her fate to be a wife and a mother. Hence, the domesticity follows women as her another virtue. The domestic duties and responsibilities should be done in the society and the family. Women's domesticity which manifests into her gentle and homely characters has to make the men in the family to feel comfortable so that they do not seek for the happy time outside the house. Women's domestic duty is such as being a nurse for the sick family members in which this duty makes a woman feels useful and accomplished. Women should also do all the house works such as cooking, making the beds, sewing, and knitting (Welter, 1966: 161-165).

The submissiveness and domesticity of women as a wife and a mother are the virtues that automatically follow women as the outcomes of the marriage. Marriage itself, in the nineteenth century, is viewed as the state where woman truly belongs to. Through marriage, women's authority and responsibilities are increased. Women are seen as the ones who are responsible for the quality of the young generations in America by the way they are raising their children (Welter, 1966: 169-171).

3.2.3. Women's Roles in the 19th Century

James and Dorothy Volo, in their book entitled *Family Life in 19th Century of America*, explain and give examples of some women's roles, both in the society and in the family. In the nineteenth century, women are expected to maintain the values of stability, morality, and the democracy of the family to make the home safe and comfortable. This comes from the new refined idea of ideal women spread to young girls by women's magazines and books, called "The Cult of True Womanhood" (2007: 217-218).

The life of a woman starts from being a daughter or a sister and ends as a mother or a wife of the family. Since the beginning a woman was born as a daughter, or later as a sister, she will be treated differently from her brother. In most households, sisters and brothers are treated in a hierarchical manner. For example, the children of the brothers will be seen more superior and valuable than those who are born from the sisters. On the other hand, sisters are expected to have a good influence for her brothers with her gentle and caring charm (Volo, 2007: 34).

In the nineteenth century, women's access to the knowledge of men is rather difficult because young women only know and meet her brother's friends or acquaintances. Unmarried young women are not allowed to have a relationship and too much interaction with men except those whom she has been properly introduced to. It is done to avoid bad scandals which can damage her image and reputation in the society. Women's reputation is important because it will be her main point when she looks for a husband in the future. In this case, parents and

family play an important role to take care and protect the women in the family (Volo, 2007: 36-37).

Men are expected to be mentally ready and financially stable when he wants to court and marry the women they like. It is very important because he will be responsible of all the needs of his wife and his children. It is the main reason why women are also expected to get the wealthy gentleman as a husband. In the nineteenth century, especially in America and Britain, the family income is used as the measurement to divide the class as the “poor” and the “very poor” (Volo, 2007: 48-54).

A married woman has three major roles as a wife, a mother, and a homemaker. Upon being a wife, a woman is required to be obedient to her husband and to make him content and satisfied. She shall always devote herself to serve him well. In the nineteenth century, a wife is seen as the heart of the family and the epitome of domesticity. Wives take the domestic responsibilities at home such as sewing, doing laundry, and cooking. Once a woman is married, her access to places outside the house is limited because public life is seen as too harsh for her. Nevertheless, there is an exception for the upper class’s married women. They are allowed to go outside to do the visiting, or which is often called as the call (Volo, 2007: 215-220).

Motherhood is a very important role and a very handful occupation in the nineteenth century. As a mother, a woman is expected to teach her children and to shape their characters into becoming decent and good people. Mothers are

responsible for their children's morality, personality, and social ability. They also must provide the children with love and affection, a homey and comfortable home so that the children will have ideal childhood. Mothers should also have the children getting occupied with positive activities to spending their time. Instead of giving physical punishments, mothers are expected to turn children's behaviors into subtle manipulations (Volo, 2007: 194-204).

Little girls and young women are already taught about women's roles by their mother since their young age. For example, not only farmer's daughter will be asked to help her mother with the house chores since she is five or six but a daughter from rich family also learns some womanly activities such as knitting, sewing, or doing any kind of decorative needlework such as making gloves, socks, stockings, and shawls. Knitting and sewing are done also by adult women in the evening as a way to rest from any kind of physical activities as mastering on needlework is considered as a skill that must be had by women (Volo, 2007: 246-265).

Women's sphere is all the places in and around the house including kitchen, the yard and the garden. As a wife is responsible for the house and all its surrounding, she is also called as a homemaker. Women as homemaker have the responsibilities regarding the needs and the economic productivity of the family. The poor farmers' wives usually plant their own food in a small garden and preserve it for the winter as this is seen as an essential household activity. In conclusion, the comfort of the family is associated with wife's skill as a homemaker (Volo, 2007: 226-230).

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

4.1 Intrinsic Elements

4.1.1. Characters and Characterization

4.1.1.1. Major Characters

4.1.1.1.1. Margaret March

Margaret March, who is usually called Meg, is one of the major characters in the story. She is the oldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. March. She grows up in the lower-middle class family because her father loses his fortune upon helping an unfortunate friend in the past (Alcott, 1868: 42). Meg has to work at her age of sixteen to support her family's financial needs because her father is away at war. She works as a teacher for children of a wealthy family, as well as to nurse them. Although she seldom complains about her poor life, she always has the desire inside of her heart to live a good life just like everybody else (Alcott, 1868: 43).

In the story, Meg March is pictured as a beautiful, calm, and elegant sixteen year old young woman with fair skin and long brown hair (Alcott, 1868: 10). Other than having a beautiful appearance, Meg is a good daughter for her parents and a good sister for her three younger sisters. She takes care of her younger sisters well and takes the role as the second mother when the four of them are together and their mother is not around. Meg has a motherly personality

that makes her sisters, especially Amy, obey her words. ‘Don’t say that. You were very naughty, and it is hard to forgive the loss of her precious little book... Go after them... then take a quite minute and just kiss her...’ (Alcott, 1868: 83).

Meg always tries to carry herself in the best manner possible and she always tells her sisters to be well-behaved young girls. ‘You are old enough to leave off boyish tricks, and to behave better, Josephine... you should remember that you are a young lady’ (Alcott, 1868: 9). Meg likes to dress herself beautifully and talk with the best manner she can because, for her, that is how a proper lady should act. She is just a young lady who has a simple mindset and idea of a good life in which includes silk dresses, gloves, parties, carriage, and servants to do things for her. ‘It’s like other people, you know, and I always envy girls who do such things, I’m so fond of luxury,’ said Meg, trying to decide which of two shabby gowns was the least shabby (Alcott, 1868: 40).

Meg is a good girl and has such an innocent side in her. When she attends an invitation from one of her rich friends, Annie Moffat, she gets to attend some dance parties and to experience good things she always wants. She adores the Moffat’s life for they are such a wealthy, fashionable, and kind family. She finds herself trying to imitate the manners and the way they socialize with others as well as she can. Meg soon is being everyone’s favorite and she enjoys the attention they give without thinking much about it. “She enjoyed herself very much that evening... Major Lincoln asked who ‘the fresh little girl with the beautiful eyes’ was... So altogether she had a very nice time...” (Alcott, 1868: 93).

Meg's innocence is also shown when a man named John Brooke, Laurie's tutor, has a romantic feeling for her. She is only seventeen when Mr. Brooke confesses his feeling and tries to court her. It makes Meg very flustered and confused because she has never been courted before and her parents do not let her be bothered by such thing as love affair in her young age.

'Oh no, please don't—I'd rather not,' she said, trying to withdraw her hand, and looking frightened in spite of her denial... This was the moment for the calm, proper speech, but Meg didn't make it; she forgot every word of it... 'I'm too young,' faltered Meg, wondering why she was so fluttered, yet rather enjoying it (Alcott, 1868: 232-233).

From the quotation above, it can be seen that Meg is not used to the attention that she gets from a man in a romantic way. She is not sure what to do in that kind of awkward situation although she also likes Mr. Brooke. Being a good and sensible girl she is, she even confronts her aunt who says bad things about Mr. Brooke and defends the poor man. '...John is good and wise, he's got heaps of talent, he's willing to work and sure to get on, he's so energetic and brave' (Alcott, 1868: 236). Meg, who has a good heart and always sees good things in people, finally accepts the poor Mr. Brooke as her husband although she is used to dream to marry a wealthy man and have a good life. She shows her good and pure view of love by saying that she is willing to let go of her desire of luxury for a good amount of love. 'My John wouldn't marry for money, any more than I would. We are willing to work, and we mean to wait...' (Alcott, 1868: 236).

4.1.1.1.2. Josephine March

Josephine March—who prefers to be called Jo—is the second major characters in the story. Jo is the second daughter of March family after Margaret.

She does not continue her education but works as a care taker of her rich old Aunt March. Every day Jo will go to Aunt March's big house to accompany the old lady, read stories until she falls asleep, and then she will go to the large library inside the house to please herself. Jo is very passionate about writing stories. She has a little journal containing her self-written short stories that she keeps for her beloved father when he comes back home from the army. Jo's biggest dream is to be the best writer and to publish her own book.

In the novel, Jo is picture as fifteen year-old young lady who has quite sharp features such as tall and thin body, a pair of sharp, gray eyes, big hands, and a dark complexion (Alcott, 1868: 10). Jo loves her family very dearly that she thinks they should never be apart from each other. She even does not like the idea of her sister getting married and being owned by someone else. '... I knew there was mischief brewing, I felt it, and now it's worse than I imagined. I just wish I could marry Meg myself, and keep her safe in the family' (Alcott, 1868: 208). She likes to play a role as a son and brother who protects the family when her father is away in the army.

'I hate to think I've got to grow up, and be Miss March, and wear long gowns... It's bad enough to be a girl, anyway, when I like boys' games and works and manners! I can't get over my disappointment in not being a boy; I can only stay at home and knit... I'm the man of the family now Papa is away...' (Alcott, 1868; 9-11).

From the quotation above, it shows that Jo has a very tomboyish personality. She does not quite like the idea of being born as a girl and growing up into a woman. This personality makes her pays a very little attention to feminine things such as dresses, gloves, and silk. She does not really care about the fact that

she has to behave and act in womanly manner. It is the reason why Meg and Amy always scold her for doing and saying improper boyish things. Jo tends to do things in her own ways with her high-spirited soul. ‘What in the world are you going to do now, Jo?’ asked Meg one snowy afternoon, as her sister came tramping through the hall, in rubber boots, old sack, and hood, with a broom in one hand and a shovel in the other (Alcott, 1868: 52).

Jo is also pictured as an impulsive and friendly person. She tends to do something freely and what she thinks is right. Unlike Meg and Beth, who are shy with strangers, especially men, Jo likes being friendly to almost every one. Jo is being friend with her rich orphan neighbor, Laurie Laurence, because she feels sorry for the boy for being lonely. They both once meet at the New Year Eve’s party held by Meg’s friend. Jo does not think twice to visit Laurie and entertain him. She even calls him Teddy as her pet name for him.

‘There he is,’ thought Jo, ‘poor boy! All alone and sick this dismal day. It’s a shame! I’ll toss up a snowball and make him look out, and then say a kind word to him’... With that, Jo shouldered her broom and marched into the house, wondering what they would all say to her (Alcott, 1868: 53-54).

Jo has such a strong and straightforward personality compared to her other sisters. She does not like to act and pretend to be a fine and proper lady even though it costs her some good fortunes at some opportunities. One time she has to attend calls with Amy and she has to present herself in the best manner possible. During the calls, Amy and Jo meet some respectable wealthy people, including their Aunt March and the old lady’s friends. Unlike Amy, who tries her best to be a decent, fine, proper lady with the talk and gossips, Jo cannot bring herself to suit

in the small group of graceful and rich people who like to have small talk and gossips with manner. Jo keeps being herself with her straightforwardness although Amy has warned her to behave well.

‘I don’t like favors, they oppress and make me feel like a slave. I’d rather do everything for myself, and be perfectly independent.’

‘Ahem!’ coughed Aunt Carrol softly, with a look at Aunt March.

‘I told you so,’ said Aunt March, with a decided nod to Aunt Carrol.

Mercifully unconscious of what she had done, Jo sat with her nose in the air, and a revolutionary aspect which was anything but inviting (Alcott, 1868: 306).

In the novel, it is also told that Jo is a kind of person who is hard to control and settle her emotion, especially anger, and is staying like that even when she is grown up. She once loses her temper over her sister Amy who burns her little book of her self-written stories. She cannot bring herself to forgive Amy so she ignores her sister when Amy joins her and Laurie ice skating on the frozen lake. Unfortunately, Amy falls into the lake because of the broken ice. “...I only let her go. Mother, if she *should* die, it would be my fault...It’s my dreadful temper!... What shall I do?’ cried poor Jo, in despair” (Alcott, 1868: 84). Since then, Mrs. March has always been trying to teach Jo how to settle her anger because she wants her daughter to be a calm and gentle woman.

Jo is a determinant, independent, and free person. When Laurie confesses his romantic feeling to Jo, she turns him down because she does not feel the same as Laurie. Jo feels that she is not the right person for Laurie and she is not ready to be tied up in a relationship. ‘Nothing more, except that I don’t believe I shall ever marry. I’m happy as I am, and love my liberty too well to be in any hurry to give it up to any mortal man’ (Alcott, 1868: 373). That makes the poor boy

broken heart and decides to leave to calm his mind down. ‘Oh, Teddy, I’m sorry, so desperately sorry, I could kill myself it would do anything good!...You know it’s impossible for people to make themselves love other people if they don’t,’ cried Jo inelegantly...(Alcott, 1868: 372). After Laurie’s confession, Jo decides to leave to a new place for a change as well. She wants to give Laurie and herself a space to think about everything that has happened. She takes her mother’s friend’s request to be a teacher for their children in New York. By doing so, Jo also wants to try a new experience for her writings (Alcott, 1868: 337-339).

4.1.1.1.3. Amy March

The third major character of the story is Amy March, the youngest member of the family. Amy is depicted as twelve-year-old, rather selfish, spoiled young girl who likes to imitate her older sister Meg in behaving in the best way possible. As the youngest one, Amy often demands full attention from everyone and she wants to be everyone’s top priority. She has fair and pale skin, blue eyes and curly yellow hair up to her shoulder, slender body, and always carrying herself like a young lady being mindful of her manners (Alcott, 1868: 10).

Amy can be very impulsive and naughty when she does not get what she wants. Once, she is being impulsive because Jo upsets her by prohibiting her from joining Meg, Jo and Laurie to go to the theatre. Because of her anger towards Jo, Amy burns Jo’s self-written book which Jo treasures very much and planning to give it to his father once he is back home. ‘Scold as much as you like, you’ll never

see your silly old book again... I burned it up... I told you I'd make you pay for being so cross yesterday...' (Alcott, 1868: 79- 81).

Eventually, as the time passed, Amy does grow more mature, beautiful, critical and wise for she always follows Meg with her lady-like manners. She grows up beautifully into a proper lady she always dreams to be. After Meg's marriage, she takes the matter of being the proper lady in the family into her own hands. Once, she and Jo have to do the calls and visit their neighbors' houses for some small talks and gossips. Amy who already knows everything about the proper lady's appearance and manners make Jo being presentable for the calls.

'I'll do anything for you, Jo, if you'll dress yourself nicely, and come and help me do the civil... Now put on all your best things, and I'll tell you how to behave at each place, so that you will make a good impression... Hold back your shoulders, and carry your hands easily, no matter if your gloves pinch... You'll never look finished if you're not careful about little details, for they make up the pleasing whole' (Alcott, 1868: 296-297).

4.1.1.1.4. Elizabeth March

Elizabeth March is the third daughter of March family. She is often called Beth by her family and the people around her. Beth is thirteen years old and is a very shy and timid girl. She has fair skin, smooth hair, bright eyes, and a peaceful expression which is seldom disturbed. Beth only opens up to the people who are close to her and whom she trusts. "Her father called her 'Little Tranquility', and the name suit her excellently, for she seemed to live in a happy world of her own, only venturing out to meet the few whom she trusted and loved" (Alcott, 1868: 10).

Beth is overall the calmest and dearest member of the family. She has a health issue which makes her stop attending school and stay at home instead. She is, as said in the novel, the pet of the family for she seldom makes any fuss or acts naughty in the house. Her sisters always treat her with gentle care because of her shy and timid personalities.

‘If Jo is a tomboy and Amy a goose, what am I, please?’ asked Beth, ready to share the lecture.

‘You’re a dear, and nothing else,’ answered Meg warmly; and no one contradicted her, for the “Mouse” was the pet of the family (Alcott, 1868: 9).

Beth is also a kind person and she has such a warm heart despite it is hidden by her shyness. She, who loves music very dearly more than anyone in the family, is given a grand piano by Mr. Laurence. Beth is very happy and wants to express her gratitude to the old man. She is very shy and timid in front of Mr. Laurence before but when she remembers that he once lost his little daughter, she impulsively hugs and kisses him to show her gratitude. “But she didn’t finish, for he looked so friendly that she forgot her speech, only remembering that he had lost the little girl he loved, she put both arms round his neck and kissed him” (Alcott, 1868: 70).

When her mother is away to nurse his father who is ill in the army, Beth is the only one who remember her mother’s words to keep the Hummels, the poor family, in check. She keeps going to visit the family because her sisters refuse to go. She is being responsible by doing her best to do her duty even though she knows that the baby of the Hummels is sick. Unfortunately, Beth gets ill and is almost died because she gets infected from the sick baby.

‘Meg, I wish you’d go to see the Hummels; you know mother told us not to forget them,’ said Beth, ten days after Mrs. March’s departure... ‘I have been every day, but the baby is sick, and I didn’t know what to do for it. Mrs. Hummels goes away to work, and Lottchen takes care of it; but it gets sicker and sicker, and I think you or Hannah ought to go’ (Alcott, 1868: 181).

Beth overall is a kind and beautiful person whom loved by people around her. Unlike her sisters, she never does have any thought about love and marriage as she knows her own condition. ‘... I’m not like the rest of you; I never made any plans about what I’d do when I grew up; I never thought of being married, as you all did...’ (Alcott, 1868: 382). She, until the end of her life, keeps being the dearest soul that her spirit is remembered by her family as Amy’s daughter is later named after Beth.

4.1.1.2. Minor Characters

4.1.1.2.1. Mrs. March

Mrs. March is the mother of Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy. Her daughters always call her Marmee. She lives only with her daughters for months because her husband, Mr. March, is going to the army. Mrs. March is very respected and loved by her daughters because of her caring and gentle ways in raising them. She has never been anything but a gentle mother and a good parent for her daughters although she has to play the role of a father when he is not around.

Mrs. March is a kind-hearted person and she never hesitates to help others who are in need. It is shown on a Christmas morning when March sisters has been sitting around the dining table and waiting for Mrs. March so they can start to have the breakfast. It happens that Mrs. March finds a little poor family, the

Hummels, who does not have enough heat, warm clothes, and food in the cold Christmas morning. She then asks her daughters if they are willing to give their breakfast that morning for the Hummels. Fortunately, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy do not even hesitate to pack up the food and bring it to the poor family's house which makes Mrs. March very happy.

‘...But I want to say one word before we sit down. Not far away from here lies a poor woman with a little newborn baby. Six children are huddled into one bed to keep from freezing, for they have no fire. There is nothing to eat over there, and the oldest boy came to tell me they were suffering hunger and cold. My girls, will you give them your breakfast as a Christmas present?’ (Alcott, 1868: 20).

In the novel, Mrs. March is also pictured as a calm and wise person. She always tries to be patient and calm in any kind of situations so that she can face and solve the problems in their house well and fair. For example, when she receives a telegram telling her husband is ill in the army, Mrs. March does not act recklessly. She takes the news well and before going away to nurse her husband, she still has time to tell Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy what to do while she is not home. She writes letter, thinks what to do next, and directs her daughters to prepare the stuff she will bring, all at once. “Writing, thinking, and directing all at once might well bewilder the poor lady, and Meg begged her to sit quietly in her room for a little while, and let them work” (Alcott, 1868: 166).

Mrs. March is a good, wise mother and a role model for her daughters. She is such a patient and responsible mother. She never yells at or punishes her daughters even though they make mistakes. Instead, she makes her daughters to always learn from the mistakes and the new experiences and to accept them all as

the parts of their growth. She lets Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy to do what they think is right but never stops to keep her eyes on them if they need help. One time the March sisters want to spend their holidays without doing the house chores just like the other rich girls. Mrs. March only let them do their plans and learn from it about how precious leisure time can be if it comes after the busy and tired day of doing duties and responsibilities. ‘Don’t you feel that it is pleasanter to help one another, to have daily duties which make leisure sweet when it comes...?’ (Alcott, 1868: 123).

4.1.1.2.2. Theodore Laurence

Theodore Laurence is a young boy who lives as the neighbor of the March family. He prefers to be called Laurie because he hates that his friends keep calling him Dora. Laurie is the grandson of old rich Mr. Laurence who happens to be a close friend of Mrs. March’s father. Laurie is raised by only his grandfather because his parents are dead when he was a baby. He is a handsome young man in his fifteen with some good features such as fine nose, big black eyes, and fine teeth. He has curly black hair and brown skin (Alcott, 1868: 35).

Laurie is a lonely young man since he only lives with his grandfather and the servants in his big mansion. Fortunately, Jo’s friendly personality makes it easy for him not only to be close friend with Jo but also to be a close acquaintance, neighbor, and even a brother for the rest of March family. He soon feels comfortable enough to show other sides of him. One of them is the playful, larky side. He once pulls a prank on Meg by sending her a love letter pretending to be

John Brooke, his tutor who has a crush on Meg. Laurie is scolded by Mr. March, Jo, Meg and his grandfather because of it. ‘Bad boy, be quiet! Sit down and think of your own sins... If I get your grandpa to apologize for the shaking, will you give up running away?’ asked Jo seriously (Alcott, 1868: 218).

Laurie never uses his higher social status to act ignorant and arrogant to other people around him. Laurie also often shows that he is a kind person and a gentleman through his caring act and kindness, especially to the March sisters. He has always been so kind to Jo and her sisters even since their first meeting at the New Year’s Eve party they attend. The kind and respectful Laurie lets Jo to hide in the same room with him and even offers her to dance despite Jo’s burnt dress. ‘Never mind that; I’ll tell you how we can manage: there’s a long hall out there, and we can dance grandly, and no one will see us. Please come’ (Alcott, 1868: 36). He also helps Jo to take care of Meg and even offers to take the two sisters home with his carriage because Meg cannot walk after sprained her ankle.

“...Laurie drew up a little table, brought a second installment of coffee and ice for Jo, and was so obliging that even particular Meg pronounced him a “nice boy”... and Jo was looking round for help when Laurie, who had heard what she said, came up and offered his grandfather’s carriage, which had just come for him” (Alcott, 1868: 37-38).

4.1.2 Setting

4.1.2.1. Setting of Time

The setting of time of *Little Women* is during the Civil War in the 19th century.

“...she thinks we ought not to spend money for pleasure, when our men are suffering so in the army” (Alcott, 1868: 7). The 19th century is also the period

when the new idea of ideal women called “The True Womanhood” is being taught and spread to the society and it becomes the rules for every woman in America.

4.1.2.2. Setting of Place

The story of *Little Women* takes place in New England, America. Most events of the stories happen at March’s house located in a small village. March’s house is built beside a big well-built house of an old man, Mr. Laurence, ‘You mean the people who live in the big house next door, don’t you?’ asked one of the girls’ (Alcott, 1868: 27). There, in their house, March sisters are growing up and sharing the most beautiful memories of their childhood, especially those memories who have Beth in it.

Some important events that happen in March’s house are the growth of the March sisters where they spend almost every day seeing each other and doing sister stuff together. In the March’s house is where Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy are taught by Mrs. March not only how to be good women but also good people. Their house is also the place where Amy and Jo have a big argument, where the sisters playing Jo’s self-written play, where Beth is severely ill, and where Beth is passed away.

Some of important places where the girls of March are growing as adult are at Meg and Mr. Brooke’s house where Meg lives her life as a housewife and a mother of her twins, Demi and Daisy. “The little house ceased to be a glorified bower, but it became a home, and the young couple soon felt that it was a change for the better” (Alcott 1868: 280). Mr. Brooke and Meg’s house is also the place

where Meg learns the importance and the difficulties of being a good wife and a good mother.

The second one is Jo's and Mr. Bhaer's house at Plumfield. It is the same for Jo and Mr. Bhaer's who are married and having their little family with two adorable children, Rob and Teddy, living in a big house which is given by the kind-hearted Aunt March as her last will. There, Jo, who is just like Meg, is also learning such a handful yet beautiful motherly life and is enjoying every moment she gets, "Yes, Jo was a very happy woman there, in spite of hard work, much anxiety, and a perpetual racket. She enjoyed it heartily and found the applause of her boys more satisfying than any praise of the world..." (Alcott, 1868: 494). The last one is France where Amy meets again with her childhood friend Laurie Laurence and where they realize their romantic feelings toward each other before deciding to be married. After married, Laurie and Amy live in the mansion of Laurie's grandfather although Laurie intends to go for his own business to prove to his grandfather that he is not a spoiled boy anymore (Alcott, 1868: 464-465).

4.1.2.3. Setting of Social Environment

The novel focuses on the story of women who live in the nineteenth century when the new idea of ideal women is spread and forced to the society and have to live accordingly. The main characters are Meg March, Jo March, Beth March, and Amy March who come from lower-middle class family, though according to Meg their family had once possessed some good amount of money when she and Jo were still little "...Don't you wish we had the money Papa lost when we were little, Jo? Dear me! How happy and good we'd be, if we had no

worries!’ said Meg, who could remember better times (Alcott, 1868: 8). Even Meg and Jo March have to beg to be allowed to work to support themselves as well as helping their mother supporting the family. March sisters’ life is not the fancy one like they always dream of but they are quite content with their family’s love and sweet bonds between them despite the hard times they often face. “...they gave a love that grew with their growth and bound them tenderly together by the sweetest tie which blesses life and outlives death” (Alcott, 1868: 244).

The most distinctive one of the women’s roles is the role of married women to stay at home, doing the domestic roles while men are at works or serving at the war. There in the novel, it is told that March sisters are living with only their mother while their father is away in the army during the Civil War. This condition is used by Alcott to show how March sisters are taught about women’s life, the duties and responsibilities, such as taking care of the family, doing house chores, being gentle and affectionate to others, and being a home for the family. Other than that, it is also showed in the novel the definition of perfect life of young women at that time, the one Meg March always wants, which is including dresses, jewelries, balls, and a lot of travelling. The last thing that pictures the social condition that time is when Laurie and Jo accompany Amy to go to Aunt March’s house but Aunt March is criticizing them for being close and together because man and woman should not go together on their own. “...And, Jo, you’d better go at once; it isn’t proper to be gadding about so late with a rattlepated boy like...” (Alcott, 1868: 186).

4.1.3 Conflict

4.1.3.1. Internal Conflict

There are some major internal conflicts occur in *Little Women* involving the main characters. The first internal conflict that happens in the story is when Meg already married to John Brooke, Laurie's tutor, a poor man who cannot provide Meg March with the grand life she always wants. Though she is already devoted to her husband, Meg's heart sometimes is intrigued to spend her saving for luxury or she is still jealous watching her friends having four to five servants to do all the chores while she has to do them by herself. She still longs for the posh life. John Brooke has put his trust over his money to her beloved wife so that she can take care of one of his most valuable possession, his money (Alcott, 1868: 290).

However, one time Meg is out with her rich old friend Sallie Gardiner and Meg accompanies Sallie to buy silk for her new dress. Meg longs for the good things Sallie has but when her friend proposes to buy her some, she declines it just to buy it with the money her husband has given her. After doing what her desire tells her to, she later regrets it because twenty-five yards of silk costs for fifty dollars clearly disappoints her husband more than anything.

“She knew her husband's income, and she loved to feel that he trusted her, not only with happiness, but what some men seem to value more—his money... But that autumn the serpent got into Meg's paradise, and tempted her like many a modern Eve, not with apple, but with dress” (Alcott, 1868: 288).

Another internal conflict happening in the story is when Jo feels lonely after she turns Laurie down for his romantic feelings after her. She loses her only

friend and after that her beloved sister Beth is died. She feels so confused because she is sure she does not love Laurie that way but she wants her Laurie back for her longing of being loved again. She has no idea that Laurie has fallen in love with her sister and decides to marry her. At that time, Jo finally comes to realization that she needs love and someone in her life even though she once thinks that she shall never be married to anyone for she is too fond of her freedom to let it go. “Poor Jo, these were dark days for her, for something like despair came over her when she thought of spending all her life in that quiet house, devoted to humdrum cares...” (Alcott, 1868: 440).

4.1.3.2. External Conflict

One of the external conflicts happens in the novel is the external conflict between Jo March and Laurie when Laurie confesses his romantic feeling to his very best friend. He says that he has been trying to give signals to Jo that he loves her very dearly but Jo just cannot help but to turn him down. They have a big quarrel because Laurie is insisting that his love is real and he cannot forget his feeling but Jo who is as stubborn as him does not want to return the one-sided feeling. Poor boy Laurie is very heartbroken that he leaves Jo to have some good times for himself and to forget his first love. Jo herself is too proud and fond of her liberty to let it go by having a romantic relationship with any men. “Nothing more, except that I don’t believe I shall ever marry. I’m happy as I am, and I love my liberty too well to be in any hurry to give it up for any mortal man” (Alcott, 1868: 373).

Another external conflict is when Amy burns Jo's self-written novel which she wants to give it to her father when he returns home. Laurie invites Jo and Meg to go to theatre with him and Mr. Brooke. Both Meg and Jo are very excited to go because they never get the chance to watch or at least to buy the ticket. Young Amy who is recently just out from school wants to join out of boredom but Jo does not allow her to. Jo insists that it is very impolite for Amy to come when she is not invited even though she can buy the ticket herself. Feeling all betrayed and upset, Amy decides to burn Jo's novel for that novel is the only thing Jo very fond of. Going back home cannot find her novel, Jo asks her sisters about it and soon realizes that it is Amy who has taken her precious writing. Jo cannot help but to be full of wrath that she ignores Amy and says that she shall never forgive the terrible thing Amy has done. "You wicked, wicked girl! I never can write it again, and I'll never forgive you as long as I live" (Alcott, 1868: 81).

The incident leads to a bigger problem when Jo cannot forgive her sister for what she has done. Jo ignores Amy the whole night and until the next morning. It seems like Jo will not let her anger go any time soon although Amy already admits her mistake and has already begged for Jo's forgiveness. That morning Jo goes for ice skating with Laurie for a better change of mood when Meg suggests Amy to follow them and to find the right time to apologize once more. Unfortunately, Amy falls and almost drowns into the lake because she steps on the middle part of the frozen lake while trying to catch up for Laurie and her sister. It makes Jo's heart sink in panic and fear of almost losing her precious sister. Later,

she regrets everything and realizes that she has to learn to control her anger so she will not cause any more harm to the others (Alcott, 1868: 82-840).

4.2. Extrinsic Element

4.2.1. The Cause of The Emergence of Women's Roles

In the novel, women are not directly portrayed that they are treated unequally to men but it is shown that women and men are seen and valued differently. Instead, women are viewed as an object and a property of society and women and men are not on the same level. March sisters live in the nineteenth century when the new idea of ideal women is spread as well as it becomes the new rules for women at that period of time.

This new idea of ideal women is grown within Meg March that it becomes a part of her personalities and manifests into a mindset of hers. The mindset urges Meg to always behave and act accordingly to the social standards so that she can fit the criteria of being a proper lady. She knows all the things about behaving and dressing like proper lady such as wearing beautiful dress along with its accessories, talking in a feminine way, dancing and gossiping. In Meg's opinion, being a proper lady means having all the luxury things. Meg also tries to make her sisters follow her steps in behaving in lady's manners by teaching them and becoming an example for the younger ones. 'It is one of her aristocratic tastes, and quite proper, for a real lady is always known by neat boots, gloves, and handkerchief,' replied Meg, who had a good many little "aristocratic tastes" of her own (Alcott, 1868: 32).

Meg has some rich female friends who invite her to attend some parties for a few times. A part of her which likes the lady-like activities and stuff makes her tries to be accepted by her peers and the wealthy people at the party. Meg has the need to be seen and to be known as a good, proper lady by her friends and the rich people in the society. Her need of social acceptance makes her do things she never imagines she will do. Once, Meg is invited by one of her rich friends, Annie Moffat, to a sleepover and some parties and at first she feels a little intimidated by Annie's family because of their nature of rich people. "The Moffats were very fashionable, and simple Meg was rather daunted, at first, by the splendor of the house and the elegance of its occupants" (Alcott, 1868: 91). She also feels embarrassed for not having another dress to attend the different dance parties. Then she lets her friend's sisters to dress and doll her up so that she looks decent and presentable in front of the wealthy and high class guests. "On the Thursday evening, Belle shut herself up with her maid, and between them they turned Meg into a fine lady. They crimped and curled her hair, they polished her neck and arms with some fragrant powder..." (Alcott, 1868: 96).

Meg's change, however, makes her to get more attention from the guests. Her decent, rather beautiful dress, her new look and even when Mrs. Moffat introduces her as Daisy, they all give her a kind of pleasure of having many people fancy her. She suits herself with the new surrounding and atmosphere where she behaves so well like a fine lady in front of high class people. She keeps on acting as Daisy for the night even though she feels tired of the pretending.

“She very soon discovered that there is a charm about fine clothes which attracts a certain class of people and secures their respect... several young gentlemen, who had only stared at her at the other party, now not only stared but asked to be introduced... The queer feeling did not pass away, but she imagined herself acting the new part of fine lady and so got on pretty well... She was flirting her fan and laughing at the feeble jokes of a young gentleman...” (Alcott, 1868: 97-98).

From the quotation above, it shows that women’s role to dress like a fine lady, to look beautiful, classy, and graceful, are constructed, spread, and judged by society itself. Meg has to look different for rich people to notice her and give her the attention she wants. She also has to pretend and act as a woman who comes from higher class to be accepted and to get the recognition. Dressing beautifully and behaving in feminine manners are the standards and Meg needs to do it to fit in.

The idea of ideal women is also being socialized and taught in the family by parents. Mrs. March starts to teach her daughters about the idea primarily since their early age. As a woman and a mother, Mrs. March sets examples for Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy about how to behave as a woman and how to be a good woman. She is successfully being a role model for her daughters in the term of being a mother. Mrs. March has her daughters to do the house chores which have been divided evenly and she sets the habit for March sisters to knit and sew together by the fireplace every evening after supper. ‘Has anybody got anything to tell? It’s been such a dismal day I’m really dying for some amusement,’ said Meg, as they sat sewing together that evening (Alcott, 1868: 47).

Being taught by the mother they respect very much, March sisters seldom complain about the house chores they have to do every day. They do it willingly

and the chores become their daily routines at home. In this case, March sisters who are doing the house chores as the part of learning the women's roles do not only affected by the social construction but also because of the internal factors such as their mother and their personality. Mrs. March is March sisters' role model and that makes them want to become a person like her that they are willingly doing anything good she asks them to do. 'It is so, Mother; and my great wish is to be to my husband and children what you have been to yours. Show me how, I'll do anything you say' (Alcott, 1868: 400).

4.2.2. The Implementation of Women's Roles

The true womanhood becoming the unspoken rules for women in the nineteenth century has changed society's expectation about women to be higher and more complex. Following the old concept about the differences between men and women, the new idea of ideal women seems to emphasize more about it. One of the differences is portrayed in the March sisters' lives in the form of roles and responsibilities as women both in the society and in the family.

4.2.2.1. Women's Roles in The Society

The first role portrayed in the novel is that a woman has to look beautiful, decent, and presentable in front of people, especially in special occasions like parties and balls. A woman's look has to be feminine as it is defined as women's nature. It can be seen on Meg who is always confused and panicking about what she is going to wear to the party she gets invited to. Her limited choice of dress and its accessories makes her rather anxious about her look.

‘If I only had a silk!’ sighed Meg... I shall have a new ribbon for my hair, and Marmee will lend me her little pearl pin, and my new slippers are lovely, and my gloves will do... You must have gloves, or I won’t go... Gloves are more important than anything else; you can’t dance without them, and if you don’t I should be so mortified’ (Alcott, 1868: 29-30).

From the quotation above, it can be seen that it is very important to Meg to own beautiful, or at least decent, silk dress and the accessories to complete her look. Meg’s thought of being mortified only because of the possibility of Jo not wearing her gloves shows the importance of women to dress like a fine lady. On their way to the party, Meg says, “for a real lady is always known by neat boots, gloves, and handkerchief” (Alcott, 1868: 32). It shows that society always expects women to have the same good taste in fashion as well as to possess the nice dresses and its ornaments.

The importance to dress beautifully for women is also portrayed in the novel when Meg attends her friend’s, Annie Moffat, invitation for a sleepover and some parties. Whilst having no more than one tarlatan to be worn to the parties, Meg cannot miss the splendid opportunity to have a whole fun and fancy night. Therefore, she has to bear the embarrassment when the high class guests treat her differently because of her rather simple look compared to her wealthy friend’s.

“She very soon discovered that there is a charm about fine clothes which attracts a certain class of people and secures their respect... several young gentlemen, who had only stared at her at the other party, now not only stared but asked to be introduced... The queer feeling did not pass away, but she imagined herself acting the new part of fine lady and so got on pretty well... She was flirting her fan and laughing at the feeble jokes of a young gentleman...” (Alcott, 1868: 97-98).

It can be seen from the quotation above that the different look Meg has after the make over from Annie Moffat’s sister, Meg gets the attention she is

longing for. There is a kind of good effect caused by the good dress that shows how women's look is valued by the society. The nicer and more decent a woman's look is, the more she will be respected by people. Although the fancy look is only expected in the higher class society, it still gives women the urgency to put on some effort in her whole appearance. As Amy once says, 'Polish up my other talents, and be an ornament to society, if I get the chance' (Alcott, 1868: 413)

Beside from fine beautiful appearance, women also are expected to have good manner and behavior. It is not only how women dress but also how women talk, walk, and dance should be done in a feminine and lady like way in which it is ruled by the norms and the society. It is shown by Meg's statement that says "You are old enough to leave off boyish tricks, and to behave better, Josephine... you should remember that you are a young lady" (Alcott, 1868: 9). Once a woman turns fifteen and older, she ought to act properly and gracefully in her age. On the contrary, Jo, who cannot hide her disappointment in being born as a girl instead boy, keeps acting and behaving like a rebel young boy in which it makes Meg and Amy feels concerned and they often scold Jo for it. It means that despite the different personalities, Jo is still told to perform the proper behaviors and manners for that is how thing should be done. Some of the manners are mentioned by Meg such as 'No, winking isn't ladylike. I'll lift my eyebrows if anything is wrong, and nod if you are all right. Now hold your shoulders straight, and take short steps, and don't shake hands when you are introduced to someone...' (Alcott, 1868: 32).

The way society has expectations towards women's appearance and manners also shown when Amy and Jo doing the calls. The calls are done by young women by paying a visit to the neighbors and having a fun time for small talks about new gossips around them. As Amy says to Jo, who is reluctant to go, '... you were to go properly with me, and return our neighbors' visits... so be honorable, come and do your duty, and then be at peace for another six months' (Alcott, 1868: 295). It means that once a woman gets a visit from her neighbor, she has to return it back by doing a call to the neighbor, like how Amy says it is kind of a duty. When they are doing the calls, Amy requires Jo to dress beautifully with all the accessories needed and she repeatedly reminds Jo to show her best manners in front of the hosts.

'You're a perfect cherub! Now put on all your best things, and I'll tell you how to behave at each place, so that you will make a good impression... Hold back your shoulders, and carry your hands easily, no matter if your gloves do pinch... Hold it up when you walk, but drop it in the house; the sweeping style suits you best, and you must learn to trail your skirt gracefully' (Alcott, 1868: 296- 297).

4.2.2.2. Women's Roles in The Family

Women's roles in the family are influenced mostly by the True Womanhood's idea of ideal women which focuses on women's domestic roles and duties in the family. As women's biggest values are her piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness, women should have the use of all them to be the best women in her family as a wife, a mother, and a homemaker. In the novel *Little Women*, the domestic roles in the family are shown through the life of Meg, Jo, Amy, after

their marriage and Mrs. March as an already married woman. The roles are going to be explained below.

4.2.2.2.1. Woman as A Wife

Marriage is seen as the end of women's innocence but the beginning of her journey and a new chapter of her life. Marriage is every girl's goal once she turns twenty because being an old unmarried lady means loneliness and a shame. "At twenty-five, girls begin to talk about being old maids, but secretly resolve that they never will be; at thirty they say nothing about it, but quietly accept the fact..." (Alcott, 1868: 448). A marriage is also seen to 'halves one's rights and doubles one's duties' (Alcott, 1868: 454). Being a housewife, however, gives women more tasks and duties to do.

A woman as a wife has duties to be fulfilled to her husband. The duties are pictured by Meg, Jo, Amy, and Mrs. March as they are the married women in the novel. The first role of a woman as a wife is to submit herself to and take care of her husband. One time, Mrs. March gets a telegram from the army telling her that Mr. March is ill. The news makes Mrs. March immediately go to see and to nurse him until he gets better. In fulfilling her duty to her husband, Mrs. March leaves her teenage daughters in the house only with the servant and under the supervision of Laurie and his grandfather. 'Send a telegram saying I will come at once. The next train goes early in the morning, I'll take that' (Alcott, 1868: 165). It shows that not only because of her love for Mr. March, she also feels the sense

of duty to be present for her ill husband. Nursing the sick husband is important for a woman once she is married and being a wife.

It is pointed out a few times in the novel that women are expected to want to marry a wealthy man. ‘Hadn’t you rather have her marry a rich man?’ asked Jo, as her mother’s voice faltered a little over the last words (Alcott, 1868: 209). Marrying a wealthy gentleman is seen as a goal because it makes a woman can enjoy such a luxurious life, and to enjoy many beautiful and expensive things. ‘He is rich, a gentleman, and has delightful manners,’ began Amy, trying to be cool and dignified... (Alcott, 1868: 414). It can be known that Amy is like Meg who likes posh beautiful things and fancies a good life with a good amount of money. She once gets engaged with a young wealthy man named Fred although he is not a very nice person. On the contrary, Meg who has the beauty to get married to a wealthy man chooses to marry the poor John Brooke instead. Meg is supposed to marry a man whom chosen by her rich Aunt March but she loves Mr. Brooke dearly that she cares no more about money and wealth. She makes Aunt March furious with her decision.

‘Now, Meg, my dear, be reasonable and take my advice. I mean it kindly, and don’t want you to spoil your whole life by making a mistake at the beginning. You ought to marry well and help your family; it’s your duty to make a rich match and it ought to be impressed upon you’ (Alcott, 1868: 235).

When Meg chooses to marry the poor Mr. Brooke, she has to accept him with what he possesses. She starts to let go of her womanly desire and longing of luxury, to resist her envy upon seeing other women’s fine lives so that she will not hurt her husband’s feeling and to be a good, understanding, and considerate wife.

She learns how to love her husband even with his poverty and little amount of earnings every month because she once makes a mistake by spending so much money to buy silk fabric and makes her husband upset. ‘... I can’t resist them when I see Sallie buying all she wants, and pitying me because I don’t. I tried to be contented, but it is hard, and I’m tired of being poor’ (Alcott, 1868: 290).

Another role as wife is performed by Meg when she is married to Laurie’s tutor, John Brooke. Meg marries to him when she is twenty years old and soon has the life of a housewife. The young Meg cannot yet settle her ego and emotion that on her early days of marriage she has a few serious arguments and quarrels with her husband. One time they have a rather serious quarrel because of an unset currant jelly when John Brooke already brings his friend home for a dinner. The husband and wife both cannot contain their anger which makes the situation worse. However, Meg remembers her mother’s words that say ‘Be careful, very careful, not to wake his anger against yourself, for peace and happiness depend on keeping his respect’ (Alcott, 1868: 286). Those words can be interpreted as husband’s dominance towards the wife as the submissive party in the marriage. It means that Meg should not challenge Mr. Brooke because she as a wife should always be respectful and committed to him. Meg has to be patient and keep her mind calm, be the cool side, when she is faced with an argument with her husband.

The role of woman as a wife is mentioned by Mrs. March in her advice for Meg. The new mother Meg is very preoccupied by her babies all day and night that she barely has time for her husband. She neglects him and treats him like an

intruder when he demands the attention he deserves from her. This situation comes to the point when Mr. Brooke ignores Meg by going to a parlor for some amusement he does not get at home and ends up making Meg feel ignored by him as well. Upset and overwhelmed, Meg asks her mother for some advices. She is told to always remember that she is still the wife of John Brooke beside being a mother for her children and she should never neglect him.

‘You have only made the mistake that most young wives make—forgotten your duty to your husband in your love for your children... don’t neglect husband for children, don’t shut him out of the nursery, but teach him how to help in it’ (Alcott, 1868: 399).

At the end of the novel, Amy is married to her childhood friend and neighbor, Laurie. They meet again in France where Amy gets her painting lesson and Laurie spends his time upon his heartbroken experience with Jo. The womanly and beautiful changes in Amy makes Laurie feel a new kind of feeling towards her. Eventually, the romantic Amy becomes a beautiful and dedicated wife for Laurie which makes him falls in love more deeply with her. She plays her role as a wife whole-heartedly as she is also very fond of her husband. ‘... Come home, dear, and I’ll find your bootjack; I suppose that’s what you are rummaging after among my things. Men are so helpless, Mother,’ said Amy, with a matronly air, which delighted her husband (Alcott, 1868: 464).

4.2.2.2.2. Woman as A Mother

When a woman is married, she eventually will be a mother as well. Women’s domestic role as a mother holds a very important factor for the growth of the children, both mentally and physically. A mother holds the responsibility to shape

her children's personalities, characters, and their well-being. In *Little Women*, the life of a mother is pictured by Mrs. March and Meg.

Mrs. March, as already known, is the mother of Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy. She is left alone by her husband, who is in the army, to take care of her daughters. When Mr. March is away, the March sisters are on their teenage period which needs a lot of guidance from their parents during the growth into young women. Nevertheless, Mrs. March has always been a good mother for the March sisters. She always treats her daughters with gentle and caring manners that her motherly aura makes them feel a kind of positive vibe whenever she comes home. 'Glad to find you so merry, my girls,' said a cheery voice at the door, and actors and audience turned to welcome a tall, motherly lady with a "can-I-help-you" look about her was truly delightful (Alcott, 1868: 13).

Mrs. March as a mother is really respected by her daughters. She never uses any kind of harsh physical or verbal punishments. On the other hand, March sisters are quite handful when they start to complain about their day or even their lives. She is seldom angry at her daughters when they are doing so. When Jo has a big quarrel with Amy that makes Amy almost die, Mrs. March does not scold any of her daughters. Instead, she talks to Jo and advises her how to control her anger so that it will not cost her any more harms in the future. She talks with a great amount of understanding and she uses gentle words to her upset daughter. '... remember this day, and resolve with all your soul... Jo, dear, we all have our

temptations, some far greater than yours, and it often takes us all our lives, to conquer them' (Alcott, 1868: 85).

Mrs. March's motherly soul has Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy feel at ease to share their secrets and worries to her. However, she keeps her concerns and worries to herself that her daughters never notice how anxious she is about their future and well-being. Once, Meg is attending a party invitation from her rich friend and she is really delighted to go. Mrs. March is worried that Meg will come back feeling more discontented with what she already has at home because she knows the fact that her oldest daughter is very fond of luxury. Nevertheless, she still lets Meg go upon seeing her excitement about spending weekend attending party. "...a little pleasure seemed so delightful after a winter of irksome work that the mother yielded, and the daughter went to take her first taste of fashionable life" (Alcott, 1868: 91).

During Meg's good time in the party, she is accidentally eaves dropping Mrs. Moffat and her daughters who badmouth Meg, Laurie and Mrs. March. The talk is rather inappropriate for Meg because she always thinks that her relationship with Laurie is pure and innocent. When Mrs. March being told about this matter, she feels responsible and guilty for she is the one who lets Meg go attending the party at the Moffat's mansion. 'I was very unwise to let you go among people of whom I know so little-kind... I am more sorry than I can express for the mischief this visit may have done you, Meg' (Alcott, 1868: 103). This shows that Mrs.

March has a great sense of responsibilities about what happens to her beloved daughters.

As a mother, Mrs. March knows how to use good and careful words when talking about some sensitive or serious matters with her little daughters. She also knows well her daughters' characters so that her words choice can put the March sisters' mind at ease and they can take the good advices with pleasure. This sweet character of Mrs. March is what makes Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy never once speak or do anything against their mother's advices.

'Yes, my dear, I have a great many; all mothers do, but mine differ somewhat from Mrs. Moffat's, I suspect... for the time has come for a word may set this romantic little head and heart of yours right, on a very serious subject. You are young, Meg, but not too young to understand me, and mothers' lips are the fittest to speak such of things to girls like you...'
(Alcott, 1868: 103).

From the quotation above, it can be known that mother's role to her daughters is to guide and to look after them in some specific matters in life. Mother is in charge to give the daughters the learning about serious matters regarding to womanly stuff such as romantic affair and marriage since their young age. In the novel, Mrs. March always listens to her daughters' stories about their love and gives them advices they needed which is taken from her own experience as a wife and a mother. 'I know it, Meg, for I've tried it, and I seldom give advice unless I've proved its practicability' (Alcott, 1868: 400).

Another reason that makes the March sisters never go against what their mother teach them and that they always seek help and advice regarding their marriage is because March sisters see Mrs. March as their role model. For them,

Mrs. March is the best mother who at some particular times can be their mentor in life as well. When Meg has a problem to balance her duties as a wife and as a mother, she comes to her mother for she sees her as a good wife and a good mother in the family. 'It is so, Mother; and my great wish is to be to my husband and children what you have been to yours. Show me how, I'll do anything you say' (Alcott, 1868: 400). Meg, Jo, and Amy are able to get their happy ending and happy families because of the good examples from Mrs. March. 'She has had a good example before her all her life, my dear' Mr. March whispered back, with a loving look at a worn face and gray head beside him (Alcott, 1868: 456).

Domestic women's role as a mother in the novel is also pictured by Meg. Not so long after her marriage, Meg and John Brooke soon are blessed with twin babies named Demi and Daisy. This is such a sudden change in Meg's life for being a mother is really new experience for her although her motherly sense is already there since the birth of her babies. Her new duty as a mother captivates all her attention to nurse and take a good care of the babies. She spends the days and nights to look after her children with the anxiety of the fear of making mistakes. '... she was entirely absorbed in her children, to the utter exclusion of everything and everybody else' (Alcott, 1868: 396).

A mother shall have a tender heart to raise her children so that they may grow up with love and affection. Unlike Mr. Brooke who is a man and naturally has the firm character as a father, Meg has the more gentle heart and is very fond of her children that she sometimes treats them with too gently which makes her

children rather spoiled. Therefore, she once is told by her husband to be more assertive to the kids, especially her son Demi, so that he will not make use of his Mamma's love to be disobedient.

'He's my child, and I can't have his spirit broken by harshness.'

'He's my child, and I don't want his temper is spoiled by indulgence. Go down, my dear, and leave the boy to me.'

When John spoke in that masterful tone, Meg always obeyed, and never regretted her docility.

'Please let me kiss him once, John?' (Alcott, 1868: 404).

4.2.2.2.3. Woman as A Homemaker

The last domestic women's role in *Little Women* is the role of being a homemaker. As a homemaker, women are responsible of the needs of the family. The needs are including the need of food and clothes, the need of clean and tidy house, and the need of comfortable and cheerful condition at home. This is depicted in the novel by Mrs. March and the March sisters.

Mrs. March makes a habit for her daughters to sew and knit every evening after the supper. They knit and sew to make blanket, sheet, or socks for the family. "... then out came the four little workbaskets, and the needle flew as the girls made sheets for Aunt March" (Alcott, 1868: 16). The sewing and knitting habit is also done by Meg after she is married. "... Meg went to the other window, and sewed as if new rosettes for her slippers were among the necessaries of life" (Alcott, 1868: 286).

Meg starts her marriage life just like any other matrons. She wholeheartedly decides that she will be a good homemaker, to make her husband

happy and content in the home after a long day of work. Meg plants her own fruits and makes her own, follows a cook book to make good dishes for him, and even tries to make all the ingredients by herself. “Fired by the housewifely wish to see her storeroom stocked with homemade preserves, she undertook to put up her own currant jelly... for their own currants were ripe...” (Alcott, 1868: 281). Women’s role as a homemaker requires a determination and dedication of the wife to serve her husband and provide him with comfort and the best home he deserves for that is how a good homemaker is defined.

Now, in the first flush of the new life, she had often said, ‘My husband shall always feel free to bring a friend home whenever he likes. I shall always be prepared; there shall be no flurry, no scolding, no discomfort, but a neat house, a cheerful wife and a good dinner’ (Alcott, 1868: 282).

4.2.3. The Consequences of Not Fulfilling Women’s Roles

As gender roles are one of the products of social constructions together with norms, customs, and stereotypes, it is clear that women’s roles can give women as the society members the consequences if they fail to fulfill it. Unlike customs and law, however, gender roles do not have the real punishments. Women’s roles which are formed based on society’s expectations have some social sanctions for those who cannot do their roles properly.

It is not mentioned in detail in the story what will happen if someone fails to fulfill their roles in the society. Nevertheless, there are some events that can be seen as examples of what is going to happen if a woman does not do her roles as expected. The first event is when Meg feels pressured when she realizes she has

nothing pretty to wear to the party and the way she frets that Jo will embarrass herself in front of the party guests.

”You must sit still all you can and keep your back out of sight; the front is all right. I shall have a new ribbon for my hair, and Marmee will lend me her little pearl pin, and my new slippers are lovely, and my gloves will do, though they aren’t as nice as I’d like” (Alcott, 1868: 29).

It can be understood that although the women’s roles are formed based on the society’s expectations along with the norms, women’s roles are supported by gender role’s socialization and individual’s self-concept that make women have unconscious reaction when they think they do not fit the idea of true womanhood. In this case, it is showed with not only how excited Meg about to go to the party because she has always been thinking that what a lady would do but also how anxious she is about Jo for dressing and behaving inappropriately.

Another example is showed when Meg is invited to her friend’s house for a sleep-over and for attending parties. There, she is being dolled up by her friend, Annie Moffat, and her sisters because they know that Meg only has one dress and they think Meg has a potential to be a real lady. That night at the party, Meg is presented to be a young lady named Daisy. Ignoring the guilt lingering on her heart after hearing mean words her friend said with her family about herself, Meg enjoys the night being adored and admired by mostly the male guests.

“I’m not Meg tonight, I’m “a doll” who does all sorts of crazy things. Tomorrow I shall put away my ‘fuss and feathers’ and be desperately good again,” she answered with an affected little laugh...Meg danced and flirted, chattered and giggled, as the other girls did... (Alcott, 1868: 100-101).

From the example above, it can be seen that when a woman cannot do the role to fit herself in the society standards, she gets social sanction in the form of being badmouthed by the people around her. Thus, a woman can feel being left behind and isolated by her peers. This can also make a woman keeps trying to make herself as perfect as possible to meet society's expectation and to satisfy her own ego.

The last role that cannot be fulfilled is done by Meg when she is already married and has her twin babies. Having babies to be taken care of is a new experience for Meg and her husband, John Brooke. The motherhood life is somehow keeping her mind and attention preoccupied that she is forgetting her husband who also needs her attention. Being a mother and a wife are two different roles a woman should be able to do and to keep in balance. Those domestic roles are considered very difficult yet very important because the children's personalities and husband's contentment depend on how well a woman does her role of a mother and a wife.

“John was a mild man, but he was human; and after a long day's work to come home tired, hungry, and hopeful, to find a chaotic house, an empty table, and a cross wife was not exactly conducive to repose of mind or manner...But John was angry, though he did not show it; he felt that Meg had got him into a scrape, and then deserted him in his hour of need” (Alcott, 1868: 284-285).

Meg is being overwhelmed by her sudden change in her life and the double duties to take care of her husband and her children. Her position as a married woman and a new mother, however, does not give her anything but more responsibilities to handle. It is shown that no matter how the duties can be very

handful for her, she has to try harder to please her husband and to nurse her children well. It is described that it is Meg's nature to always come to her sense and be back to serve and dedicate herself to her beloved family. '...and after a summary clearing up, she dressed herself prettily, and sat down to wait for John to come and be forgiven' (Alcott, 1868: 285).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Little Women is a novel by Louisa May Alcott that tells the story about the growing up process of March sisters from girls to become women. The novel implicitly shows the life of women in the 19th century and how they deal with the new standards of womanhood and women roles. The writer uses gender roles and women's roles theories to analyze the causes of the emergence of women's roles, the implementation of women's roles, and the consequences of not fulfilling the women's roles in the story depicted in the novel.

From the analysis, it is found that there are some factors that cause the emergence of women's roles in the story. First, the idea of ideal woman that is being spread out during the nineteenth century makes the new unspoken standards and rules for women within the society. It causes women to feel pressured to adjust and to fit themselves according to the new standards. The second factor is related to individual's characteristics and their understanding of the idea of ideal woman. It means that March sisters' characteristics play a big factor on how they deal with women's roles. It is showed by March sisters, Jo and Meg, who both have the exact opposite characters and mindset about the idea of ideal woman. Meg who is already an elegant and very feminine takes the idea of ideal woman seriously that it resembles on her efforts to fit herself in the society by trying to dress beautifully, to talk as a proper lady, and to keep her attitude in control.

Meanwhile, Jo who is a tomboyish and adventurous girl by nature seldom does what Meg tells her to do or minds her behaviors.

Then it is also found in the novel the implementations of the women's roles. One of the most important women's roles is to look like a lady by wearing a beautiful dress, gloves, bonnet, heels, jewelries and being attending parties. It is depicted by Meg who is eager to attend the New Year Eve's party where she and Jo are being invited but at the same time is worried about her simple dress and the lack of Jo's proper-lady attitude. The other women's roles are being a good wife, a good mother, and a good housekeeper. These roles are shown in the life of Meg March after she marries John Brooke. In her early days as a wife and a housekeeper she keeps trying to serve her husband by cooking meals and making its ingredients by herself, doing the house chores and keeping the house feels homely. After having twin babies, she begins her motherhood life with some difficulties to nurse her babies because of her young age and the lack of experience.

Lastly, there are some consequences of not fulfilling the women's roles. The first one is faced by Meg when she attends her friend's party without having spare dresses to wear. It causes her to be badmouthed by her friends and feeling ashamed and ostracized because of her condition. Another one is when Meg fails to keep the balance of being a good wife while doing her role as a mother. Meg gives her husband almost zero attention that he feels neglected and tries to look for comfort outside the house. It causes Meg to feel sorry and failed to do her duties as a good wife.

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