THE MEANING OF BEING A FAMILY REFLECTED IN LOUISA MAY ALCOTT’S “LITTLE WOMEN” (1868): SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

PUBLICATION ARTICLE

Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Getting Bachelor Degree of Education in English Department

by

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2014
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Surakarta 14 Juni 2014
ABSTRACT

THE MEANING OF BEING A FAMILY REFLECTED IN LOUISA MAY ALCOTT’S “LITTLE WOMEN” (1868): SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

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This research paper is Knowing that the problem is the most important part of research, the writer purposes the problem as “what is the meaning of being a family are reflected in Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women. So they writer makes title “the meaning of being a family reflected in Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women (1868): Sociological Approach. The writer use The objectives of the research are : (1) To analyze Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women novel based on its structural elements (2) To analyze the meaning of being a family in Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women based on sociological approach.

This research applies descriptive qualitative method research. The object of this research is Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women novel, and the writer is going to analyze it by using sociological approach.

The outcome of the study reveals the relationship between the novel and the social reality in American Society especially at the second half of nineteenth century. In Little Women by Louisa May Alcott describe about the meaning and important of being a family. Which is the issues also related with social condition of America at the second half of nineteenth century.

Keywords: Little Women, Sociological Approach, Meaning and important.
A. Introduction

*Little Women* is a novel written by an American author, Louisa May Alcott. It was first published in 30th September 1868. *Little Women* is a novel about the struggle of the four March sisters named Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy in facing their life in a family by the absence of father figure. And the four Child of March Family have different characteristics each other which make their life more colorful. We can see the characteristic of four child of March family. The first is Meg, the oldest, is beautiful, adult and rather vain. Jo, the second, is tomboyish and temperament. And major character of the novel is Jo. Beth, the third, is the shy. Amy, the youngest, is the little artist and immature.

Researcher chooses the novel because this novel is the top ten bestsellers of the decade. According to the researcher, this novel has a point of interest in terms of structural elements, point of view, theme, plot, and moral message is very interesting and the novel is realistic story in real word based Louisa May Alcott’s life.

This main issue of this research is the meaning of being a family reflected in Louisa May Alcott “Little Women”. It is analyzed by using sociology criticism proposed by Rene Wellek and Werren. According to Wellek and Werren literature is simply a mirror of life, a reproduction, and thus, obviously, a social document. They also argue that Much the most common approach to the relations of literature and society is the study of works of literature as social documents, as assumed pictures of social reality.

B. Research Method

In this research, the writer uses qualitative research. There are some steps to conduct the research. The first is determining the type of the study. The second step is determining the object of the study. The next is determining data and data source. The fourth step is determining technique of data collection, and the last step is determining technique of data analysis. The object of the
study is the meaning of being a family reflected Louisa May Alcott Little Women novel (1868). It is analyzed by using a sociology criticism.

There are two data sources which are needed to conduct this research. They are primary data sources and secondary data sources. The source of primary data is John Louisa May Alcott Little Women novel (1868), while the sources of secondary data are taken from other sources related the study, such as: website, dictionary, and some books which support the research. The technique used in analyzing the data is descriptive analysis. It relates to structural elements of the novel named Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women novel (1868).

The techniques of collecting data are reading novel and note taking, the steps are: (1) Reading the Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women novel (2) Identifying the topic of the novel (3). Determining the major characters (4) Taking a note of the important information (5) Reading some related books to find out the theory (6) Determining Issues of the novel.

C. Research Finding and Discussion

The writer gets some research finding in analyzing Little Women novel. Each finding has some cases to be discussed. After they have examined, all of components will get back together in a schematic manner in the discussion.

1. Finding

In analyzing Little Women novel, the writer gets some findings. There are some social historical background of American society at the second half of nineteenth century.

a. Social aspect

There are many social aspects had changed in the United States caused by the development of industry, such as social status, social structure, and social relationship between the society. In social class is divided into three class, the first is upper class, middle class, and the last is
lower class. In social aspect explain about economic society and social condition of United States at second half in nineteenth century.

_Little women_ reflect the phenomenon about the rich and the poor of American society at the second half of nineteenth century. When the readers read Little Woman novel by Louisa May Alcott, the reader can be seen the different society of life. When the readers know Hummel’s family, the reader can classes the family in upper class because Alcott’s explain Hummel’s family is very poor. They live in a poorly house which also have one room, and with a little newborn baby. Six children are huddled into one bed to keep from freezing, for they have no fire.

_Little Women_ novel by Louisa May Alcott describes a good relationship between the poor and rich family. It can be seen in the relationship between Laure’s family and March family. Laure’s family always help March family. That is one of the evidences of good relationship in social life. In Little Women novel, the reader can see a good relationship between March family and Hummel family.

b. **Economic aspect**

The economic history of the United States has its roots in European colonization in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. Economic and social changes in America during the 19th century gave rise to new kinds of commercial enterprises – in particular those of the illegal sort. Significantly, the first decades of the 19th century saw the economic elite continue to solidify their power; in the following decades they would leverage this power, consolidating both raw materials and human labor to create the country’s manufacturing sector and turning formerly
autonomous skilled artisans and farmers into a dependent workforce.

(http://www.librarycompany.org/shadoweconomy/)

At the same time, prevailing economic and social conditions presented viable commercial advancement to an unexpected population – people who chose to take advantage of quasi-legal and downright illegal opportunities.

Economic in United States also influenced by Civil War in United States. The economic condition grew up from the urban area to the increasing urban area which was more industrialized. Agriculture that became the main economic in United States which is developed by the invention of machine.

In Little Women novel by Louisa May Alcott shows the economic condition of March family in United States. Their economic in March family is getting worse, because Mr March going to Washington. Mach family got difficult in financial.

(http://www.librarycompany.org/shadoweconomy/)

c. **Political aspect**

The elections of 1860 and 1864 were probably the most important in American history. They settled the question of slavery and the issue of the nature of the Federal Union. The split of the Democratic Party in 1860 resulted in the election of the Republican candidate--Abraham Linconn. The South seceded resulting in the Civil War. Many Americans by 1864 had become disenchanted with the War and the terrible battle field losses. The
Mclellan and the Democrats offered to end the War by compromising with the southern Confederacy.

The Republicans stood by President Lincoln and his program of defeating the Confederacy to preserve the Union and an end to slavery. Lincoln was convinced that he would lose the election. At the time, Europeans saw the War as a basically domestic struggle. Only later would historians understand how powerfully the outcome would affect the history of the 20th century.

From the novel, Louisa May Alcott shows her hateful feeling to the war so much because it only brings the suffering especially on the families. It is shown in Alcott’s expression in showing her hateful of the war.

(http://histclo.com/country/us hist/elect/ue19.html)

d. Science and technology aspect

Science and technology is widely recognized as an important tool for fostering or media and strengthening the economic and social development of the country.

Science and technology provide people with the knowledge and tools to understand and address many of the challenges. Science and technology is very important for people’s social life, with science and technology the people can easily in social.

John Buescher perspective in American society at the second half on nineteenth century in Innovation and technology in nineteenth century were two technological innovation that profoundly changed daily life in the nineteenth century. They were both” Motive Power”. Steam, electricity, and telegraph.
According to some development and applications of steam engines and electricity to various tasks such as transportation by increasing and multiplying the mechanical power of human or animal strength or the power of simple tools.

*Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott’s novel shows some seen example of technology aspect. Telegraph is one of the electricity, which is function to get massage and send massage. In this era telegraph is very important to March family. And telegraph is one of the ways the society used to communicate each other. For example when Mrs March got telegraph from Washington that Mr March in Washington is fell a sick

e. Cultural aspect

Culture has many definitions, culture concerning or focusing in social life. Example of culture like values, attitudes, and normative or expected patterns of behavior. Actually culture is genetically and cannot exist on its own, but is always shared by members of a society. Alcott conveys a kind of song in Little Women to show the cultural value. Alcott expressed in the novel when the March sister play an Operatic Tragedy on Christmas night.

In the cultural aspect divided into three dimension

1. Mental Fact

   Mental Fact of America in nineteenth century divided into some aspect (moral, and value). In mental fact, the writer will be describing about that.

2. Social Fact

   Social fact is a thing distinct from its individual manifestations. Social facts are the values, cultural norms, and social structures external to the
individual. By a social fact, Durkheim is referring to facts, concepts, expectations that come not from individual responses and preferences, but that come from the social community which socializes each of its members. (Durkheim)

f. Religious aspect

Religion continues to be a potent factor in the emerging global order and its conflicts, especially in United States. In the United States pollsters and scholars have found evidence that the vast majority of Americans continue to believe in supernatural forces, identify themselves in religious terms, and hunger for a spiritually enhanced life.

Religious aspect grew rapidly in United States. In the United States pollsters and scholars have found evidence that the vast majority of Americans continue to believe in supernatural forces, identify themselves in religious terms, and hunger for a spiritually enhanced life.

In United States was in developing its economic condition by industrialization. This condition influences the crucial activity and the missionary in keeping the Christianity. (Barna, 1996; Princeton Religious Research Center, 1996, 1997a).
2. Discussion

After the researcher analyzed the novel Little Women by using Sociology theory, it is clear that this novel reflects the meaning of being a family reflected Louisa May Alcott Little Women novel. In addition, Alcott want to explain a particular view of the issues sociology, sociology of the writer, sociology of the society and the last is sociology of the readers. Alcott gives the story emphasis on the condition of the actual trial. The real in the trial that many complications of the novel, but March family can give solution with it. So the researcher gives issues the meaning of being a family.

Louisa May Alcott put her position in the character in the Little Women novel as middle class group. Usually the author wants to put his position with a happy ending. This was proved at the end between conflicts of family.

Louisa May Alcott most of the criticisms expressed about the socio-economic. It can be seen from the condition of March family, and March family in Middle class.

In addition became to the author, the relationship between the Alcott and the reader with regard to the position and role in society ideas about lifestyle and culture are important to society. Because the position and significant literary standing in the community, in addition to having an influence on the content of literary works, also has an influence on the acceptability of the works they produce for society.

Based on the above analysis, the conclusion of the discussion in the Little Women novel reflected how the tension between all the characters face in the conspiracy trial. Alcott more using sociology perspective to package the story in Little Women novel.

D. Conclusion

After analyzing Little Women novel by Louisa May Alcott using sociology criticism, the researcher comes to conclusion. First, based on
structural analysis, it is apparent that in this novel moral message and live style from the story.

Louisa May Alcott give the story to the reader by combining all elements into a single unit. She emphasized the story conflict by creating complex characters. Alcott also put setting of Little Women. According Nurgiyantoro (2000:227), there are three kinds of setting, namely setting of time, setting of place and social setting

In the Little Women novel place and time in the story in Washington, America. The author makes the story becomes interesting with colored diction. Novel of literary works of Louisa May Alcott has structural elements related to one another and build a good unity.

Based on Sociology analysis, this novel depicts the struggle of March family in social life. They must be live without father, because her father work in Washington. Alcott shows a picture of the actual social life of family, based on real social in this era. The author also gives emphasis of differences social class. In this novel also explain about different of social class. but different social class does not make another class has bed characteristic.
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