

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

This chapter will be analyzing female masculinity in the novel *Little Women* that published in 1868. The setting is set in New England, specially in Boston, Massachusetts area during the American Civil War. And the Analysis is focused on Jo's masculine behavior would be analyze according to eight masculinity characterization which consist of dominant, independent, rational, assertive, analytical, brave, active, and insensitive that has been stated on gender and masculinity theory in chapter two.

4.1 Jo's Female Masculinity

Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* is the novel that has four main characters; they are Meg, Jo, Amy and Beth. Their story centers around the four girls and the life they have during the time they are grow up. Marmee, the girl's mother is another main character. Jo's character is the most interesting because of her unique characteristic. When the novel begins, Jo the character that Louisa May Alcott based upon herself, is already a teenager. She is working as a companion to her aunt. She struggles to deal with poverty. Jo is a very outspoken person and her own personal conflict comes in controlling her temper.

Jo represents herself not like an ordinary girl at her age but like a boy and her father called her 'son Jo'. Jo's characteristics are greatly reflected in her rejection of women attitudes and behavior.

"It's bad enough to be a girl, anyway, when I like boy's games and work and manners! I can't get over my disappointment in not being a boy. And it's worse than ever now, for I'm dying to go and fight with papa. And I can only stay at home and knit, like a poky old woman!"

From the statement above, Jo clearly demonstrates that she wants to be the man of the family, not merely as a little woman. She wants to be a soldier in the army and not a seamstress. The

word 'can' is used to indicate ability that she capable doing women's housework. Whereas 'can't' show how deeply she wants to do men's works and their manners. It also demonstrates Jo's recognition that 'fights' belongs to the man's world and 'knit' belongs to the woman's world. The implication is that fighting is a worldly occupation, while knitting belongs to the woman sphere. Jo desires to be different and tries to enter the man's world, but she discovered that determination only is not sufficient. But it does not prevent her from insisting upon becoming the head of the family whe the father goes to war.

Her persistent rejections to adopt women characteristics is also displayed in her dislike of her birth given name. This is clearly in chapter entitled *the Laurence Boy* when Jo encounters Laurie at the gardiner's ballroom in New Year's eve. As Laurie calls Jo Miss March, Jo replies "..... I'm not Miss March, I'm only Jo," and she continues her sentence, "I hate my name, too, so sentimental! I wish everyone would say Jo instead of Josephine"(chapter 3, pg 28).

In Jo's mind, women is equated with sentimentally, a quality she detests. Since she regards herself as a man and belongs for masculine freedom and independence. She holds that 'Josephine' a typical women's name is too sentimental for her, while Jo is firm, boyish and more attractive to her. It also happened when Amy says," Don't Jo. It's boyish!" and Jo replays, "That's way I do it" (Chapter 1, pg 6). This shows that the name Jo is more go well with her actual trait, and this is how she wants to be recognized by other people.

Compared to Jo, Meg, the oldest of the March girls is much more lady-like and has many feminine qualities. She represents the conventional and good lady of time. She loves beautiful, luxurious things and concern about the way she dresses. In contrast Jo as typically tomboy, unlike Meg and most girl of her age.

The party at gardiner's New Year's eve ballroom demonstrates the different between Meg and Jo, when it comes to act like a lady. Knowing that Sallie Gardiner is elegant and

wear expensive clothes, the question that sounds pop into Meg's mind is "what shall we wear?" and the dialogue below will be portrait the difference between Jo and March.

"What's the use of asking that, when you know we shall wear our poplins, because we haven't got anything else?" answered Jo with her mouth full.

"If I only had a silk! Mother says I may when I'm eighteen perhaps, but two years is an everlasting time to wait."(chapter 3, pg 24)

The words 'everlasting time' above shows that Meg desires to have a silk rather than just a poplin. Jo constantly demonstrates her lack of interest beauty and elegance. She defiantly state that "I don't believe fine young ladies enjoy themselves a bit more than we do, in spite of our burned hair, old gowns, one glove a piece and tight slippers that sprain our ankles when we are silly enough to wear them."(chapter 3, pg 33) the indication of her statement is that 'burned hair, old gowns, glove a piece and tight slippers' such as an unbeautiful things, a non lady-like behavior which do not affect her enjoyment of the party at all. "I'm neat and cool and comfortable, quite proper for a dusty walk on a warm day. If people care more for my clothes than they do for me, I don't wish to see them."(Chapter 29, page 277) Jo looks downs on those who pay much attention to external appearance. The implication is that she is more concerned with internal qualities.

At the most basic level, Jo's language choice is functions as a significant indicator for her masculinity. Unlike her sister, Jo uses slang language which the time only used by men and consider in appropriate to be used by women. She delights in slang, even though she is frequently blamed and corrected by her sisters. This can be find of the very beginning at the novel, "Jo does use such slang words!.....I detest rude, un lady like girls" protests Amy, the youngest March sister. In her eyes, slang is the same as being un lady like. However, Jo insist "that's way I do it"(chapter 1, page 5-6)

On the other hand, another factor that distinguishes Jo's language from other March sisters is her use of strong words. She likes 'good strong words that mean something' even though Meg detest more than once that they are 'dreadful expressions' (chapter 4, page 36). Strong words in this case are those informal expressions that are inappropriate for women, such as 'wretches'. These words are used instead of bad words like swear words. Elegance was one of the standards for a good lady in that time, thus the lady-like girls in that period must adopt the standard polite language rather than use slang or strong words.

To some extent, this is a kind of consensus for a lady at the time. Judging from Jo's saying "that's way I do it" we can see that she realize and even understand that slang and strong words are not appropriate language for a lady. She also admires such expressions showing her desire to be a masculine and to show her strong masculine identity.

Moreover, Jo's masculine behavior would be analyze according to eight masculinity characterization which consist of dominant, independent, rational, assertive, analytical, brave, active, and insensitive.

4.1.1. Active.

Jo is the second oldest of March sister. Jo has many dream and ambitions in her mind and always actively trying hard to reach it therefore almost no one in the family can stop her not doing the things she likes. She is an outspoken tomboy and often surprised people with her sharp tongue. Jo's active character can be seen when she wants to go outside for exercise in one winter afternoon, whereas in the outside was cold and dull. Although Meg has advised her to stay warm and dry by the fire at home as she did but Jo refused it.

"..... can't keep still all day, and not being a pussy cat, I don't like to doze by the fire. I like adventures, and I'm going to find some."(Chapter 5, pg 45)

The quotation above describes that Jo is an active person. She told that she was not a pussycat that dozing by the fire. Jo always insists that she has the right decision for everything. She

hates the initiative of having someone else told her what she supposed to do or say. She loves to adventures and does new things in her life. It is proves that she is an active person. It is because Jo took the initiative to act on her creative and imaginative talents that she could finally became an inspiration for woman. Jo is portrayed as the kind of girl who never lets herself gets bored as it mention in the quotation above.

Jo always can make herself busy, full of activity with her imagination as her lead. No matter what is going on around her, through her action Jo is always able to keep herself amused and entertained. Not easily get distracted with other just keep focusing on any activity she has started. Besides, the author also portrays that Jo is an active person by told that Jo turn out to be suit with Aunt March, who was lame and needed an active person to wait upon her (chapter 4, page 37). It is clearly described that Jo is an active person.

4.1.2. Bravery.

Within the story which approximately set on November, marmee receives a telegram announces that Mr. March gets serious illness and she must go to Washington D.C. to take care of him. Marmee suddenly pale and told the girls ti pack up her clothes. Realizing that take a long trip needs much funds, Marmee sends Laurie to borrow several money to aunt March. But in a sudden, Jo bravely cuts of her hair and having earned twenty-five dollars by selling it. Then, the money was given to Marmee for the expense during a trip to Washington D.C. Everyone was shocked and amazed when saw Jo cut off her one beauty hair, the only thing left that kept her physical wait as female.

“I hadn’t the least idea of selling my hair at first, but as I went along I kept thinking what I could do, and feeling as if I’d like to dive into some of the rich stores and help my self. In a barber’s window I saw tails of hair with the prices marked, and one black tail, not so thick as mine, was forty dollars. It came to me all of a sudden that I had one thing to make money out of, and without

stopping to think. I walked in, asked if they bought hair and what they would give for mine.” (chapter 15, page 158)

From the quotation above, it can be said that Jo is a very brave person who willing to sacrifices her beauty hair to get money in order to help her family. It is not talk about a price, but it is about love values. She loves her father and her family so much. That’s why she cut off her hair. She thinks that she must do something for her father. According to Jo, her hair is less important than her father’s health. And her bravery is clearly showed in Beth utterance as follow, “I don’t see how you dared to do it” (chapter 15, page 158). It is show that none of the March girls besides Jo that would ever brave to do such enormous sacrifice.

In addition, her bravely also showed in the fact that Jo is the first one from the March girls who has enough bravery to go over the house next door and talk to Laurence boy, Laurie and become best friend with him. She also does not afraid while meets Mr Laurence, although his mouth is grim and he has strong strength. It is proved when Mr. Laurende asked to Jo whether she afraid of him or not, and Jo answered, “Not Much, sir” (Chapter 5, page 51) that simple but clear response pleased Mr Laurence and makes him laughing out loud.

4.1.3. Dominance.

In the first chapter, the march girls are arguing over who will buy a new pair of slippers for Marmee as a Christmas gift because they thought that Marmee’s slippers has broken. While Meg offers herself to buy it because she is the oldest among them but Jo persistently dominates with a decision.

“I’m the man of the family now papa is away, and I shall provide the slippers, for he told me to take a special care of mother while he was gone.” (Chapter 1, page 8)

Jo is enrolled herself as the leader in the family since Jo’s Father was sent to fight in the civil war. It could be argued that she tries to take over her father position in the family because she thinks that it is her responsibility to be leader in the family. She considers herself as the man

of the family, and by seeing how much her family needs her that encourages Jo to take care and protect them.

“It’s great comfort, Jo I always feel strong when you are at home, now Meg is gone. Beth is too feeble and Amy too young to depend upon, but when the tug comes, you are always ready”

“Why, you know I don’t mind hard jobs much, and there must always be one scrub in a family. Amy is splendid in fine works and I’m not, but I feel in my element when all the carpets are to be taken up, or half the family fall sick at once. Amy is distinguishing herself abroad, but if anything is amiss at home. I’m your man”(Chapter 32, page 309 – 310)

As the man of the family Jo feels that it is her responsibility to protect her family. It makes her eagerly to do anything it takes for the sake of her family, including not to think about herself. Being able to help her family and make them happy is Jo’s desire. In Jo’s mind, only a man can preserve the all important unity of the family therefore she kept her man-like behavior as her way to dominantly lead and protect her family.

4.1.4. Rationality

Jo’s rationality is seen when she tries to describing the reason why she refuses Laurie’s offer of marriage. She said that they are not being together because both of them are temperament and having strong-will. It shows her ability to have clear rational breakdown for her own character and also Laurie’s.

“I agree with mother that you and I are not suited to each other, because our quick tempers and strong wills would probably make us very miserable, if we were so foolish as to...”(Chapter 35, page 349)

Jo tries to make Laurie accepting the reality that both of them are not suitable to become a couple. But, Laurie cannot accept the reality because she really love loves Jo and he does not

want to lose her. Therefore, he tries to convince Jo to accept his love. He is sure that one day Jo will open her heart for him and love him as he loves her. Laurie will be a perfect saint and willing to do anything for Jo if she loves him.

But, Jo is still in her previous decision. She cannot loves Laurie. Jo would not take a risk by serious experiment. Jo asks Laurie to be reasonable in by accepting her decision as she said, “Now do be reasonable, and take a sensible view of the case,”(Chapter 35, page 350). It proves that Jo is more rational and using logic in getting decision than Laurie has done in facing the problem.

However, Laurie is very disappointed whe he knows the reality that Jo refuse his marriage’s proposal. He cannot accept this because he really loves Jo and does not want to be lose her. Jo feels sorry when she knows that Laurie is very shocked hearing that she just wants to be his best friend and not more than that. She knows that she has broken his heart. But she realizes that it is the best way to tell him the truth of her feeling as she stated, “ You know it’s impossible, for people to make themselves love other people if they don’t,”(chapter 35, page 348)

4.1.5. Assertiveness

Jo is confused when her best friend, Laurie, has fallen in love with her. Having no feeling of love and only considering Laurie as her brothers, Jo prefers to avoid Laurie. Therefore, Jo chooses to go to New York in order to avoid him. At the time Jo thinks that it is the best manner to solve her problem with Laurie because she does not want to hurt his feeling.

“It may be vain and wrong to say it, but I’m afraid Laurie is getting to fond of me.”

“Then you don’t care for him in the way it is evident he begins to care for you/” and Mrs. March looked anxious as she put the question .

“Mercy, no! I love the dear boy, as I always have and am immensely proud of him, but as for anything more, it’s out of the question.”

“You are sure of his feeling for you?”

“I’m afraid it is so, Mother. He hasn’t said anything, but he looks a great deal. I think I had better go away before it comes to anything.” (Chapter 35, page 317)

Avoiding Laurie by going to New York in point of fact is not a good solution since it is only delaying the problem between them. Laurie still loves Jo and waits for her until she returns from New York. It is described when Laurie said good bye, he whispered significantly, “It won’t do a bit of good, Jo. My eye is on you, so mind what you do, or I’ll come and bring you home.” (Chapter 35 page 319)

In New York, Jo realizes that her previous decision to avoid Laurie was a fault. She thinks that telling the truth to Laurie is the best way to solve the love problem between them. She realizes that Laurie has the right to know the truth. Jo does not want Laurie to wait for her and throw away his happiness. She argues that love cannot be forced. She realizes that her decision not to accept Laurie’s love because she does not love Laurie is right, although would break Laurie’s heart. Therefore, she explains that she unfortunately considers him just as her brother and best friend, not more than that.

“You, you are, you’re a great deal too good for me, and I’m so grateful to you, and so proud and fond of you, I don’t know why I can’t love you as you want me to. I’ve tried, but I can’t change the feeling, and it would be a lie to say I do when I don’t.”
(Chapter 35, page 348)

From the quotation above, it can be seen clearly that Jo is an assertive person in solving her conflict with Laurie about her manner in handling her love problem. Jo finally finds a better solution in handling her love problem with Laurie.

Jo tells Laurie not to wait for her anymore because she does not love him. Therefore, she asks him to find his true love. She tries to make him realize that she is not the right girl for him, and one day he will find another girl who is better than her. She is sure that one day he will forget her and fall in love with another girl.

4.1.6. Analytical

Jo is a person who always has a big plan. She always thinks before doing. She has a dream to be writer, get rich, and famous. She has ever said it when March girls and Laurie talking about their dreams in chapter *Castle in the Air*.

“.....I’d write out of a magic inkstand, so that my work should be as famous as Laurie music. I want to do something splendid before I go into my castle, something heroic or wonderful that won’t be forgotten after I’m dead. I don’t know what, but I’m on the watch for it, and mean to astonish you all someday. I think I shall write books, and get rich and famous, that would suit me, so that is my favourite dream.”

(Chapter 13, page 139)

Jo has prepared everything in complete detail to reach her dream to be a writer. She even has a desk in the garret, place where she creates her great works. And in October she is beginning her first step to reach the dream. And make her dream come true, Jo is indulge her creative talents by writing stories and sends to the publisher.

At that day, she will send her two stories that she wrote to the local newspaper. Surprisingly, the next weeks these stories were published. Although, the publisher was not give any payment for the beginners but Jo is very happy because the publisher give her next chance to sends her following works. Excited, Jo will write more and she would be paid if the story was improved as she stated, “I shall write more... and I an so happy.” (Chapter 14, page 152)

4.1.7. Independence

Jo is an independent "little woman" in the March family. This independence is mainly shown in terms of Jo's dream to be a writer that historically, during the nineteenth century was an occupation dominated by men.

"... I want to do something splendid before I go onto my castle, something heroic or wonderful that won't be forgotten after I am dead. I don't know what, but I'm on the watch for it, and mean to astonish you all someday. I think I shall write books, and get rich and famous, that would suit me, so that is my favourite dream." (Chapter 13 page 139)

Jo said that her favorite dream is "to do something splendid" and "heroic or wonderful that won't be forgotten after I'm dead". In Jo's speech, "rich" comes first followed by "famous", which implies that Jo puts her duty to help support her family above the demands for becoming famous. According to Jo, writing is her key to being independent and successful.

In chapter twenty seven, Jo continues to write. Then one night, she goes to be a lecture on pyramids. While she is writing for the lecture begins, a boy shows her a newspaper. She reads that the newspaper is offering a one hundred dollars prize for the best sensationalist story. Excited, Jo writes a story, submits it, and wins. With the money, she sends Marmee and Beth to the seashore for several weeks, hoping that her sister's illness will be better. It is proven with dialogue between Amy and Jo below :

"I think the money is the best part of it. What will you do with such a fortune?" asked Amy, regarding the magic slip of paper with a reverential eye.

"Send Beth and Mother to the seaside for a month or two," answered Jo promptly. (Chapter 27, page 259)

From the dialogue above, it can be said that Jo shows her independence and her ability to provide financial support herself and her family. The whole family also supports her in her pursuit to be a writer.

Jo keeps writing. She makes more money, providing herself and the family. Finally, she decides to finish her novel, which is a romance. The publisher tells her to edit and cut it down, after long consideration she eventually did it. When the novel is published, the publisher earns her three hundred dollars, much greater than she expected, as well as mixed reviews from critics.

Jo's independent also seen when she rejects Laurie's offer of marriage. Jo refuses to think anything related to marriage and she never thought that someday will be married.

“Nothing more, except that I don't believe I shall ever marry. I'm happy as I'm, and love my liberty too well to be in a hurry to give it up for any mortal man.”(Chapter 35, page 350)

Jo speaks these words when Laurie pushes her to say the reason why she rejects his marriage proposal. And Jo said that she has no idea about marriage despite the fact that Laurie is handsome, kind, loving, and rich. She just enjoy her life, loves adventures and to do new things and to behave how ever she wants, as Jo's statement, "... I like adventures, and I'm going to find some"(Chapter 5 page 45) it is probably the reason why she chooses to work and reaches her dream to become a famous writer than have to marry in order to follow the society expectation.

At the time, during nineteenth century society did not look kindly on women who turn down rejectan eligible man. Women were expected to accept as their destiny the roles of wife

and mother, and to dismiss any ideas of living an independent life that rejected these conventional roles.

Besides, Jo also believes that she can do anything without help from other people. The result is surely not always turn out as she planned, as she once regrets after made her aunt upset. She missed a trip to Europe because she dislike any favors that come to her.

“I don’t like favors, they oppress and make me feel like a slave. I’d rather do everything for my self, and be perfectly independent.” (Chapter 29 page 286)

Jo refuses to accept any favors even though it comes from her aunt March. She believes that she could do anything on her own effort without any help from other people. It is her belief for being independent not matter what it takes.