Your Name

Instructor Name

Course Number

Date

**Little Women**

*Little Women* is a historical drama novel written by American author Louisa May Alcott which was published in the year 1869 (“*Little Women*”). Little Women gives an autobiographical account of the life of a family living in Concord, Massachusetts. The family consists of a father who is serving in the Civil War, a mother called “Marmee” who is a working woman, and four sisters Meg, Jo, Amy, and Beth. Meg and Jo are the older sisters with a Job. Jo works with a wealthy aunt while Meg serves as a Governess (Alcott). The Novel mainly depicts how these sisters grow up and earn their rightful place in the world. Throughout her novel, Louisa May Alcott depicts the main idea of gender roles and feminism in society. By representing the life struggles of appreciated and admirable women, *Little Women* tries to reflect the role of women in society. This essay focuses on how the theme develops throughout the novel.

As the novel progresses, different possibilities for integrating women in society keep on emerging which highlights the significance of feminism. The theme develops throughout the novel by depicting the wide range of areas where women can contribute such as home, literature, art, and ethical culture. At the beginning of the novel, the theme is prevalent in the fact that the March family has overcome the domination of patriarchy by working independently in society. All men such as Mr. March, Mr. Lawrence, Laurie, Publishers, and Suitors seemed to play a second role. Three of the lead characters, Mamee, Amy, and Jo happily earn their living by doing different kinds of Jobs (Alcott). Although Jo has a passion for writing and wants to pursue her dream of becoming a renowned artist, she struggles in a patriarchal society as her writings seem to be hardly acknowledged (Alcott). Moreover, a society which has strangely developed a notion of how a woman should act and behave is continuously addressed in the novel. The character Jo is depicted to have a personality different from society's perception of women's behavior and roles. With her broad ambitions of becoming a writer, she roams around the neighborhood in leather boots suggesting that women have various roles to play than just serving the tea hot.

In the middle of the novel, the theme is prevalent when Jo refuses to marry the wealthy teenager Laurie. When Laurie sends a proposal for Jo, she rejects it for several reasons. Firstly, she believes that she and Laurie are not made for each other because of a class difference (Alcott). Secondly, she disapproves the society’s notion of women belonging to their homes and husbands without any sense of having a life of their own. Moreover, this theme is presented in an act of transcendentalism. Jo takes a step towards her self-discovery as a writer, which prevails in the middle of the novel.

Towards the end of the novel, the idea of women's role in society is more weighed towards the responsibility of women as protectors of a home and family. After spending the little part of her life in New York the way she wanted, Jo decides to return and acknowledge her responsibility as a protector of a family (Alcott). She decides to fit in the community by serving both as a wife and as a writer. With her decision, she upholds the equilibrium between her dreams of becoming a writer and a domestic duty.

As the book marks the era of the mid-nineteenth century, the historical background limits the role of women in society. However, the way the story emerges as a means of pushing the frontiers of the old-fashioned roles of women in society, depicts the utter need for realization for gender acknowledgment.

**Works Cited:**

Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Women*. Sterling Publishing Company, Inc., 2004.

“*Little Women*.” *Wikipedia*, 17 Dec. 2019. *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Little\_Women&oldid=931142185.