

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Little Women is a novel by an American author Louisa May Alcott. This novel was published in two volumes in 1868 and 1869. The first volume consists of 23 chapters and the second volume consists of 47 chapters. Louisa May Alcott (2013) states that “the first volume, *Little Women*, was an immediate commercial and critical success, prompting the composition of the book’s second volume, entitled *Good Wives*, which was also successful. Alcott followed *Little Women* with two sequels, also featuring the March sisters: *Little Men* (1871) and *Jo’s Boys* (1886). *Little Women* was a fiction novel for girls that veered from the normal writings for children, especially girls, at the time”.

Louisa May Alcott was born on 29 November 1832 in Germantown, Pennsylvania. She was the second eldest of four children. Louisa May Alcott wrote several novels, short stories and poems. She wrote *Little Women*, *An Old Fashioned Girl*, *Little Men*, *Eight Cousins*, *Rose in Bloom*, and others. The name of her father is Amos Bronson Alcott and the mother is Abigail May Alcott. Louisa enjoyed writing from a young age, which inspired her and her three sisters, Anna, Elizabeth, and Abby May, to form their own secret society. Louisa May Alcott dies in Boston in 1888.

Little Women tells a story about the lives of the four March girls are Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy. The four March Sisters have different characters. Meg, the oldest, she is beautiful and has a dream to become a queen who wears a beautiful dress. Jo, the second, she is tomboyish and temperament. Beth, the third, she is shy and has a talent to play piano. Amy, the youngest, likes drawing.

On Christmas Evening, the four March girls are complaining that Christmas will be disappointing because they are not receiving any presents. They receive a letter from their father, who is serving as a chaplain in the Civil War. After they read a letter from their father, they want to make their father proud. On Christmas Day, Mrs. March, known to the girls as Marmee, encourages the girls to give their breakfast to the Hummel family, and the girls do so. Mr. Laurence, their neighbor hears of the kindness done to the Hummels family and he sends dinner to Mrs. March family.

After that, Meg and Jo are invited to a dance. At the dance, Jo meets Laurie. Laurie is the grandson of their neighbor Mr. Laurence. Laurie is always alone and rarely leaves his house. Soon after the dance, Laurie is ill. Jo wants to meet Laurie, because she thinks that Laurie is lonely in a big house. Finally Jo can meet Laurie and she meets Mrs. Laurence. Mrs. Laurence gets to meet the whole March family, he is particularly fond of Beth and he invites Beth to play the piano any time in his home. Later, he gives her a piano of her very own.

Mrs. March receives a telegram informing them that their father is sick. Jo shows her passion and dedication to her family by selling her hair, so that Mrs. March can use the money to go see him. In Mrs. March absence, Beth takes it upon herself to visit the sickly Hummel family and contracts scarlet fever from the baby. Mrs. March hears Beth is ill, she wants to meet Beth. Finally, Mr. March family can gather together, and Meg in love with Mr. Brooke.

In *little Women* novel, there are many positive response having addressed to this book. It can be seen from *goodreads* internet site. One of the discussant, Martha in June 21, 2011 states that *Little Women* is “so great and simple perfection. It has characters every girl could ever relate to. This book represents so many different kinds of love and how they change over time, and how some, will last forever”. Another response is coming from Ana Carter in March 25, 2012 stating that *Little Women* is great. She thinks that “this book is a classic, and it is beautiful coming of age story that tells the story of the March family. The four March girls are taught about kindness, charity, good deeds and the importance of family and friends, as they grow older they enrich their lives with love and growth in lieu of wealth”.

Little Women is one of the most popular novels. Deborah Weisgall in June 11, 2012 states that “*Little Women* was published in September 1868, and the first printing sold out, although one reviewer warned that it

was not “a Christian book”. Another 4.500 copies were printed, a British edition was scheduled, and the publishers begged for a sequel”.

In addition, *Little Women* novel also had been adapted for film. Jodi Walker on October 21, 2013 states that “two silent films in 1917 and 1918. In 1933 film starring Katharine Hepburn. In 1949 version starring Elizabeth Taylor, and finally the most recent 1994 film adaptation starring Susan Sarandon, Winona Ryder, and Claire Danes, can’t even think about that without crying- leave the material pretty well covered on the big screen”.

There are four reasons why the writer is interested in studying this novel; first is because the writer is interested in studying one of literary study that is a novel. Second is because the novel makes the writer more interested to read it. Third is because the plot of the novel is interesting. Fourth is because humanity and morality that becomes the main issue of novel is reflected well.

The first is because the writer is interested in studying one of literary study that is a novel. Novel is one of literary review that tell story, characteristics, sequence of events of human life. Novel also gives emotional feeling to the reader.

The second reason is because the novel makes the writer more interested in reading it. The story of *Little Women* novel reflects the different characteristics of four little women. The four little women have

different characteristic but they can make it beautiful through any kinds of life problems.

The third reason is because the plot of the novel is interesting. Hall (in Koesnoesobroto, 1988: 29) argues that “plot as what happen in a story, the story’s organized development, usually a chain linking cause and effect”. This novel tells the story about lives of the family Mr. March. The plot of the novel is easy to understand and makes the writer interest.

The fourth reason is because humanity and morality that becomes the main issue of novel is reflected well. Humanity and morality are important in social life. This novel contains humanity and morality message, such as the mother of Jo, Meg, Beth, and Amy in this novel always help Hummel family and the mother always gives advice for child to help Hummel family.

The writer uses a sociological theory as an approach to analyze this novel, because the story of the novel is about humanity and morality, so it is appropriate with sociological theory as an approach. By so doing, the writer gives the title: **HUMANITY AND MORALITY REFLECTED IN LOUISA MAY ALCOTT’S *LITTLE WOMEN* NOVEL (1868): A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH.**

B. Literature Review

In this study, the researcher summarizes some relevant literature review to prove the originality of this study, by this literature review, the

reader can understand the differentiation and the similarities between this study and the other relevant research.

The first researcher is 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. The aim of her research was to analyze the structural elements of *Little Women* and describe the effects of Civil War in the story based on Sociological approach. The outcome of the study reveals the relationship between the novel and the social reality in American society. In *little women*, Louisa May Alcott describes the effects of Civil War endanger the community especially families. Louisa May Alcott describes how Civil War influences the life in America through social, economic, political, cultural, religious, and science and technology aspect.

The second researcher is Anita Widiastuti, a Muhammadiyah University student (2003), entitled “JO’S STRUGGLE FOR BETTER STANDARD OF LIVING IN LOUISA MAY ALCOTT’S *LITTLE WOMEN*: AN INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY ANALYSIS”. The aim of the study is to find the influences of Jo’s struggle for better standard of living on her personality development. The result of the data shows the following conclusions. Firstly, the structural elements of the novel present a good unity. Louisa May Alcott employs the traditional plot that begins with exposition followed by complication, climax, and resolution. She

tries to give a moral message through this novel that life is a struggle to reach her life goal. She takes it as the theme of the novel. Secondly, the result of the psychological analysis shows that the struggle has influenced Jo's personality. Jo changes from tomboyish into more gentle and feminine that is influenced by her struggle for better standard of living.

The third researcher is Maximillian Samuel Puji, Sanata Dharma University (2007), entitled "MASCULINITY OF JOSEPHINE MARCH AS SEEN IN LOUISA MAY ALCOTT'S *LITTLE WOMEN*". The aim of the thesis is to know the determinants of Josephine March's masculinity based on the theory of traditional masculinity by Janet Saltzman Chavetz, and the second is to find out the variables which develop Josephine March's masculinity based on the theory of personality development by Edward J. Murray. The findings of the first analysis show that Josephine March's masculinity is shown through some determinants, they are: physical determinant, functional determinant, emotional determinant, intellectual determinant, interpersonal determinant, and other personal determinant. In the second analysis, the findings reveal Josephine March's variables which develop her masculinity. The first variable is her poverty and the second is her disappointment on discrimination.

The fourth researcher is Lisa Novita Ningrum, University of Muria Kudus (2012), entitled "FLOUTING MAXIM OF RELATION IN *LITTLE WOMEN* NOVEL BY LOUISA MAY ALCOTT". The aim of this study is to find out flouting maxim of relation which are employed by the

characters and to find out the speaker's meaning of flouting maxim of relation in "*Little Women*" novel by Louisa May Alcott adapted by Lucia Monfried. The result of this study is there is one kind of flouting the maxim. It is flouting Maxim of Relation. Due the fact of flouting of maxims is the important point in pragmatic and from the result above, English learner should enrich themselves by understanding flouting of maxims. She can find the flouting maxim of relation in script movie or the other object like short story, script drama and novel.

The similarity of this research with each literature reviews above is in analyzing the major issues reflected in *Louisa May Alcott's Little Women*. The difference between this research and each literature review is the first research focused on analyzing the issues of the effect of civil war on families that found in *Louisa May Alcott's* novel and the second research is focused on the Jo's struggle for better standard of living in *Louisa May Alcott's* novel. The third research is focused on the analyzing the masculinity of Josephine March as seen in *Louisa May Alcott's* novel. The fourth research is focused on flouting maxim of relation in *Louisa May Alcott's* novel. The present research has different perspective in analyzing the data. The researcher uses sociological approach to analyze the data. The researcher analyzes humanity and morality reflected in *Louisa May Alcott's Little Women* by using sociological approach.

C. Problem Statement

Based on the previous background of study, the researcher proposed the problem “How is humanity and morality reflected in Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women* novel (1868)?

D. Limitation of the Study

The researcher focuses this research in analyzing humanity and morality reflected in Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women* novel (1868) based on a sociological approach.

E. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the research are:

1. To describe *Little Women* novel based on structural elements of novel.
2. To analyze how humanity and morality are reflected in Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women* novel (1868) based on a sociological approach.

F. Benefits of the Study

The researcher really hopes that this research on *Little Women* (1868) has benefits. The benefits of this study as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefit

The result of this study is expected to be able to give information and contribution the development of the knowledge, and

as an academic reference by other researchers to conduct further research and particularly the literary studies on *Little Women* novel.

2. Practical Benefit

The study is expected to enrich the knowledge and experience of the writer and other students of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta or other University students who have interest in literary study on the novel from a Sociological Approach.

G. Research Method

1. Type of the Study

In this research, the writer uses qualitative research. The data sources are library and literary data. It proposes to analyze novel using sociological approach. The steps to conduct this research are (1) determining the type of the study, (2) determining the object of the study, (3) determining data and data source, (4) determining technique of data collection, and (5) determining technique of data analysis.

2. Object of the Study

The object of the study is humanity and morality reflected in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* novel (1868). It is analyzed by using a sociological approach.

3. Type of the Data and Data Source

The writer uses two sources of data, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources.

a. Primary data sources

The primary data sources is Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* novel (1868).

b. Secondary data sources

The secondary data sources from other sources related to the study, such as website, dictionary, and some books that support the analysis.

4. Technique of Data Collection

The methods of collecting data are as follows:

- a. Reading the novel repeatedly and understanding the content
- b. Reading some other resources related to the novel
- c. Giving marks to particular parts in the novel, which are considered important for the analysis
- d. Taking notes for important parts both in primary and secondary data sources
- e. Classifying the data into categories and developing them into a good unity
- f. Drawing conclusion and formulate its pedagogical suggestion

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The technique used in analyzing the data is descriptive analysis. It concerns with structural elements of the novel on humanity and morality reflected in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* novel (1868)

H. Paper Organization

The research paper organization of “Humanity and Mistreating reflected in Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women* are as follows. Chapter I is introduction, which consists of background of the study, literary review, problem statement, the objectives of study, the benefit of study, and research paper organization. Chapter II is underlying theory, which presents the notions. Chapter III deals with social historical backgrounds of American society in the second half of the nineteenth century. Chapter IV deals with structural analysis of the novel, which involves the structural elements of the novel and discussion. Chapter V is sociological analysis, this chapter explains the sociological analysis of *Little Women* novel. Chapter VI is Conclusion and Suggestion.