

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the study

In social life, we often see or hear about the meaning of being family. Families are the basic, foundational social units in all human communities around the world, and healthy individuals within health families are at the core of a healthy society. It's in everyone's best interest, then, to help create a positive environment for all families. This can be a labor of love for all of our social institutions: educational institutions, businesses, human and family service agencies, religious institutions, health organizations, literary everyone involved in the daily life of a community.

Families are our most intimate social environment. They are the place where we begin the vital processes of socializing our children, the teaching them in partnership with countless others in the community, how to survive and thrive in the world. Doherty, W.J., (2000)

Louisa May Alcott was born on 29 November 1832 in Germantown, Pennsylvania. Louisa May Alcott like Jo character in the *Little Women* novel. Louisa is Tomboy like a Jo character and she has third sister. She explains more detail the characters of the people in the novel, for example in one of the chapter, when she invite the reader to known the Amy's characters. She tells about Amy get punishment from the teacher, because she brings prohibition food in her

class. So, from the chapter the reader can know Amy's characteristics that Amy like a child when she gets some problem. In *Little Women's* novel, Louisa May Alcott's describe about her live. The major character of the *Little Women* is Jo. The character of Jo is like her life. And Louisa May Alcott's dies in Boston in 1888.

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.

Alcott's story begins with the four March girls—Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy, lamenting their poverty. The fist chapter tells about when they celebrate Christmas. They decide,they will each buy themselves a present in order to brighten their Christmas. Marmee comes home with a letter from Mr. March, the girls' father, who is serving as a Union chaplain in the Civil War. The letter inspires the girls to bear their burdens more cheerfully and not to complain about their poverty. In *Little Women* novel is about the meaning and importance of family.

Amy likes drawing a picture. Their father, Mr. March, is away from home in Washington, where the war is, and Mrs. March cares the four daughters with their companion, Hannah. The absence of their father is because of the war gives bad impacts to the March family especially in economic and social life. The situation makes the children work in order to get the money to help finance life. Meg works as a governess in a rich family, Jo as a companion in Aunt March, an old widow.

Mrs. March is a very kind mother. She always cares for her daughters with love, motivates them in every situation and teaches them to help the poor. The March sisters build a good relationship with their rich next-door neighbor, Mr. Lawrence, and his grandson, Laurie. One day, a letter comes to the March informed that Mr. March is seriously ill and asked Mrs. March to come. Here, to help Mrs. March finance the trip, Jo, make a big sacrifice to cut her only sign of beauty, her hair, and sells it. By the Marches sacrifice in life, they can make their father, Mr. March, back home.

Little Women as a literary work of course leaves responses from the readers whether they are pro or contra about the novel. It can be seen from *good reads* internet site. Most readers like and love this novel. *Little Women* novel by Louisa May Alcott is very good novel, because this novel tell about the meaning of family. So a lot of people want to read the novel.

The good responses of *Little Women* is not only leaves good comments but also criticism. Although so many readers love this novel, but one of them,

Rory, stated in July 2007. He stated that *Little Women* is dull and preachy. He also stated that most of the chapters play like morality plays than a solid plot. A bad comment about the author, Louisa May Alcott that she is an ornery old maid was came from Anna in January 1994. She stated that the children who read the novel will be disappointed by the author of the book they love.

Related to literature, sociology plays a big role. A literary work is created by the people who are the member of a society. Sociology studies the relation between people and society. Sociology discusses the social condition of the author.

There are four reasons why the writer is interested in studying this novel; first is because it is the realistic story in real world. Second is because in the story of the novel tells about the importance of a family. Third is because attractive setting and place. And fourth is because in the story of the novel tells about women loyalty in a family.

The first reason is because it is the realistic story in real word based Louisa May Alcott's life. When the woman struggle with the other in March's family, so the story is very interested for me. It tells about the the meaning of being a family and women struggle. The second reason is because in the story of the novel tells about the importance and the meaning of a family, when all of the March sisters work in order to get the money to help finance life.

The third reason is because attractive setting and place, I think in the setting and the palace of the novel is classic setting and place. Every single detail of setting time and place seems real, so the other people, who read the novel, understand about the story and can distinguish between the past and present of the novel.

The fourth reason is because the story of the novel tells about women loyalty in a family. We can see in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* novel, when all of the four March girls appreciate another, and they work in order to get the money to help finance life.

The writer uses Sociological approach to analyse Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* novel. The title of the work is "THE MEANING OF BEING A FAMILY REFLECTED IN LOUISA MAY ALCOTT'S LITTLE WOMEN (1868):SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH".

B. Literature review

The study conducted by the writer has a close relationship with the study conducted by Anita Widiastuti, a Muhammadiyah University student (2003), entitles "JO'S STRUNGGLE FOR BETTER STANDARD OF LIVING IN LOUISA MAY ALCOTT'S LITTLE WOMEN :AN INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY ANALYSIS". She uses individual psychology analysis to

analyze the data. The aim of the study is to find the influences of Jo's struggle for better standard of living on her personality development.

And the second is conducted by the writer which has a close relationship with the study was conducted by Agustin Dwi Ratnaningrum, a Muhammadiyah University student (2009), entitled "THE EFFECTS OF CIVIL WAR ON FAMILIES IN LOUISA MAY ALCOTT'S LITTLE WOMEN: SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH". She uses sociology analysis to analyze the data. The aim of the study is to find the civil war on families in Louisa mayalcott's novel.

C. Problem statement

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 reflected in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868) and which is the complication and resolution of the *Little Women* novel?.

D. Limitation of the study

The research limits the study on analyzing the meaning of being a family reflected in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868) novel based on sociological approach.

E. Objective of the study

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.

F. The benefit of the study

1. Theoretical benefit

To give contributions to the body of knowledge, especially to the application of Sociological Approach in literary study Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* novel (1868).

2. Practical benefit

To give benefit to the other researchers in understanding *Little Women* Novel by Louisa May Alcott from Sociological approach.

G. Theoretical approach

In this research, the writer uses sociological approach to analyse the novel. The writer focuses on analyzing the meaning of being a family that happens in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* novel. There are some steps in analyzing novel. Firstly, the researcher begins from the structural elements of the novels, consist of character and characterization, setting, plot, point of view, and theme. Secondly the researcher uses Sociological approach. The previous technique will apply in the next go the deeper understanding.

H. Research method

1. Type of research

The writer uses descriptive qualitative method, the research object in this study is the meaning of being a family in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*.

2. Object of the 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.

3. Type of the Data and Data Source

In study there are two source namely primary and secondary data source. There are:

a. Primary Data Source

The primary data source is original materials on which other research is based that usually the first formal appearance of result in the print or electronic literature and it's from the time period. The primary data source is taken from Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* novel.

b. Secondary Data Resources

The secondary data source is the data that consist of the other data related to the primary data as the support that comment on and discuss the evidence provided by primary source.

The secondary data are taken from other sources which are related to the primary data includes books, other data that have relationship with

the research, such as biography of author, commentaries, and other relevant information.

4. Technique of Data Collection

The method used for collecting data are library research and browsing.

They are as follows :

- a) Reading the Louisa May Alcott's Little Women novel.
- b) Identifying the topic of the novel.
- c) Determining the major characters.
- d) Taking a note of the important information.
- e) Reading some related books to find out the theory.
- f) Determining Issues of the novel.

5. Technique of Data Analysis.

The technique of data analysis of the research is descriptive analysis.

In this research the researcher tries to describe the structural elements of the novel and sociological analysis. In this case is sociological approach to show the meaning of being a family in Little Women novel by Louisa May Alcott: Sociological Approach.

I. Paper organization

Paper Organization of this research comprises six chapter. Chapter 1 is introduction which covers background of the study, literature review, problem statement, objective of the study, benefit of the study, theoretical approach, research method, and paper organization. Chapter II is underlying theory that the

writer uses to conduct this research. It covers the notion of sociological approach, and the major principles of sociological approach. Chapter III is social background and all of about the importance of being a family. Chapter IV is structural analysis. This chapter is dealt with structural analysis of *Little Women* novel. Chapter V is sociological analysis. This chapter explain the sociological analysis of *Little Women* novel. Chapter VI is Conclusion and Suggestion.