

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Human being, as a social creature, must communicate with their environment. To realize it, they need language which is used as the major means of human's communication. Communication means the way people express their thoughts and feelings. In accordance with this Hurlock (1991: 176) states that people express their feeling and thought through language such as sign, spoken and written.

In human society, language is very important. It is used in all aspects of life, including in the development of art. One form of art the language is literature. Kennedy (1979: 1) states that literature is a kind of art, usually written, that offers pleasure, experience or imagination of the people through language. Moreover, Wiyatni (2006: 15) states that literature is an imagination of people which is written in beautiful and polite words.

The works of literature are divided into three groups: poetry, drama, and fiction. Poetry is divided into epic, lyric, narrative, descriptive, and reflective. Drama is divided into tragedy, comedy, romance drama, and tragic comedy. Fiction is classified into three genres: short story, novella and novel. (<http://Wikipedia.Org/Wiki/nonfiction>, 2010). A short story is a work of fiction that is usually written in prose. A Short story tends to be less complex than a novel. A novella is a short

narrative tale or a short novel. A novel is a fictional prose narrative of a reasonable length which contains characters, plots, structures, setting, theme, symbol and image, speech and dialogue and point of view. Moreover, a novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the time in which it was written. A novella is a narrative in literary prose which has the length between novel and short story (60 – 100 pages).

Among all forms of imaginative literary in the language, a novel has been the favorite of both writers and readers because it deals on an imagination of life experience with the elements of theme, character, setting, plot, action, atmosphere and tone, point of view. People are interested in novel than poetry and drama because of the element in the fiction and the way of the author presents it.

Despite this fact, the reader often finds difficulty to understand a novel due to the complexity of the theme and setting of the plot. To understand a novel, a reader needs the ability to analyze. Through a good analysis, a reader will find the truth of story in the novel.

To analyze a novel, a reader must know which value of novel will be analyzed. There are two kinds of novel analysis, i.e, intrinsic value and extrinsic value. Nurgiyantoro (2002: 23) states that intrinsic value is the value from inside which builds the literary work. Intrinsic value is divided into: character, theme, action and plot of story, and point of view, setting, atmosphere and tone. Extrinsic value is the value from outside which builds the literary work. Extrinsic value is divided into: socially economic situation while story is made, social politic, cultural, religion, and regulation of the society.

This research is aimed to help the reader to understand the story of *Little Women* deeply. The writer is interested to analyze *Little Women*, one of the best Louisa Mac Alcott which was published in 1868, three year after the end of America Civil War (called in the U.S.A. the war of state) because the scene of the story is a small town in one of the northern states where the March family lived. The novel took the time in the nineteenth century life in America during which women found it difficult. Beside that, the story covers with family love. In addition, it explains many types of characters of four sisters and how they overcome family's problem. It also brings moral message for reader.

Little Women tells us about March's family who has four little girls living in England during the civil war. Their father, Mr. March is a chaplain in Union Army and rarely at home. The first March girl is Margaret or Meg, the eldest sister who is very pretty and well mannered. She works as a governess for the kings, a wealthy local family. The second girl is Josephine or Jo who is boyish, out spoken and has a passion for writing. Her nature often gets her into trouble, while her heart often pushes her into acts of kindness. She is also very close to Elizabeth. Elizabeth or Beth is the second youngest girl in March family. She is a calm, kind girl, and a pianist. The youngest in March family is Amy. She is interested in art, and always carries herself like a very proper young lady.

The story begins with the four March girls Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy who are sitting in the living room, lamenting their poverty because of civil war. The girls decide that they will buy a present in order to brighten their Christmas. Soon,

however, they change their minds and decide that instead of buying presents for themselves, they will buy a present for their mother. Their mother comes home with a letter from Mr. March. The letter inspires the girls to bear their burdens more cheerfully and not to complain about their parent.

One morning, the girls wake up to find books, probably copies of *The Pilgrim's progress*, under their pillows. They directly find their mother. Hannah, the family servant tells them that their mother has gone to aid poor neighbors. When Mrs. March returns, she asks them to give away their delicious Christmas breakfast to a poor family. The girls agree to do so and enjoy the good work they have done.

Mr. Laurence, whom the girls never met, rewards their charitable activities by sending over a feast. Soon, Meg and Jo are invited to attend a new year's party at the home of Meg's wealthy friend, Sally Gardiner. At the party Jo retreats to an alcove, and there meets Laurie, the boy who lives with Mr. Laurence. While dancing, Meg sprains her ankle. Laurie escorts the sister's home. The Marches regret of having to return to their daily routine after the holiday festivities.

Jo visits Laurie when she is sick, and meets his grandfather, Mr. Laurence. She inadvertently insults a painting of Mr. Laurence in front of the man himself. Luckily, Laurie's grandfather admires Jo's spunk, and they become friends. Soon, Mr. Laurence meets all the sisters, Beth become his favorite. Mr. Laurence gives his deceased granddaughter's piano.

The girls have various adventures. Amy is caught trading limes at school, and the teacher hits her as punishment. As a result, Mrs. March withdraws her daughter

from school. Jo refuses to let Amy go with her to the theater. In retaliation, Amy burns Jo's manuscript, and Jo, in her anger, nearly lets Amy drown while ice-skating. Meanwhile, pretty Meg attends her friend Annie Moffat's party. After allowing the other girls to dress her up in high style, learns that appearances are not everything. While at the party, she hears that people think she intends to marry Laurie for his money.

In the spring, Jo smuggles Laurie into one of the club meetings, and he becomes a member, presenting his new circle with a postbox. At the beginning of June, the Marches decide to neglect their housework. At the end of a lazy week, Marmee takes a day off too. The girls spoil a dinner, but everyone ends up laughing over it. One day, Laurie has England friends over, and the Marches go on a picnic with them. Later, Jo gets a story published for the first time.

One dark day, the family receives a telegram saying that Mr. March is sick in the hospital in Washington, D.C. Mrs. March goes to visit him, and Jo sells her hair to help the trip finance. Meanwhile, Mrs. March goes to visit her husband, only Beth goes to visit the Hummels, and one of her visits, she contracts scarlet fever from the Hummel baby. Beth teeters on the brink of death until Mrs. March returns. Meanwhile Amy spends time at Aunt March's house in order to escape the disease. Beth recovers, though not completely, and Mr. Brooke, Laurie's tutor, falls in love with Meg, much to Jo's dismay. Mr. Brooke and Meg are engaged by the end of part one.

B. The Problem Identification

Based on the background explanations above, the writer identifies the following problems:

1. What types of characters are presented in *Little Women*?
2. What characters traits do the main characters in *Little Women* have, and what techniques does Alcott use to present them?
3. What messages can be drawn from Meg, Jo, Amy and Beth characterization?

C. The Problem Limitation

Considering the writer's time and resources, the problem in this study is limited only to the characterization of four main characters and the messages presented in *Little Women*.

D. The Problem Formulation

Based on the limitation of problem above, the problem of the study is formulated: What personalities do the major characters have, how they are presented, and what messages are presented through them?

E. Significance of the Study

This study is aimed to contribute deeper understanding about the character traits, the message the author presents it in *Little Women*.

F. The Aim of Research

This study is conducted in order to get empirical data about:

1. Characters traits of four main characters of *Little Women*
2. The techniques used to present the characters in *Little Women*.
3. The message presented through the four characters in *Little Women*

G. Thesis Organization

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter I discusses the background, limitation of study, formulation of study, significance of study, the aim of research, and thesis organization. Chapter II discusses the definition of fiction, reading fiction, characters, characterization, type of characterization, kinds of character, and message of novel. Chapter III discusses about research method, subject of research, type and source of data, instrument of the research, research procedure. Chapter IV discusses about analysis of character trait, characterization and message of the novel. Lastly, the conclusion and suggestion about the character trait, characterization and message of the novel are presented in chapter V.