

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Background of the Study**

Education can be either formal or informal. Other than the formal education, all the things that the child learns can be called as informal education. Informal education is anything that the child learns from the members of the family, the environment and all that is presented in the environment. This education is very important in all around developments of the child. Nature and the environment play a very major role in the education and learning experience of a child. The roles played by the family and all the members are very important. This education actually plays an influencing role in the life of the child.

Parents are usually the role models of the children. The mother and father can actually see that the child is imitating them in various things that they do. Even when the parents do not do something consciously, they are influencing the child with their behaviors. These also work towards the final outcome of the adult child. If the family is built on a foundation of love, the child also learns the importance of family and bonding within the family. Besides, the role played by the brothers and sisters of the child are also important. The child understands in a practical way that he or she is not alone. There is love and rivalry between children. In the co existence with siblings, the child learns in a practical manner the numerous self denials and imitations that need to be imposed upon oneself.

There are many lessons learned by the child in a family that will go along way in helping when the child grows into an adult.

Good interpersonal relationship within a family may build the sense of belonging and acceptance. No matter what they do and who they are, one will always be the part of one's family. It means that every one in the family depends on each other in their family to fulfill their needs. However, there might be some problems in a family. A problem that comes as the effect of the existing relationship between family members is a usual thing. The family members may even take advantages and learn something from their problems. By dealing with those problems, they will eventually learn about the desire to achieve better life and could be a better person to the family itself or to the society they live in.

Peter M. Kellet in his book entitled *Conflict Dialogue: Working with Layers of Meaning for Productive Relationships* stated that families are often the special people we most rely on as we grown up and as we move through life's ages and stages. Ideally, loving bonds and mutual care unite their members (37). As a family, ones might have certain psychological and physical bonds that usually connect one another. Since they (family) become the most important part of each other's life, love and care which grow within the members will eventually strengthen their relationship as they grow and move together.

This is what the writer concerns, to study the moral development of Josephine March, in the literary work entitled *Little Women* written by Louisa May Alcott. Moral development is the process through which children develop proper attitudes and behaviors toward other people in society, based on social and

cultural norms, rules, and laws. Through *Little Women* the writer of this thesis will study how Josephine's process to develop her attitudes and behaviours properly and to fix the problem she has in her family. Because *Little Women* is considered as one of children literature, the novel fits best for showing the process of developing attitude and behaviour in the characters inside to become more mature persons.

Alcott actually used to write children literature book started from the year around 1860. With her father's encouragement, she began to write *Little Women* the following year. She was a famous feminist writer in the nineteenth century who is still well known until now. During her life, Alcott has already produced a lot of literary works, such as novels, poems, short stories and essays. Nevertheless, she is better much more as a novelist, especially children books. She is not like most of the other writers who write their works on their own imagination. She likes to write about women and family life which are mostly based on her own experiences and her family life. Some of her works have already been translated into several languages and sold out all over the world. Besides, some of them are also made into films and comics (Louisa May Alcott, 1994).

*Little Women* brought her fame, money, and inspiration to continue her writing. Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* is an interesting novel which tells about a family life and the problems that happen in it. Besides, it is also known as Alcott's masterpiece. It is one of her novels which has been translated into several languages and spread all over the world. Besides, it is also made into a film and comic book. Actually, *Little Women* itself consisted of two books. The first book

was called *Little Women* which was published in 1868, and the second book was called *Good Wives* which was published in 1869.

This is a story about the struggle of the four March sisters named Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy in facing with their life in a family by the absence of a father figure. They have different characteristics each other which make their life more colorful. Meg, the oldest, is beautiful and rather vain. Jo, the second, is tomboyish and temperament. Beth, the third, is the shy. Amy, the youngest, is the little artist and immature. Their father, Mr. March, is absent in their life because he is away from home in Washington, where the war is taken place.

The absence of their father because of the war gives bad impacts to the March family especially in financial condition. The situation makes the children have to work in order to get the money to help living their life. Meg works as a governess in a rich family, while Jo as a companion of Aunt March, an old rich widow. Mrs. March is a very kind mother. She always cares 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. Laurence, and his grandson Laurie. The Laurence always helps the March in facing with their life without father especially financially.

One day a letter comes to the March informs that Mr. March is seriously ill and asks Mrs. March to come. Here, to help Mrs. March finance the trip, Jo, makes a big sacrifice by cutting her only beauty, her hair, and sells it. By the Marches sacrifice in their life, they can make their father, Mr. March, come back home. Alcott tries to deliver the messages through the problem of a long family

relationship. Therefore, from the novel we can see that each of the family members has their own problems and they try to solve the problems together.

One of the interpretations of the title of this book is used as a term of endearment in the novel. Mr. March calls his daughters "*Little Women*" in the letter he sends them from the war. On the surface, the term indicates the time between being girls and being women, a time that the novel portrays in the lives of the March sisters.

As the main character, Josephine plays an important part in determining the story of this novel. Thus, the writer would like to focus on the study in analyzing Josephine character, how she reacts towards the conflicts, how her relationship with her family runs and how the depiction of her moral development in her life. Eventually, it will lead to dig the conflict of each family members that affected every one in the family deeper, as related to the thematic significance of the story, and how they overcome the problems altogether and by themselves.

The reason why the writer is interested in discussing this novel is because it carries a sort of problems that we cope everyday; quarreling with sisters, for instance. It also has various conflicts that commonly close to our daily life and we are familiar with. In other words, talking about family is not merely about the members of the family itself, but also about other people who are connected to them and the problems which come up along with their existence.

## **B. Statement of the Problems**

The background of the study leads to some statements that are going to be analyzed in this thesis. The following statements are formulated to make a clear focus on the analysis:

1. How is Jo March as the main character potrayed in the story?
2. How does the main character experience her moral development in the story?

## **C. Objective of the Study**

In organizing the study, there are several objectives that the writer wants to achieve. The objectives of the study are intended to answer every question which comes out, as it has been mentioned in the statement of the problems by using the chosen theory as the tool to analyze them. Therefore, the writer tries to answer the above questions in order:

1. To find out about Jo March characteristics as the main character in the story
2. To analyze the moral development through the main character's conflicts that occurs in the story.

## **D. Significance of the Study**

By analyzing Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, it is hoped that the readers can get some values to enrich their understanding of literary works. Besides, the study is expected to give and enhance the knowledge of the readers

about feeling close to and understanding about lost and wandering family. This thesis focuses on the main character of the novel. Here, the writer will focus more on Josephine who has to undergo some conflicts; both external and internal conflicts. By overcoming the conflicts, she becomes a better person and more mature.

It is also expected that this study would be meaningful for the contribution toward the study of literature, particularly in English Department of Airlangga University, especially for those who want to make a further study about the topic. It can also be an effective media in broadening and stimulating the readers' mind.

#### E. **Scope and Limitation**

To avoid confusion, the writer of this thesis focuses her study only to Louisa May Alcott's views in the character of Josephine March in achieving her moral development in the story. In the story itself it is shown that she has different character with her other sisters. The analysis is emphasized on Jo's behaviors. The other minor characters such as Meg, Beth, Amy, Laurie, Professor Bhaer and Marmee are discussed only in their relation with Josephine March. Also, the writer decides to limit her study by taking Josephine's character traits, because they cause her inner and outer conflict that lead to Josephine's moral Development.

## F. **Theoretical Background**

The thesis is intended to analyze the main character of *Little Women* novel deeper in order to cope with her problems. The writer limits the analysis into the characterization in order to know about the characteristic, which can be noticed from several ways: showing character's appearance, displaying character's actions, revealing character's thought, letting the character speak and knowing the character from other's reaction toward the character. However, the writer focuses mainly on Jo's character.

The writer decides to use the intrinsic approach to analyze the novel since it concerns with the literary elements of the novel. Later, the writer will analyze how the conflict happened in the story. Therefore, the most appropriate theory in analyzing the problems is New Criticism. The writer also uses psychological theory namely Piaget's Moral Development in order to see the development of the main character deeper. Those approaches and concepts are applied to help the writer to get a deeper analysis in this thesis.

## G. **Method of the Study**

In the process of writing, the writer uses library and online research. This research is done by collecting data from various books, articles, critics, reviews and other printed materials from both library and internet which can be used to support the analysis. Those printed materials include the main source of the analysis that is novel and other information that supports the novel itself. However, the main source used for the study is the literary work itself, in this case



is *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott, whereas the other sources are used for supporting the study. Moreover, some sources dealing with the literary theories and approaches are also used in the analysis of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*.

The method used is descriptive analysis. This method is applied based on the work itself and supported by other information concerning with this work. In this case, it is also used to describe the characterization of Josephine March as the main characters and the other character also. The quotations in the genuine forms are provided to confirm and support the analysis.

#### H. Definition of Key Terms

- Family : The smallest unit of society that have a biological bound, which start from two individuals (usually man and woman) who take a long term commitment to live together. (thefreedictionary.com)
- Conflict : A struggle between two opposing forces. (Barry, 23)
- Moral Development : The process through which children develop proper attitudes and behaviors toward other people in society, based on social and cultural norms, rules and laws.  
(encyclopediaofchildrenhealth.com)

- Little Women : The girls are in the transition from childhood to adulthood.