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**Finding a Voice: Portrayals of Young Budding Women in
Novels for Girls**

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This thesis will examine the description of Louisa Marie Alcott's *Little Women* and Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* focusing on the life of emerging female writers and the obstacles they face. It explores various kinds of perspectives from which they were or were not accepted in the society in the late 19th and beginning of the 20th century.

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V Olomouci dne..... Podpis

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1 Introduction

Louisa May Alcott and Lucy Maud Montgomery grew up in a similar setting and they both portray their lives in the novels with compelling details from their own experience. Both protagonists depicted in this thesis deserve to be described as they radically changed the view on women's characters in North American literature. The protagonist Anne Shirley of Montgomery's book is an example of a particularly interesting character who was first introduced into children's fiction and in Alcott's story, the exceptional Jo March portrays an aspiring young writer or literary heroine.¹

The aim of this thesis is to analyze their two most famous novels, Alcott's *Little Women* (1867), *Good Wives* (1869) and Montgomery's first two parts of her series *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) and *Anne of Avonlea* (1909) link them with their own autobiographies and focus on the respective characters Jo and Anne from the literary heroine point of view and their desire to stand out from the traditional position for women in society in the late 19th century and receive a prosperous job and identity in the society. The first part of the thesis will introduce a brief description of the position of women, women's literature, and other female authors of the late 19th century in North America but also in Great Britain and the context of their writing.

Secondly, it briefly deals with the view on women and marriage and education, which are the key factors that differentiate the protagonists from other female characters and authors. As both novels analyzed in this thesis share most of the bibliographic features, it is essential for investigating the significant motifs and themes of their works. It will also consider finding their "voice" in literature and the development of female literature in USA and Canada.

The third section will focus on the textual analysis of the parallels of the protagonists themselves and the aim is not to list all the parallels found in the novels but focus primarily on the theme of desire. This thesis will be centered around the dream of stepping out of the norm and becoming a literary/ educational figure in society. The protagonists Jo and Anne represent independent women as Alcott and Montgomery in their personal lives did as well.

¹ T.D. MacLulich, *L.M. Montgomery and the Literary Heroine: Jo, Rebecca, Anne, and Emily*, (Canadian Children's Literature/Littérature canadienne pour la jeunesse, 1985), 5.

The last section will include their relationship with men and how they influenced their view on female identity also with behavior towards them, the secondary motifs that encouraged Jo's and Anne's ambition to differentiate from the traditional middle-class women and shortly compare them with other female characters from the novels. In addition, I will list the obstacles and relationships that helps discovering their authenticity in becoming writers and teachers such as their vivid imagination, masculine behavior, bad temper. In the final part, I will discuss the key part of this thesis which is the path how they became teachers and writers in such difficult conditions.

2 Women's literature and development in the late 19th century

Generally, women in the late 19th century encountered several situations of inequality especially in terms of social and political issues. The main job a woman had to do was to take care of the household. Women could not vote, and while the educational opportunities for white women were expanding, their legal status remained sharply limited.² They were wards of their fathers until marriage, at which point their legal identities were merged with their husbands, so that they could not own property or keep any wages they earned.³ Simone de Beauvoir claims that after Civil War, the African American men were given the right to vote and white women wanted the same, which was successful a few years later.⁴ This led to development of the future job opportunities for women and helped them to be seen in various fields of jobs such as writers or teachers.

At the beginning of the 19th century immense changes in the politics and social hierarchy arose. Therefore, we might observe various developments in gender inequality and the progress in women's literature. It was common to use a male's pseudonym when being a women writer.⁵ Samantha Howell mentions that also some male authors such as Jozef Korzeniowski (Joseph Conrad) and Eric Arthur Blair (George Orwell) also used pseudonyms, their use of a pseudonym was a form of artistic expression, rather than a tool to conceal their identity from the male dominated literary world.⁶

² Baym, Nina. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1998, 25.

³ Baym, *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 25.

⁴ Bair, Deirdre. *Simone de Beauvoir: Politics, Language, and Feminist Identity*. (Yale French Studies, no. 72 1986),149.

⁵ Howell, *The Evolution of Female Writers: An Exploration of Their Issues and Concerns from the 19th Century to Today*, (University of Hawai'i at Hilo: Vol.13, 2015).

⁶ Howell, Samantha. *The Evolution of Female Writers: An Exploration of Their Issues and Concerns from the 19th Century to Today*, (University of Hawai 'i at Hilo, 2014) 23.

However, several changes came about in the 19th century and women were allowed to publish on their own. Alcott also used a pseudonym A.M. Barnard; however, she did not publish *Little Women* and *Good Wives* under her pseudonym, but rather under her real name.⁷ Towards the end of the century, female authors explored the themes of love and sexuality through the feminist context of independence and equality, thus making women's literature appealing to all readers regardless of their gender.⁸ Even though this thesis focuses on the works of American and Canadian literature, it is crucial to mention that the literary movements were highly influenced by the literature in Britain, especially in the Victorian Era. In the Victorian era, the concern regarding the position of women's contribution to literature and art was highly discussed. With time, women gave rise to their dissatisfaction with gender inequality and expressed their thoughts in their writing with emphasis on themes that they concerned as general issues. Moreover, Samuel Shirley claims that the issue of gender inequality remains in the literary world and man still stands as the dominant figure, and woman is forced to "prove" her worthiness; such discrimination is not specific to American women writers.⁹ Eliza Leslie is a specialist on the development of the status of a woman in the literary world since the 19th century and she claims: "If she is a writer of fiction, and you presume to take the liberty of criticizing her works...refrain from urging that certain incidents are improbable, and certain characters unnatural.¹⁰ Of this it is impossible for you to judge, unless you could have lived the very same life that she has; known the same people; and inhabited with her the same places."¹¹

2.1 Women writers in the late 19th century in North America

Louisa May Alcott and Lucy Maud Montgomery belonged to the group of respected writers in the late 19th century, along with renewed authors such as Kate Chopin and Emily Dickinson. Kate Chopin mostly known for her novel *The Awakening*, focuses on the women's identity, finding a voice in literary contexts and personal lives which is closely related to Alcott and Montgomery's works.¹² Chopin focused on motherhood and gender

⁷ Howell, *The Evolution of Female Writers: An Exploration of Their Issues and Concerns from the 19th Century to Today*, 24.

⁸ Howell, *The Evolution of Female Writers: An Exploration of Their Issues and Concerns from the 19th Century to Today*, 25.

⁹ Shirley, Samuel. *The Wadsworth Themes in American Literature Series, 1800-1865*. (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009), 25.

¹⁰ Howell, *The Evolution of Female Writers: An Exploration of Their Issues and Concerns from the 19th Century to Today*, 26.

¹¹ Shirley, *Wadsworth Themes in American Literature Series*, 26.

¹² Baym, *The Norton anthology of American Literature*, 22.

equality which is as well a very significant theme in novels depicted in this thesis and her work inspired other women writers to stand out from the traditional view on other women writers.¹³

We might see many parallels in Emily Dickinson and Alcott's writing. Dickinson's cousins and dear friends met Alcott in person. However, there is no evidence showing that Alcott and Dickinson met in real life. Nevertheless, their works involve various correlations in terms of themes and examining gender identity. Katrin Gischler argues in *Gender identities in the poetry of Emily Dickinson and in the narrative life of Frederick Douglass* that Dickinson is not very literal about gender in her works, however, her female speakers use feminine speakers to use their gender to construct and deconstruct their own identities as well as to discuss the performative nature of gender.¹⁴ Therefore, we see the parallelism here as Alcott portrayed Jo March as a girl/woman with fighting with her female identity.

When we think of female authors working with autobiographical elements portrayed in the protagonists Alcott and Montgomery clearly extend the level of this kind of literature. Both authors belong to the romantic period of North American/Canadian literature, and they were also believed to serve the subordinate role in the male-dominated culture and therefore we find the protagonists of *Anne of Green Gables*, *Anne of Avonlea*, *Little Women* and *Good Wives* shifting this trajectory to a different path.

Alcott's desire for writing was mostly because of the fellow Concord writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.¹⁵ Moreover, her father Amos Bronson Alcott had an impact on her as he was an educator and motivated Louisa to care about her future career.¹⁶ Montgomery was inspired by Alcott's writings which is further developed in chapter 3.2, where the autobiography of Montgomery suggests significant reasons to become different which is clearly visible in her respective character of Anne such as Alcott wrote about Jo.

¹³ Kaplon, Megan P. *Kate Chopin's The Awakening: Struggle Against Society and Nature*. (Inquiries Journal/Student Pulse 4, 2012),7.

¹⁴ Gischler Katrin, *Gender identities in the poetry of Emily Dickinson and in the narrative life of Frederick Douglass*, (Munich 2005), 4.

¹⁵ Gurley, Jennifer. *Louisa May Alcott as Poet: Transcendentalism and the Female Artist*. (The New England Quarterly 90, no. 2, 2017), 212.

¹⁶ Baym, *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 1725.

2.1.1 Women and education

The educational history of women has been considered an issue for years. It is essential to realize that it was not common for women to attend schools and there has been a strong discouragement in terms of educating young girls. Moreover, even boys were not forced to value their education as their priority. Thelin demonstrates the results of his study and emphasizes that only about 2 % of the U.S. male age group attended college at the time of the U.S. Civil War; by 1900, the rate was barely above 4%.¹⁷ Some boys, and a few girls, attended local seminaries and academies, these being stepping-stones to college in the decades before high school became common.¹⁸

When we speak about higher education for women in the 19th century, it is necessary to notice that it was thought that women ought to have separate education from men for its specific vocational purpose: teaching.¹⁹ As this thesis revolves around the job of becoming a teacher, which is further developed in chapter eight, it is undeniable that having this profession was not only an appropriate profession for women, but it was also work that prepared them for marriage, child-rearing, and the community support for education.²⁰ Women were not even able to become doctors, lawyers, or clergywomen. More importantly, this is the reason for fighting for their identity as they were meant to take care of the households and raise children, however, men would still have their job serving their clear identity in the society. Therefore, women fought to have more options than being housewives and mothers they did not want to subordinate any more. In the novels *Little Women & Good Wives* the mother works for *Soldier's Aid Societies* and the two eldest daughters, Meg, and Jo, willfully choose to work to support themselves to make it easier for their parents because the family is poverty-stricken. This is a very unusual difference between the approaches of the society to work of middle-class women. In the work *Anne of Green Gables*, Anne also desires to earn her own money and feels a certain level of responsibility, therefore she starts writing for a school magazine to support Marilla and Matthew and shows precise evidence of changing the traditional view on work life.

¹⁷ *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to the Present* (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1975).

¹⁸ Thelin, John R. *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

¹⁹ Howe, Florence. *Feminism and the Education of Women* (Boston University: The Journal of Education 159, no. 3, 1977) 14.

²⁰ Howe, *Feminism and the Education of Women. The Journal of Education*, 14.

2.1.2 Women and marriage

As Langland once asserted, “Marriage is women’s fulfillment” and she made it clear that a woman would find self-fulfillment when she becomes a wife and a mother.²¹ “A married woman could not engage in or bring forth lawsuits; she could not enter business contracts, nor could she buy or sell or otherwise have control over any property”.²² It was very unusual or even prohibited for a woman to have a job after marriage. “The traditional domestic ideal dictated that a woman's task after marriage was motherhood and devotion to the needs of her husband”.²³ The protagonists Jo and Anne broke the tradition with their passion for seeing the need of spreading knowledge and educating young children for their better future. They fought to have more options than being housewives and mothers just as the authors themselves. Tiffany Wayne writes about the view on marriage in North America as some women deliberately selected not to marry for their professional development or the influence of their parents.²⁴ The main protagonists of the works that are emphasized in this thesis clearly support Wayne’s theory and prioritize their career as writers and teachers, even though they have ambitions to get married.

The traditional model of marriage for convenience changed with time. “In the nineteenth century, the ideal of companionate marriage, or a partnership based on love and mutual respect, replaced the earlier economic model of marriage”.²⁵ Marriage no longer served only for multiplying the property and lineage, but also as a relationship between people who were fond of each other and provided mutual support to each other.²⁶ We encounter these changes in the novel *Good Wives*, which is proven specifically in the following paragraph. Alcott uses the March women’s predicament to show how traditional marriage exposes women to the burdens of their husbands. Marmee is left to satisfy the roles of mother, father, and provider. Upon realizing Marmee’s burden, Jo professes that she will bypass this version of womanhood and strive for financial independence, a status only permitted to men.²⁷ Alcott is evidence of being rather independent as she never married

²¹ Langland, Elizabeth, *Female Stories of Experience: Alcott’s Little Women in Light of Work. The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development*, ed. Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland. Hanover: (UP of New England, 1983), 118.

²² Wayne, Tiffany K. *Women's Roles in Nineteenth Century America*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007), 17.

²³ Eiselein, Gregory and Anne K. Phillips. *Louisa May Alcott Encyclopedia*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001). 197.

²⁴ Wayne, *Women's Roles in Nineteenth Century America*, 1.

²⁵ Wayne, *Women's Roles in Nineteenth Century America*, 1.

²⁶ Wayne, *Women's Roles in Nineteenth Century America*, 1.

²⁷ Smith, Shardai, *Dismantling Gender Roles and Redefining Womanhood in Louisa May Alcott's Little Women*, (Locus: The Seton Hall Journal of Undergraduate Research: Vol. 4, Article 12.2021), 4.

nor had any children. Montgomery married Ewen Macdonald and had three children with him. More specifically, concerning the theme of marriage in the selected novels, we can only evaluate the story of Jo and her husband Friedrich Bhaer as Montgomery wrote about the marriage of Anne in the following novel *Anne's House of Dreams*. At first, Jo is depicted as a girl with tendencies not to marry nor pursue any romantic relationship. However, later she proves her vulnerability and fragility and falls in love with professor Bhaer whom she meets in New York. An interesting fact is that the readers assume that Jo would marry her rather rich and intelligent neighbor Laurie who comes from a wealthy family. However, in marrying professor Bhaer and hence committing herself to work rather than to romantic love, Jo creates new possibilities for her own work in the community.²⁸ Murphy also mentioned, Jo seeking love for someone like her father, such as the elderly and rather feminine and patriarchal which also quite causes the lack of “happy ending”.²⁹ This could be judged as a form of keeping her family tradition and taking the role of Marmee by marrying “her father”. This claim is also developed in more details in the following chapters.

3 Autobiographies

To receive a clear-cut understanding of the position of the authors in North American literature, it is appropriate to mention a short description of their lives and time they lived in and add some details about their relationship. The novels *Little Women* and *Good Wives* are concerned as semi-autobiographical as Louisa May Alcott included several situations from her personal life and she said about her most famous work: “Never liked girls or knew many, except my sisters, but our queer plays and experiences may prove interesting, though I doubt it.”³⁰

The first part of the series *Anne of Green Gables* was initially inspired by a newspaper article and Montgomery had an excellent idea to insert her own family story from the countryside background of Prince Edward Island and she created the character Anne as a reflection of her childhood and early teenage years at school.

²⁸ Murphy, Anne B. *The Borders of Ethical, Erotic, and Artistic Possibilities in Little Women*, (Signs 15, no. 3 1990), 569.

²⁹ Murphy, Anne B. *The Borders of Ethical, Erotic, and Artistic Possibilities in Little Women*, 578.

³⁰ Alcott's Own Quote, <https://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com//>

3.1 Louisa May Alcott's autobiography

Alcott was raised with her three sisters in Concord, and she grew up in a poor family, however, her father always encouraged Louisa to be an educated lady. He was himself a philosopher and inspired Louisa to read and write.³¹ Her mother encouraged her to write, and she also wrote her own journal to express her thoughts. Moreover, Baym in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* mentions her desire to design theatre plays for her and her sisters, which appears in *Little Women* and the March sisters.³²

Alcott used various autobiographical elements to express that her life was exceptionally different from other girls in her surroundings in 1860's during the Civil War. "I will do something, by and by. Don't care what, teach, sew, act, write, anything to help the family; and I'll be rich and famous and happy before I die, see if I won't."³³ This quote precisely describes Alcott's desire and her main motivation in life, which she tries to develop in her respective characters. She clearly craves for her personal success and cares about her relatives at the same time with all the issues of her financial situation. Alcott did teach and sew; she also worked as a governess and took on other short-term jobs. But mainly, however wanted to make money through her writing.³⁴ In *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Baym examined that being eager for money and desirous of experimenting with fiction that would allow her to write unconventionally about such topics as incest, suicide, drug addiction, sexual passion, and the supernatural, she began publishing melodramatic sensation stories under the name of A. M. Barnard, earning \$100 (around \$1200 in today's currency) for each story.³⁵

3.2 Lucy Maud Montgomery's autobiography

Lucy Maud Montgomery started writing at the age of 13. She started with poetry and newspaper articles and as she spent some part of her life on Prince Edward Island, she also became a teacher at a local school there. The setting of her novel will be also mentioned in the following chapters as she felt extremely inspired and connected to this place. This led Montgomery to express the fantasies of nature that she took from there. Prince Edward

³¹ Baym, *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 1725.

³² Baym, *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 1725.

³³ Baym, *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 1725.

³⁴ Baym, *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 1725.

³⁵ Baym, *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 1725.

Island also helps Montgomery emphasize that Anne is being raised in a village environment and she does not hold any “city girl” manners.

Her work mainly revolved around social and family issues, romantic fantasies, and her personal life experience. She certainly reproduced the series of novels with precise autobiographical features such as: losing a parent, having passionate fantasies and imaginations, being adopted, becoming a journalist and a teacher, and fighting with emotion and temper. Montgomery portrayed Anne throughout her childhood and young adult life with several autobiographical elements and character traits of the protagonist that she prominently possessed on her own.

3.3 The relationship between Alcott and Montgomery

These two remarkable authors were interested in similar topics discussed in their works and their similar circumstances under which they grew up themselves. The two Montgomery and Alcott grew up in a very similar setting, but it is still important to realize the difference at the time each of them wrote their most famous novels. Louisa May Alcott was a sort of an inspiration for Montgomery to publish her novel *Anne of Green Gables* as Alcott was born in the year 1832 and Montgomery 42 years later. Both, however, belong to the romantic period of American/Canadian literature and deal with the themes of family life, education, and independence of female characters.

They both began their careers as young and motivated ladies in part by financial distress, worked as teachers and were involved, to a varying extent, in social and political movements of the day, including women’s suffrage. Alcott published for children as well as for adults while Montgomery is more firmly regarded as a children’s author, a categorization that she attempted to transcend. Nevertheless, her first best-seller and the story for which she is famous, *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), is regarded as a children’s novel, although many, as with *Little Women & Good Wives* argue for its status as a cross-generational novel.³⁶

³⁶ Ward, Sydney. *Canonical Children’s Literature: The Literary Quality of Little Women, Anne of Green Gables, and The Secret Garden*. (Middlebury College, Vermont, 2011), 36.

3.4 Their works and styles

From their professional point of view, Montgomery used lengthy narrative techniques with precise description of the natural landscape of the setting at Prince Edward Island. Montgomery emphasizes Anne's driving ambitions, fantasies, and gratitude but also her obligations to the Cuthberts. Tirana S. Frever focuses on Montgomery's style of writing which is represented in the protagonist's language more specifically in Anne's use of adjectives, her speech forms and the pattern across the text and a structural thread that binds isolated incidents together, lending coherence to the novel as a whole, drawing the reader into Anne's world through her storytelling, and establishing the relationship between text and reader as one of speaker and listener within an oral storytelling tradition.³⁷

Alcott portrayed *Little Women* and *Good Wives* in a very detailed way in terms of the characters' emotions. She allows the readers to understand each situation involving the omniscient narrator who is not a character itself, but it helps to develop the thoughts of the protagonists. Moreover, she inserted passages of letters and poems that Jo wrote for her family, which allows the readers to fully understand Jo's emotions and thoughts while she is away from her family.

4 Introduction to the works

4.1 Introduction to *Little Women* and *Good Wives*

Alcott's sequence of novels depicts a story written about March sisters Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy. The sisters are raised by their mother during the American Civil War, while their father has left the home to provide spiritual guidance to young soldiers. This thesis is focused mainly on the second sister Jo who takes care of her relatives in several harsh situations they experience. All the sisters have different ambitions in their life that are connected to each other with their family background. The main themes of the novels concern: being genuine, family duties vs. personal growth and gender role stereotypes. Alcott also deals with understanding of the genesis of the ideal women character.³⁸ "Women, says Amy, should learn to be agreeable."³⁹ All the sisters have different views

³⁷ Tirana S. Frever, *Anne Shirley, Storyteller: Orality and Anne of Green Gables*. (University of Michigan, 2005).

³⁸ Alcott, *Little Women*, 43.

³⁹ Alcott, *Little Women*, 67.

on the role of a “proper” woman, and this is the traditional opinion of sister Amy. Jo, however, behaves against this argument, which is explained in the following section dedicated to her representation.

4.1.1 Jo March

Jo was the second oldest daughter of the family. She dreams to become a writer and she opens a school for little boys bringing them up into the kind of life that is not quite possible for girls in her world.⁴⁰ Historically, Jo has been the idol of girl readers, and biographies of Louisa May Alcott assert that Jo was also the favorite of her creator, who identified in herself the traits she had given to her character.⁴¹

As I mentioned above, she tries to oppose the theory of a traditional role for a woman by thinking about her own professional priorities in the first place. “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, some day. I think I shall write books and get rich and famous; that would suit me, so that is my favorite dream.”⁴² To have a clear view on Jo, Smith perfectly demonstrates in her *Gender Roles and Womanhood in Little Women* how Alcott's Jo, in her novel *Little Women*, is a model for dismantling the narrow barriers between masculinity and femininity. She teaches young girls—and adult women—that being masculine or valuing masculine traits, such as ambition and financial independence, does not prohibit a woman's potential for happiness and success in life.⁴³

Moreover, Jo shares specific features of her character fighting with her temper just like Anne which is mentioned further in the chapter six. We must, however, distinguish between Jo, who is dedicated to her mother and whole family and rather independent, angry, impetuous, and sometimes even sadistic to Jo Bhaer: a married women still dedicate to her family but rather calm and mature.⁴⁴

⁴⁰Alcott, *Good Wives*, 391.

⁴¹ Foote, Stephanie, *Resentful Little Women: Gender and Class Feeling in Louisa May Alcott*, (College Literature 32, no. 1, 2005), 63.

⁴² Alcott, *Little Women*, 67.

⁴³ Smith, *Gender Roles and Womanhood in Little Women*, 1.

⁴⁴ Stimpson, Catharine R. *Reading for Love: Canons, Paracanons, and Whistling Jo March*. (New Literary History 21, no. 4, 1990), 968.

4.2 Introduction to *Anne of Green Gables* and *Anne of Avonlea*

The series *Anne of Green Gables*, *Anne of Avonlea*, *Anne of the Island*, *Anne of Windy Poplars*, *Anne's House of Dreams*, *Anne of Ingleside* and *Rainbow Valley* and *Rilla* deal with a young, orphaned girl who is adopted by Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert, who live in a house in Avonlea. My focus in this thesis is mainly on the first two novels *Anne of Green Gables* and *Anne of Avonlea* where Anne is portrayed in her younger age with pure desire not affected by any other characters.

Marilla and Matthew are siblings, and their initial decision is to adopt a boy to help around their house and garden. This is precise evidence of differentiating the gender roles which Anne finally fulfills and shows her capability of being able to help her adoptive parents. Anne will be later analyzed in the individual chapter; it is however crucial to pay attention to the position that she has within the context of male and female primary roles in a household as Marilla seems to be displayed as a rather traditional woman in Avonlea's society, but we realize, that she might not be such a clear example of one. Anne is also sent to school which takes an essential part in the plot throughout the novel. School is a magical place for the protagonist to find her passion for literature, writing, poetry and summarizing her thoughts and became one of the most relevant symbols in the series of Montgomery's books.

4.2.1 Anne Shirley

Anne Shirley appears in the first novel at the age of 11 when Matthew Cuthbert finds her at a train station instead of a boy that they planned to have in their farm. "You don't want me! You don't want me because I'm not a boy!"⁴⁵ This is how she shows her spontaneous and strong reaction to Marilla and Matthew. In *Why Anne Makes Us Dizzy* Anne herself is described as a girl with an extremely vivid imagination as we see originally in the third chapter Anne, reluctantly faltered forth the owner of that name, "but, oh, please do call me Cordelia. It can't matter much to you what you call me if I'm only going to be here a little while, can it? And Anne is such an unromantic name."⁴⁶

Anne likes to think of unusual situations, she imagines the world with beautiful fantasies and admires nature to the fullest. It is important to emphasize Montgomery's incredible

⁴⁵ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 31.

⁴⁶ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 32.

vividness of the language that Anne used to describe things and people which I will speak about in the following chapter of the analysis. Anne was hugely inspired by her teacher and wanted to become one as well. She loved poetry and writing and during the school year, Anne formed a story club with many other girls from her class. Later, she also found one of her older “fairy stories” and she was able to earn her first money for writing.

Anne was different from other children in Avonlea, not only because of her family background but also it was her spontaneous stream of thoughts that differentiated her from her peers. She won the Avery scholarship that will enable her to take her B.A. at Redmond College (Dalhousie) but she gave it up when Marilla is left alone without Matthew at Green Gables, her growing eye making management of house and small farm was too much to handle it herself.

5 Parallels between Jo and Anne in the novels

In this chapter my major point will be concerned with the similarities that the protagonists of the novels share. It is possible to find many elements that Jo and Anne have in common. Although, I will mainly focus on the themes of desire and the autobiographical background of the authors that served as a motivation for portraying the heroines according to their passion. As this thesis concerns mainly how, the protagonist step out of the traditional position for them, I believe it is essential to point out their strengths and character traits that serve as the key factors for establishing their position in society. More specifically, the key focus in the following paragraphs will be dedicated to most of their similarities although they do not quite match ages in the novels, but it does not influence the parallels in any significant way.

5.1 A creative childhood imagination

The earliest memories from childhood undeniably influence the future of our thinking. Both Alcott and Montgomery reveal in their novels how their childhood had an impact on their life decisions. Montgomery became an orphan in her early age which is reflected in the main topic for her novel *Anne of Green Gables*, who is adopted by the Cuthberts but spends several years in her early childhood in the orphanage having terrible memories in her head that influence her behavior. Anne imagines all the time. She visualizes her dreams and events in life that she clearly desires to experience and that is what makes her

so special. To fully understand why Anne was undeniably unique it is crucial to say that she is generally known for being imaginative with her incredible talent for having poetic and curious mind. The creative childish imagination is the key factor that differentiates her from other girls in Avonlea. The contrast between her naive way of thinking and her life values of an adolescent, make Anne very special. “Isn't it splendid to think of all the things there are to find out about? It just makes me feel glad to be alive-it's such an interesting world”⁴⁷ The story of Anne is about engaging the under-appreciated qualities of an orphaned young girl who develops throughout the series of books and enhances her maturity with time. “Oh, it’s delightful to have ambitions. I’m so glad I have such a lot. And there never seems to be an end to them — that’s the best of it. Just as soon as you attain to one ambition you see another one glittering higher up still. It does make life so interesting.”⁴⁸

Anne compensates for her failures and misunderstandings with her vivid imagination that helps her to escape from her negative and insecure thoughts. On the one hand, her way of thinking seems rather childish as she desires to look like the other girls in Avonlea and behave the same way. One quotation that precisely supports her childish imagination could be when she is dissatisfied with her dress. “This morning when I left the asylum, I felt so ashamed because I had to wear this horrid old wincey dress”. She refuses to let the dress spoil her day: “I just went to work and imagined that I had on the most beautiful pale blue silk dress . . . I felt cheered up right away and enjoyed my trip to the Island with all my might”.⁴⁹ Here Anne displays the power of the female orphan archetype to use imagination to enhance her confidence and she generally tends to balance all the things and events that could be considered negative with some advantageous thoughts.

Alcott’s childhood influenced her portrayal of Jo from various aspects. Alcott never let go of her childhood ambitions. In fact, her vivid imagination is what allowed her to conquer the expectations of life for a woman in the conservative Victorian era that she clearly did not conform. She portrays Jo as reflection of her childhood and therefore the parallels are undeniably visible in Jo’s character traits. It is important to point out that the childish imagination of Jo helped her especially in writing to achieve greater success, as she benefited from her vivid fantasies and creative mind.

⁴⁷ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 23.

⁴⁸ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 259.

⁴⁹ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 23.

5.2 The role of men in their life

As this thesis revolves around two female protagonists and their desire to break the traditional barriers of the female stereotypes, it is very important to mention how men figure in their own lives and the lives of their creators. Previously mentioned in section 2.1.3, one of the differences between the authors is that Alcott never married, while Montgomery became secretly engaged with Ewen Macdonald. Marriage itself plays a prominent role in the novels of Alcott and Montgomery as they portray the protagonists Jo and Anne as those who do get married, but with different values and mindset than other female characters in the novels as in parallel fashion women in the 19th century. In the chapter *Heartache*, Jo speaks to her neighbor (Laurie) that would like to develop a relationship from their strong friendship bond: “Nothing more, except that I don't believe I shall ever marry. I'm happy as I am and love my liberty too well to be in any hurry to give it up for any mortal man.”⁵⁰ This quote clearly shows Jo's different outlook on the marriage situation and therefore it is interesting to point out how the protagonists from the depicted novels behave to men in the works and focus on the motifs that influenced these manners.

Men have a significant role for both female protagonists in the novels. However, as it has been referred to already in the previous chapters, they react to relationships differently than other girls around them. Despite such situation in the society, we see in *Little Women* and *Good Wives* that the mother believes in freedom of choice and in Jo's situation she supports her decisions.⁵¹ Jo does not want to marry. She craves to be different than her sisters and other girls with following her intuition. She has no interest in men and she possesses several feminist views on the career of women, but she gets very close to her neighbor Theodore Laurence (Laurie) who certainly shows affection towards Jo, however, she feels that she is not in the position to get acquainted and refuses to be with him.

Further evidence that clearly supports Jo's character trait is the fact that she does not want to hurt feelings of others and one of her biggest fears is disappointment and failure in her own or somebody else's eyes. On the other hand, Alcott describes that the role of Marmee (the mother) is to calm Jo down in several tense situations that she must face, such as her refusal to marry Laurie. “You are too much alike and too fond of freedom, not to mention

⁵⁰ Alcott, *Good Wives*, 204.

⁵¹ Alcott, *Good Wives*, 316.

hot tempers and strong wills, to get on happily together, in a relation which needs infinite patience and forbearance, as well as love.”⁵² Jo had this feeling towards Laurie since the beginning of their relationship, it was, however, very important to assure herself with the words of her mother and stop being afraid of losing a friend like Laurie.

Anne shows two different paradoxes in terms of her relationships towards boys. On one hand, she shows her independence and quite a strong refusal to talk to Gilbert Blythe, who she met at school. On the other hand, she has romantic feelings for him which she is afraid to show. Her behavior is a significant proof that her ambitions serve as her strongest priority, but her romantic fantasies have not vanished. Anne might be seen as someone who is trying to become similar as other girls in the society but from the point of view of character is it basically impossible and she never changes her personality even though, she tries to have a different identity for herself, she remains to behave completely naturally. She seeks for her identity even in terms of having a boy/man in her life.

Concerning the theme of marriage in the selected novels, we can only evaluate the story of Jo and her husband Friedrich Bhaer as Montgomery wrote about the marriage of Anne in the following novel *Anne's House of Dreams*. At first, Jo is depicted as a girl with tendencies not to marry nor pursue any romantic relationship.

Moreover, in *Little Women* only Meg is engaged, but all the girls are still unmarried. Alcott did this intentionally, to demonstrate that the girls have their whole lives ahead of them and to reinforce that the novel, and especially Jo, wouldn't conform to the conventional “marriage plot.” “Girls write to ask who the little women marry, as if that was the only aim and end of a woman's life,” Alcott wrote in her journal. “I won't marry Jo to Laurie to please anyone.”⁵³

5.3 Their distinction from other female characters

Jo March and Anne Shirley share prominent features to differentiate them from the society they live in. One of the key elements that distinguishes them from the other female characters in the novels is the one previously mentioned, their view on men, their certain level of masculine behavior that both protagonists obtain, strong-mindedness and breaking the traditional rules of female position. To see the characters from a closer perspective, it

⁵² Alcott, *Good Wives*, 148.

⁵³ Tracey Janey, *The Conflicted Feminism of Little Women*, (Critical essays, 2018).

is relevant to mention other female characters from the novels and their roles in the society to fully understand how Jo and Anne distinguish from the crowd.

Smith mentioned that of all the March sisters, Meg and Jo are the most diametrically opposed because they sit as separate poles of femininity. Alcott uses Meg as an example of strict femininity. Through Meg's criticism of Jo's constant displays of masculinity, Alcott aligns Meg as the correct and respectable version of young womanhood and forces Jo to inhabit the opposite.⁵⁴ Nicole Maruo-Schroder expresses, in her paper, *Louisa May Alcott, Little Women* (1868), that men were supposed to be active and aggressive, managing the harsh world of politics and the marketplace, while women ruled, submissively and tenderly, at home. This strict separation between masculine and feminine spheres forces Meg and Jo to choose one realm over the other.⁵⁵

5.3.1 Anne and Diana

In *Anne of Green Gables* and *Anne of Avonlea* it is interesting to compare Anne with her best friend Diana. When Marilla (Anne's adoptive mother) suggested Diana to become friends with Anne, which was apparently something that the protagonist would wish for a long time, Anne is truly excited and grateful, however, worried, and nervous at the same time. "Oh, Marilla, I'm frightened--now that it has come, I'm actually frightened. What if she shouldn't like me! It would be the most tragical disappointment of my life."⁵⁶ Diana obviously loves Anne, and they portray an example of a rather unique friendship. Although, their personalities differ excessively we could describe their relationship almost like a romantic story with parallels to the problems and joys inherent in their queer relationship. "Oh, Diana, said Anne at last, clasping her hands and speaking almost in a whisper, "oh, do you think you can like me a little--enough to be my bosom friend?"⁵⁷

Diana is a very intelligent and motivated girl, and she is always perceived as a positive character who helps Anne with her struggles and insecurities, however, she is not lucky in every way. She is limited by the society and her parents do not allow her to go to Queen's Academy to persevere her teaching certification. Anne, even though she faces many issues on her journey for her dream, has more career options by the end of the book, while Diana

⁵⁴ Smith, *Gender Roles and Womanhood in Little Women*, 2.

⁵⁵ Gerhardt, Christine, *Handbook of the American Novel of the Nineteenth Century*. (1. Aufl. Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter Mouton 2018), 401-402.

⁵⁶ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 85.

⁵⁷ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 87.

can only become a housewife as it was common in the society. This is another key evidence to support the thesis of Anne stepping out of a traditional norm of female behavior but on the other hand, having clear parallels with the section dedicated to Anne's insecurities as well.

5.3.2 Anne and Marilla

Anne's relationship with Marilla as her adoptive mother, might be quite challenging to illustrate as Marilla's position in the family is not quite easy as her duty was to quickly get along with Anne and teach her how to behave properly, as Anne has never lived in such caring conditions before. Marilla is rather traditional, wants Anne to pray before sleeping, go to school and have girly manners. She hardly believes at the beginning of the novel that Anne would be able to fulfill the requirements for the Avonlea society, which was sort of a community as well. However, Anne wants to be a proper girl. She is not afraid of failure and always wants to learn from her mistakes. Anne reflects to Marilla that: "Ever since I came to Green Gables, I've been making mistakes, and each mistake has helped to cure me of some great shortcoming."⁵⁸

Their relationship is crucial for enhancing the idea of Anne's strong dedication and desire for having an identity in the society that she has never been in before. She certainly feels special and shows gratitude towards her "new parents". "I just couldn't help thinking of the little girl you used to be, Anne. And I was wishing you could have stayed a little girl, even with all your queer ways. You've grown up now and you're going away; and you look so tall and stylish and so – so different altogether in that dress - as if you didn't belong in Avonlea at all - and I just got lonesome thinking it all over."⁵⁹ Marilla's statement here clearly assured Anne of being in the "right place".

Moreover, Anne once said: "I'd rather look ridiculous when everybody else does than plain and sensible all by myself,"⁶⁰ meaning that she suffered from not being able to fit among her peers, however, Diana and Marilla were always those to support her moods and questionings. Marilla assured Anne that it is normal to be different, which played an important role in their relationship as well. However, we must bear in mind, that their relationship developed over time.

⁵⁸ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 211.

⁵⁹ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 254.

⁶⁰ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 80.

5.3.3 Jo and her sisters

In *Little Women* and *Good Wives*, it is crucial to mention Jo's sisters and their roles in the family and how they perceive the roles for a woman in the society they live in. Jo certainly does not foresee her future as a proper lady with all the fragile manners that were common to show. "I hate to think I've got to grow up, and be Miss March, and wear long gowns, and look as prim as a China-aster! It's bad enough to be a girl, anyway, when I like boys' 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!"⁶¹ Alcott portrays Jo as an independent lady with immense differences from her sisters and no one would dispute that she had amazing relationships with all of them.

5.3.4 Jo and Amy

Amy and Jo have one major thing in common, passion for art. Jo loves literature and writing and Amy admires the beauty of artwork. However, the most significant distinction that is vital to indicate is Amy's extreme ladylike behavior and importance of her looks and manner and Jo's exactly opposite values for being a lady. Amy shows her clear needs of popularity and perfections, while Jo evidently desires to be popular among her peers as well, but she does not behave in a way to support this theory.

5.3.5 Jo and Beth

Jo is considered to have the strongest connection with her sister Beth, even stronger after she falls seriously ill, and it leads Jo to a certain realization. It can be mentioned with clarity that Beth unbelievably supports Jo in her writing and ambitions, and she wants her not to settle for her and risk her own destiny. The evidence comes from Beth's quote about her sisters:

You are the gull, Jo, strong and wild, fond of the storm and the wind, flying far out to sea, and happy all alone. Meg is the turtledove, and Amy is like the lark she writes about, trying to get up among the clouds, but always dropping down into its nest again. Dear little girl! She's so ambitious, but her heart is good and tender, and

⁶¹ Alcott, *Little Women*, 8.

no matter how high she flies, she never will forget home. I hope I shall see her again... ‘‘⁶²

Beth perfectly displays Jo’s character in the way that she has strong aspirations in life but never forgets those she loves the most.

5.3.6 Jo and Meg

Another independent side of Jo shows through dialogue between Jo and her sister Meg. The conversation happens during the wedding day between Meg and her husband Mr. Brooke. Instead of agreeing to the married, Jo convince her sister not to married Mr. Brooke because she thinks that her sister should be an actress instead of a wife. Meg believes that Jo’s tomboy ways are a phase to be discarded once she matures and thus forces the strict gender binary onto her sister. In society of the 19th century, women are only allowed to display the corresponding traits of femininity, such as beauty, self-sacrifice, and contentment, and thus Meg warns Jo that to be a woman is to discard her affinity for masculine attributes.⁶³

Her self-assurance that she can be self-sufficient is evident from the interview. She is ready to dedicate herself and provide anything for her sister. In Meg’s statement we see the ambitious side of Jo’s character. Implicitly, she thinks that accomplishing her goals and being independent is more important than being married without thinking about the dreams of others. She also shows several other gestures towards her family and proves her independence and that she is the most caring person in the family, she can face various disappointments due to her strong mind. The obstacles faced by the protagonists lead to their future success in later life and the reasons behind them are portrayed in the following chapter. Additionally, Meg and Jo are radically different. Meg is proper and ladylike, dreams to have wealthy husbands and nice clothes whereas Jo is more boyish with no such desires.

6 Obstacles the protagonists face

Both Alcott and Montgomery portrayed their heroines not only as those with creative imagination and talent to produce literary work, but also focused on the issues the

⁶² Alcott, *Good Wives*, 221.

⁶³ Smith, *Gender Roles and Womanhood in Little Women*, 4.

protagonists are obliged to face. One of the key themes is their path to achieve their goals on which they experience several examples of rejection and failure. They potentially learn from these situations and handle their weaknesses to become better women in future, successful in their jobs.

We can see clear parallels between Anne and Jo in terms of handling their temper which in certain situations leads to a kind of selfishness. “There’s such a lot of different Annes in me. I sometimes think that is why I’m such a troublesome person. If I was just the one Anne it would be ever so much more comfortable, but then it wouldn’t be half so interesting.”⁶⁴ Anne tends to show precisely what she has on her mind and one of the key situations in the first book *Anne of Green Gables* was when Marilla’s friend Rachel comes to visit them. “Well, they didn't pick you for your looks, that's sure and certain”, was Mrs. Rachel Lynde's emphatic comment.⁶⁵ Mrs. Rachel was one of those delightful and popular people who pride themselves on speaking their mind without fear or favor.⁶⁶ “She's terrible skinny and homely, Marilla. Come here, child, and let me have a look at you. Lawful heart, did anyone ever see such freckles? And hair as red as carrots! Come here, child, I say.”⁶⁷ As Anne is very insecure about her appearance and generally struggles with getting used to her new home, she is not able to hold her temper, which is not suitable for a girl to react to an adult lady like that: “I hate you, she cried in a choked voice, stamping her foot on the floor. “I hate you – I hate you – I hate you – a louder stamp with each assertion of hatred. How dare you call me skinny and ugly? How dare you say I’m freckled and red-headed? You are a rude, impolite, unfeeling woman!”⁶⁸

Her bad temper is also shown when a boy from school named Gilbert, who will be certainly mentioned calls her “carrot”, she is not just angry to him, but she decides to crack her slate onto his head. Anne’s bad temper leads her to be resentful and unwilling to forgive both Mrs. Lynde and Gilbert Blythe. She even promises not to forgive Gilbert forever. F. S. Az-Zahra explains that this evidence implies that Anne behaves rudely because nobody teaches her before what to do and how to manage herself when she is angry or insulted. Nobody teaches her to understand and express emotions.⁶⁹ Thus, Anne has her own way to understand her emotions and explore her own reaction when she has a certain

⁶⁴ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 153.

⁶⁵ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 67.

⁶⁶ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 67.

⁶⁷ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 67.

⁶⁸ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 67.

⁶⁹ Az-Zahra & Saktiningrum, *Anne Shirley's Character Development*, 124.

emotion.⁷⁰ She chooses to show an overwhelming emotion when she is angry or insulted as her expression and defense.⁷¹

A very similar situation is portrayed by Alcott, when Amy (Jo's sister) is angry at Jo because she did not allow Amy to join them in the theatre. Amy really wants to join her sisters, but she is told that nobody had invited her. For this reason, Amy also loses her temper and burns Jo's manuscript that she has been working on. The key point in this situation is that at first Jo is not able to forgive Amy just like Anne is not able to forgive Rachel and Gilbert. She enrages and punches Amy as she is not able to imagine that she has lost her piece of writing and finds it hard to process.

"It's my dreadful temper! I try to cure it; I think I have, and then it breaks out worse than ever. Oh, Mother, what shall I do? What shall I do?" cried poor Jo, in despair."⁷²

6.1 Insecurity

Controlling their temper goes in a close relation with their insecurity as it was described in the previous section. Chapter 5.1 mentions their powerful creative childish imagination that certainly makes the girls unique in a progressive way. However, their insecurity can be considered as an obstacle that they had to face especially in connection with the reaction of the society that will be mentioned in the next chapter. Lesley Willis wrote about Anne's creation of a new identity as *Anne of Green Gables* which relates to her character traits.⁷³ Both Anne and Jo suffer from insecurity mostly because of the traditional conventions about women's looks, position in the family and their goals that both protagonists clearly do not fulfill. For instance, Anne does not like her red hair as it was unfashionable, and she dreams to have a different hair color. Moreover, she is not fond of her old dress, and she escapes with her imagination to her "own world", sometimes. Jo is also not very self-confident in terms of her writing: "I've no heart to write, and if I had, nobody cares for my things."⁷⁴ She doubts, but her mother confirms her of the exact opposite and encourages her in future challenges.

⁷⁰ Az-Zahra & Saktiningrum, *Anne Shirley's Character Development*, 124.

⁷¹ Az-Zahra & Saktiningrum, *Anne Shirley's Character Development*, 124.

⁷² Alcott, *Little Women*, 103.

⁷³ Willis, Lesley, *The Bogus Ugly Duckling: Anne Shirley Unmasked*, (Dalhousie Review: Vol.56, 1976), 250.

⁷⁴ Alcott, *Good Wives*, 316.

6.2 Masculinity

Another “obstacle” that Jo and Anne share is their certain type of having boyish behavior and desire to live a life like a man sometimes. Jo could be considered as a proper character of masculine behavior. For instance she rejects her title as “Miss March”, as she says: “I am not Miss March, I’m only Jo”, to get rid of her lady identity.⁷⁵ She considers her name “so sentimental” and wishes everyone would say “Jo”, instead of Josephine”.⁷⁶ In her eyes, “Josephine” is too feminine and full of sentimentality; she prefers “Jo”, which sounds boyish and matches her non-feminine qualities more. In addition, Jo’s claim: “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!”⁷⁷ is another crucial evidence of her desire to get rid of all the duties women had to face. Finding and losing female identity in this thesis is one of the central elements that leads to the protagonists’ distinction in the society. Jo defies the binary. While using her masculinity to earn an entrance into the male sphere and gain independence, Jo also respects the feminine ideal of service to family.⁷⁸

To support this evidence, as Jo's father returns home from the war, he comments: “I don't see “son Jo” ... I see a young lady pinning her collar straight, lacing her boots carefully, and not whistling, talking slang, or lying on the carpet...”⁷⁹ Furthermore, her face has become “softer”, and her voice is “lower”; she “does not jump.”⁸⁰ The two sentences cited here demonstrate that she now resembles a lady and summarize that both Anne and Jo mature with time and the novels are written with the purpose to make the characters develop in the end of each book more and more. By the time Anne is 14 years old, we can see that she clearly changes her way of thinking and with the help of Marilla and Matthew she is able to control her manners and vivid storytelling. The young teen explains, “I’m going to let my imagination run riot for the summer”, but goes on to reassure Marilla that, “I’ll only let it run riot within reasonable limits”⁸¹ Marilla teaches Anne how to behave among people in Avonlea and she matures with every series more and more.

⁷⁵Alcott, *Little Women*, 43.

⁷⁶Alcott, *Little Women*, 44.

⁷⁷ Alcott, *Little Women*, 8.

⁷⁸ Smith, *Gender Roles and Womanhood in Little Women*, 1.

⁷⁹ Alcott, *Little Women*, 286.

⁸⁰ Alcott, *Little Women*, 286.

⁸¹ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 192.

7 The reaction of society

To give a clear image of, how the protagonists faced these obstacles, it is also crucial to explain how society reacted to their unusual behavior, which they do not expect from ladies at that time. As the aim of this work is not to analyze all the characters in the depicted novels, I focus especially on Diana's mother in *Anne of Green Gables* and Aunt March from *Little Women*. Both women that I have just mentioned hold the opinion of traditional women and break Jo and Anne's desire to be independent and valuable on their own. Diana's mother Mrs. Barry belonged to one of those conventional women in Avonlea and did not support the reform in Avonlea school (which is mentioned in chapter 5.1.) and did not want Diana to attend The Queen's Academy. One of the key moments in the novel is when Mrs. Barry accused Anne of giving Diana red currant wine on purpose, although it was an accident. As the narrator explains: "Her face hardened. Mrs. Barry was a woman of strong prejudices and dislikes, and her anger was of the cold, sullen sort which is always hardest to overcome. To do her justice, she really believed Anne had made Diana drunk out of sheer malice prepense and she was honestly anxious to preserve her little daughter from the contamination of further intimacy with such a child."⁸² "I don't think you are a fit little girl for Diana to associate with. You'd better go home and behave yourself."⁸³ From this quote, it is obvious that Mrs. Barry did not like Anne and did not support her relationship with Diana as she believed she was too unmannered.

All the other female characters the authors portray in the novels, serve as an accurate comparison how the society works compared to Jo and Anne. The societies in both novels show a certain type of sorrow or compassion with the protagonist as they do not see the process of changing the conventions and changing the view on their dissatisfaction of the society system. For instance: Mrs. Rachel Lynde was a notable housewife; her work was always done and well done; she "ran" the Sewing Circle, helped run the Sunday-school, and was the strongest prop of the Church Aid Society and Foreign Missions Auxiliary.⁸⁴

⁸² Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 125.

⁸³ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 125.

⁸⁴ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 1.

8 Becoming teachers

One of the most significant themes that the respective novels share is undeniably Jo's and Anne's desire to figure as teachers and educate future generations to allow them the same advantages as they had in their childhood-to find their passions. When analyzing the major theme these novels share it is essential to examine the significant advantages that this career brought them. Starting with Anne, we do not become aware of whether she becomes a teacher at the end of the second book. Nevertheless, she expresses a strong inclination to become a teacher and I will consider some arguments why. Jo did not become a real teacher herself; we find at the end of the novel *Good Wives* that she craves to open a school with her husband who is a teacher, and she helps him with creating such opportunity. Therefore, she can still be considered as someone, who clearly followed their instincts and did what she dreamed of.

8.1 Miss Muriel Stacy's influence on Anne

When Anne comes to Avonlea she is sent to the local school. Firstly, she is not very passionate about attending school because of Mr. Phillips, who is the Avonlea's headteacher. He is rather unpopular with students and Anne is unquestionably his least favorite student as I previously mentioned her key behavior features.

The arrival of Miss Muriel Stacy changes Anne's view on education immensely. Stacy is a creative, inspirational, and caring person with a strong desire to change the curriculum that the Progressive Mother Society tries to enforce. Miss Muriel Stacy was also the first woman in Avonlea wearing trousers which Anne found rather exciting. However, as we might assume, she was advised against wearing them and was told to wear a corset in school. Stacy is portrayed in the novel as an exact example of a woman looking for identity and she is trying to change the conventions in Avonlea, which vastly inspires Anne.

"I love Miss Stacy with my whole heart, Marilla. She is so ladylike, and she has such a sweet voice. When she pronounces my name, I feel instinctively that she's spelling it with an E."⁸⁵ Anne is undeniably influenced by Stacy as she considers her as a proper role model for her future career, not only in writing articles and essays that will be examined in the last chapter but also, she encourages her views on the profession of a teacher. As I

⁸⁵ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 178.

mentioned in the chapter 2.1.3. women were not highly supported in establishing their career and the portrayal of Miss Stacy vastly changes Anne's view on the position of women and their possible developments in future.

Berg precisely described how Anne learns about the dangers of her imagination and the consequences it can have, scaring herself half to death with her own made-up names and stories. Anne again proves that she has learned to suppress her imagination when her teacher asks her to stop reading a book and she obeys.⁸⁶ The book "was one Ruby Gillis had leant me," she explains to Marilla, "and Marilla, it was so fascinating and creepy, it just curdled the blood in my veins. But Miss Stacy said it was a very silly unwholesome book, and she asked me not to read any more of it or any like it".⁸⁷ Another key factor that reinforces Anne's desire to become a teacher was her successful participation in Queen's Academy, where she was accepted to get the First- or Second-Class provincial teacher's license. Montgomery herself attended PWC (Prince of Wales College) for one year between 1893 and 1894. Like Anne, she completed two years of college during this time, taking a double course load of English, French, Greek, Latin, Agriculture, Mathematics, Geometry, Algebra, Trigonometry, Chemistry, Horticulture, Roman History, Hygiene, and School Management. She then had to compete for teaching positions with students who had been able to afford a three-year course.⁸⁸

Not only was Anne able to attend Queen's Academy, but she also won a scholarship which made her feel extremely proud. It is possible to hypothesize that Montgomery might have written about the scholarship as she was not given such opportunity herself, therefore she wanted her Anne to feel the gratitude and pride along the way with her.

This was demonstrated by this excerpt from an article she wrote for the *Halifax Heraldin* in April 1896:

A girl does not—or, at least, should not—go to a university merely to shine as clever students take honors, get through and then do something very brilliant. Nay: she goes—or should go—to prepare herself for living, not alone in the finite but in the infinite. She goes to have her mind broadened, and her powers of observation

⁸⁶ Berg, Temma F. *Anne of Green Gables: A Girl's Reading*. (Children's Literature Association Quarterly (1988): Project MUSE. 2010),126.

⁸⁷ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 178.

⁸⁸ Rubio, Mary Henley. *Lucy Maud Montgomery: The Gift of Wings* (New York: Anchor Canada, 2010), 72.

cultivated. She goes to study her own race in all the bewildering perplexities of its being. In short, she goes to find out the best, easiest and most effective way of living the life that God and nature planned out for her to live.⁸⁹

8.2 Jo Bhaer and their school

In the book *Good Wives*, more specifically chapter 24, we get a closer look at Jo's desire to create a school for local boys. "Boys, I want to open a school for little lads – a good, happy, home-like school, with me to take care of them, and Fritz to teach them."⁹⁰ What is obvious from the quotation, Jo does not dream to precisely become a teacher, however, she still holds the desire to take care of others and making them better people together with education as her husband is a professor. We find more sources of evidence of Jo's teaching ambition in the following novels after *Little Women* and *Good Wives* named *Little Men* (1871) and *Jo's Boys* (1886), but we can assume that Jo's ambition was to obtain a job full of creativity an opportunity to grow. In the end of the novel *Good Wives* Jo claims: "Yes, I remember; but the life I wanted seems selfish, lonely, and cold to me now."⁹¹ I haven't given up the hope that I may write a good book yet, but I can wait, and I'm sure it will be all the better for such experiences and illustrations as these; ...".⁹² This quotation explains that Jo matures throughout the novel and realizes that all of her ambitions are possible to happen just with a bit of her temper and experience, which points out, that she focused on developing their school, before she wrote a good book that she dreamt of.

9 Becoming writers

In this chapter, the major concern is to express how Jo and Anne aim to find a voice and become successful with their ambition to write. As their passion revolves around writing articles and stories, it is interesting to examine some of the key motifs that influenced them on their way to fulfill this dream. As it was mentioned in detail in the first part of this work, they both share the similarity in their "fight" against the traditional role for women and

⁸⁹ Peled, Einat & Komem, Michal, *A girl's place is in the home: Spatial Gendered Scripts in Narratives of Girls Who Have Left or Been Pushed Out of Home*. (Child & Family Social Work, 2019), 153.

⁹⁰ Alcott, *Good Wives*, 388.

⁹¹ Alcott, *Good Wives*, 400.

⁹² Alcott, *Good Wives*, 400.

moreover, their devotion to writing is closely related to their ambition to teach (described in the previous chapter) and engage education for future generations as it was an inevitable part of their lives. As a child, Jo aspires to overcome the limitations of womanhood and believes that her writing is the solution to obtaining financial, and thus physical, independence. Along with her desire to fulfill masculine roles within society, Jo aspires “to be independent,” a privilege only rewarded to men.⁹³

For Jo writing was a certain type of activity that would help her escape from the real world and the harsh situations that she experienced. Writing also encouraged Jo to handle her emotions, bad temper, and immature manners. In *Good Wives*, Jo progressively builds up her writing talent and decides to embark on a literary career, believing that through writing she could earn enough money to support her family and lift them out of poverty. Although, she earns quite a bit of money by writing her sensational pulp stories and does not like this type of work, she continues doing it because the readers show affection to it, and it is also financially well rewarded. Alcott like her creator, Jo, liked writing “pot-boilers” - gripping stories full of adventure, which she published under the pseudonym A. M. Barnard. These stories were an immediate success and Jo as a writer clearly represented Alcott. Jo’s writing provides her control over her life that is absent from traditional womanhood. Because she chooses to retain her masculine traits in adulthood, Jo fulfills her wish to financially support her family and escapes her childhood fears that with womanhood comes dissatisfaction.⁹⁴

As it has been already mentioned, in the mid-19th century, women writers suffered from intractable gender discrimination because their works were criticized for being artless, narrow-minded, and too expressive.⁹⁵ Women writers in general gained little respect in terms of their gender mainly because most editors and critics were men as well. The entire novel is about Jo's passion for reading and her talent as a writer. In the introduction, the character's narrator discusses how Jo creates her dream as a writer. In the “airy castles” scene when everyone is to present their castle, Jo describes hers as: I’d have rooms piled with books, and I’d write out of a magic inkstand, so that my works should be as famous as Laurie’s music [...] I think I shall write books, and get rich and famous: that would suit

⁹³ Smith, *Gender Roles and Womanhood in Little Women*, 5.

⁹⁴ Smith, *Gender Roles and Womanhood in Little Women*, 6.

⁹⁵ Howell, Samantha. *The Evolution of Female Writers: An Exploration of Their Issues and Concerns from the 19th Century to Today*, (University of Hawai ‘i at Hilo, 2014) 23.

me, so that is my favorite dream.⁹⁶ Additionally, Jo is arguably one of the most well-known fictional writers of classic American literature. While she does display some insecurities about herself as a writer, some anxiety about being seen by others for what she has written, it is only when she allows herself to become vulnerable and leaves the true Jo on the paper. As it was mentioned, her ambition is to do “something splendid” and something heroic or wonderful that will not be forgotten after she is dead.⁹⁷ Jo wants to be an author because writing is wonderful. She happily and confidently states, I will keep writing [...] “I am so happy because in time I may be able to support myself and help the girls”.⁹⁸

To make things clear, Anne did not become a writer either at the end of the series, however her desire to write and tell stories was the major point in the novels. In this case, it is necessary to use the third primary source which is the third series of the books *Anne of the Island*. This part of the series is crucial for Anne’s writing and therefore I will quote certain passages from this novel.

First, once Anne comes up with a plan to pursue her goals further by saying: “It would be if you’d only cultivate it. I’ve just thought of a plan, Diana. Let you and me have a story club all our own and write stories for practice. I’ll help you along until you can do them by yourself. You ought to cultivate your imagination, you know. Miss Stacy says so. Only we must take the right way. I told her about the Haunted Wood, but she said we went the wrong way about it in that.”⁹⁹ In *Anne of the Island*, during Anne’s years at Redmond College, Anne writes two stories on her own, they are both however rejected and criticized which is very similar to Jo’s case when she desires her stories to be published. What is also very interesting is the parallelism between Diana Barry (Anne’s best friend) and Marmee from *Little Women* and *Good Wives* as they both help their beloved Anne and Jo on their writing career which is in Anne’s case clearly visible in the letter from the section *Anne of the Island*.

Miss Anne Shirley,

Green Gables,

Avonlea, P.E. Island.

⁹⁶ Alcott, *Little Women*, 188.

⁹⁷ Alcott, *Little Women*, 188.

⁹⁸ Alcott, *Little Women*, 204.

⁹⁹ Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 195.

"DEAR MADAM: We have much pleasure in informing you that your charming story 'Averil's Atonement' has won the prize of twenty-five dollars offered in our recent competition. We enclose the check herewith. We are arranging for the publication of the story in several prominent Canadian newspapers, and we also intend to have it printed in pamphlet form for distribution among our patrons. Thanking you for the interest you have shown in our enterprise, we remain,

Yours very truly,

THE ROLLINGS RELIABLE

BAKING POWDER Co.¹⁰⁰

Anne later finds out, that Diana helped her with writing and editing the story so she would have a chance to win the prize. This can be classified as another evidence of Diana's behavior as a true 'blossom friend' (Anne's and Diana's nickname for their friendship) but also, this evidence works as a useful example that Anne did not feel comfortable with her writing and she thought that she deserved to be praised for teaching rather than her writing.

To summarize the outcome of the protagonist's career choices, it is quite interesting to see that Jo focused mostly on writing and wanted to become a writer so seriously, but we learn from the novel that she opens a school for little boys and does not follow her future path on writing. Jo inspires the readers to understand that it is possible to chase their goals and stay home with the people they love. Moreover, her character influenced other women writers to trust the power of stepping out of the traditional opinions on women and create heroines with such features as Jo obtains. With Anne we know that her main inner motivation was to become a teacher and a writer, but her destiny leads her more to a teaching career in the following series of books. Anne teaches the readers that she is undeniably able to stand up for herself, able to learn from her mistakes, rely on her best friend and most importantly that learning to love yourself is the most valuable lesson of all, and sometimes it takes years to understand that your own identity is truly valuable.

¹⁰⁰ Maud Montgomery, Lucy, *Anne of the Island*. (United Kingdom: Little, Brown Book Group, 2017), 86.

10 Conclusion

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to analyze the major themes that appear and coincide in the well-known works of women authors Louisa May Alcott and Lucy Maud Montgomery. Specifically, the thesis focuses on the novel *Little Women* and *Good Wives* and the first two volumes in the series of novels *Anne of Green Gables* and *Anne of Avonlea*. The thesis examines the main purposes of stepping out of the established norms in society and the ambitions the main protagonists had, namely Jo March and Anne Shirley.

In the first theoretical part of the thesis, the position of women in the late 19th century in North American literature is mentioned and I focus on the gender stereotypes and the importance of women in education, their position in marital relationships and the context of literature in which the authors fit. As both authors supported education for women in the late 19th century and saw marriage as a symbol of love rather than the purpose for financial and social support, these chapters were extremely important to mention.

The second part of the thesis is devoted to introducing the works themselves and the authors' autobiographies. The main emphasis is placed on the reflections of their lives in comparison to the portrayal of the main characters Jo and Anne such as their character traits, family issues and their life goals. In addition, the section shortly deals with the introductions to the depicted novels.

In the practical part of the thesis, the focus is put on the parallels between the main characters that influenced their futures, their relationship with other female characters from the novels, more specifically Anne's best friend Diana, Anne's adoptive mother Marilla and all the sisters of Jo. Although the other female characters portrayed by Alcott and Montgomery in their novels still follow the traditional path, they inspire the protagonists, and Jo and Anne undoubtedly need them to form their identity. I also mention the themes that set them apart from other female characters in novels of the time and why these characters were special as women. Their creative imaginations are mentioned, which had a particularly positive influence on their future careers as writers and teachers but are also they are closely related to their impatience and frequent explosiveness, which often got them into trouble and disrupted relationships.

Another theme that is explored in the thesis is precisely the relationships with the women around them, as well as their views on marriage and men, as it is their attitudes towards

men that help them to step out of the traditional role of housewife, and Jo and Anne are given the opportunity to fulfil their dreams and become the women they have always wanted to be. In this chapter I mention how Jo and Anne view marriage and compare their attitudes with the authors' own lives.

In the last part of the thesis, we come to the main part of the analysis, specifically how Jo and Anne came to fulfill their dream. Chapter eight focuses on their career as teachers and their initial motivation and influence on their way. The last chapter then deals with their desire to become writers/ teachers and generate respect among other women to choose careers according to their passion.

The conclusion of this thesis is that Alcott and Montgomery claimed that it was and still is possible for women to achieve their goals by not only having a loving husband and children, but also being able to become strong, independent women in the field of job they love. The main theme of this thesis is becoming an important figure as a lady in the society in the late 19th century which was unusual for women at that time and Josephine March and Anne Shirley are portrayed by their authors as women who strongly desire to change the obsolete conventions and become literary and educational figures with their successful passionate careers not losing their female identity and still being able to keep their roles in professions they choose. Finally, they both became valuable members of society and encouraged other female characters and writers to fight for their desires. These novels prove that familial duties are possible to be combined with personal growth while none of them is prevailing. Therefore, the successful combination that Jo and Anne achieved in the novels lead them to find their true happiness in life and helped other writers to portray young budding female characters in their novels.

To conclude the work, it is good to add that the heroines Jo March and Anne Shirely were and are a strong inspiration to the readers not only in their ability to help their loved ones in times of hardship, but they teach readers to be grateful and determined individuals who follow their dreams. They are inspiring to us with their stories and the reader can empathize with their lives very easily.

11 Resumé

Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo analyzovat hlavní témata, která se objevují a shodují ve známých dílech ženských autorek Louisy May Alcottové a Lucy Maud Montgomeryové. Konkrétně se práce zaměřuje na romány „*Malé ženy*“ a „*Dobré manželky*“ a první dva díly z řady knih „*Anna ze Zeleného domu*“ a „*Anna z Avonlea*“. Práce zkoumá, jaké jsou hlavní cíle pro vystoupení z klasických společenských norem a ambice, které měly hlavní hrdinky, konkrétně Jo Marchová a Anne Shirleyová.

Teoretická část práce se zabývá postavením žen ve společnosti na konci 19. století v severoamerické literatuře a zaměřuje se na genderové stereotypy, význam žen ve výchově, jejich postavení v manželství a kontext literatury, do kterého jsou jmenované autorky zaraženy. Vzhledem k tomu, že obě autorky podporovaly vzdělávání žen na konci 19. století a manželství považovaly spíše za symbol lásky než za účel finanční a sociální podpory, bylo pro pochopení záměru mé práce nevyhnutelně důležité tyto kapitoly zmínit.

Druhá část práce je věnována představení samotných děl a autobiografiím autorek. Hlavní důraz je kladen na jejich životy v porovnání s vykreslením hlavních postav Jo a Anny, jako jsou jejich povahové rysy, rodinné problémy a životní cíle, kterých chtěly dosáhnout. Tato část se rovněž zaměřuje krátká shrnutí samotných děl.

V praktické části práce jsou rozebírány paralely mezi hlavními postavami, které ovlivnily jejich budoucnost, jejich vztahy s dalšími ženskými postavami z románů, konkrétně s Anninou nejlepší přítelkyní Dianou, Anninou adoptivní matkou Marillou a všemi sestrami Jo Marchové. Ostatní ženské postavy, které Alcottová a Montgomeryová ve svých románech ztvárnily, stále žijí tradičním stylem života, i přesto však inspirují Jo Marchovou a Anne Shirleyovou a napomáhají jim utvářet jejich vlastní identitu. Jsou zde rozebírána také témata, která je odlišují od ostatních ženských postav v románech té doby, a o tom, proč byly tyto postavy jako ženy výjimečné. Zmíněna je jejich tvořivá dětská fantazie, která měla obzvlášť pozitivní vliv na jejich budoucí kariéru spisovatelek a učitelek, ale také úzce souvisí s jejich netrpělivostí a častou výbušností, která je často dostávala do problémů a narušovala jejich vztahy.

Dalším tématem, které je v práci zkoumáno, jsou právě vztahy s ženami v jejich okolí a také jejich názory na manželství a muže, neboť právě jejich postoj k mužům jim pomáhá vystoupit z tradiční role ženy v domácnosti a Jo a Anne dostávají příležitost splnit si své

sny a stát se ženami, kterými vždy chtěly být. V této kapitole se zmiňují o tom, jak Jo a Anne nahlíží na manželství a porovnávají jejich postoje s vlastním životem autorek.

V poslední části práce je kladen důraz na hlavní téma práce, konkrétně jak si Jo a Anna splnily svůj sen. Kapitola osm se zaměřuje na jejich učitelskou kariéru a jejich počáteční motivaci a vliv na jejich cestu. Poslední kapitola se pak zabývá jejich touhou stát se spisovatelkami/učitelkami a jak „obtížné“ jejich cesty k tomuto cíli byly.

Alcottová a Montgomeryová tvrdily, že bylo a stále je možné, aby ženy dosáhly svých cílů nejen tím, že budou mít milujícího manžela a děti, ale také tím, že se stanou silnými a nezávislými ženami v oboru, který milují. Hlavním tématem této práce je stát se důležitou postavou jako dáma ve společnosti na konci 19. století, což bylo pro ženy v té době neobvyklé. Josephine Marchová a Anne Shirleyová jsou svými autorkami vykresleny jako ženy, které touží změnit zastaralé konvence a stát se osobnostmi s úspěšnou kariérou, aniž by ztratily svou ženskou identitu a stále si dokázaly udržet své role v profesích, které si zvolily. Nakonec se obě staly hodnotnými členkami společnosti a povzbudily další ženské postavy a spisovatelky k boji za své touhy. Tyto romány dokazují, že rodinné povinnosti je možné skloubit s osobnostním růstem, aniž by jedna z těchto stran převažovala. Úspěšná kombinace, které Jo a Anne v románech dosáhly, je tedy dovedla k nalezení skutečného životního štěstí a pomohla dalším autorkám ke ztvárnění mladých nadějných ženských postav.

K zakončení práce je dobré dodat, že hrdinky Jo Marchová a Anne Shirelyová byly a jsou pro čtenáře/ky silnou inspirací nejen v tom, že dokázaly pomoci svým blízkým v těžkých chvílích, ale učí čtenáře být vděčnými a odhodlanými osobnostmi, které si jdou za svými sny. Jsou pro nás svými osudy inspirativní a čtenář se do jejich životů dokáže velmi snadno vcítit.

12 Anotation

Name: Klára Trávníčková

Department: Department of English and American Studies

Title: Finding a Voice: Portrayals of Young Budding Women in Novels for Girls

Supervisor: Mgr. David Livingstone, Ph.D.

Number of pages: 45

Number of attachments: 0

Number of characters (Bibliography excluded): 84 801

Keywords: Lucy Maud Montgomery, Louisa May Alcott, Anne, Jo, family, female identity, writer, teacher, role of women, literature, North America, imagination, girls, women, marriage, education, autobiography, family

Characteristics: The aim of this bachelor thesis is to compare two female protagonists of Louisa May Alcott and Lucy Maud Montgomery, namely Jo March and Anne Shirley. The first, theoretical part, focuses mainly on the general position of women and women writers in the late 19th century and the challenges they had to face. The practical part then deals with the actual comparison of the main characters and their unique desire to change the traditional norms of the time. Their creative imaginations, their relationships with both men and other women are discussed, and their journey towards their dream jobs is detailed with the focus on finding their identity.

13 Anotace

Příjmení a jméno: Klára Trávníčková

Katedra: Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Název práce: Nacházení vlastního hlasu: Zobrazení mladých nadějných žen v románech pro dívky

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. David Livingstone, Ph.D.

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Klíčová slova: Lucy Maud Montgomery, Louisa May Alcott, Anne, Jo, rodina, March family, Ženská identita, spisovatelka, učitelka, role žen, literatura, Severní Amerika, představivost, dívky, ženy, manželství, vzdělání, autobiografie, rodina

Charakteristika: Cílem této bakalářské práce je porovnat dvě hlavní hrdinky ženských autorek Louisy May Alcottové a Lucy Maud Montgomeryové, konkrétně Jo Marchovou a Anne Shirleyovou. První, teoretická část, je zaměřena především na obecné postavení žen a spisovatelek konce 19. století a na výzvy, kterým musely čelit. Praktická část se pak zabývá samotným srovnáním hlavních postav a jejich jedinečnou touhou změnit tradiční normy tehdejší doby. Mezi klíčová témata patří kreativní představivost, vztah k mužům, cesta za vysněným povoláním a hledání identity.

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