

I found it very interesting to read both the positive and negative reactions to Little Women in all four of the articles. Not only did the writers of the articles have reactions to Little Women, but they also included in their review the reaction of others to Little Women.

In the first article, *Little Women Forever*, Barrett told how the book almost never made it to publication because Thomas Niles, one of the partners of the publishing company, was greatly disappointed in the book and considered abandoning the book. Before he did that he decided to have his niece, Lily, read the book because he wanted to see what the reaction of a young girl would be. Lily approved of the book and so Little Women was sent to be published. The book was almost immediately a "must read" and was not just read by young girls, but by bankers and merchants. Despite the reviews, both positive and negative, the book soon made its way into the hearts of the people. Many of the people who read the book never even read the reviews it received that were posted in the newspaper or periodicals. As years went on, Little Women was translated into several different languages and was enjoyed by those around the world. Sales around the world, more than three million, have made Little Women one of the top-selling books of all times.

In the second article, *Sentimentality and Louisa M. Alcott*, Brophy had both positive and negative opinions about Little Women. Although Brophy thought the book to be an emotionally charged classic, the style of Alcott's writing was weak and lacks the quality of a true classic. Brophy also states that Alcott is not capable of creating a situation which allows one to analyze and develop but instead uses her writing as a way to illustrate her characters. Brophy did not see the March family as Alcott's way of depicting her own family and the hard times that they went through as she was growing up.

In the third article, *Not to be Read on Sunday*, Russ told how it was a strange time for a review about the book Little Women because the people of that year had seen two of the most terrifying acts of violence, and that being assassination. Not only did the timing of the article seem strange, but also the author of the article was not someone that would usually review children's literature. Lavinia Russ, author of *Not to be Read on Sunday*, had normally

written reviews of children's books but did not feel that she was equipped to evaluate Little Women academically, or critically, because she loved the book too much as a young girl. She loved the book because she thought of Louisa M. Alcott as a rebel who had rebels for parents. They weren't rebels as far as destruction, but rebels who went to work to change the things that weren't good enough. They saw poverty, ignorance, and fear for what they were and did what they could to make changes. Lavinia Russ makes it clear that young girls should love Little Women because it is a story about "good people" and that young people love stories about goodness. She also states that this book is a good one to read during the time she wrote the article because of the hard times that have been going on in society and people need to recognize the power of goodness and to that they must work hard to change the things around them that are not good, such as poverty, ignorance, and fear.

The fourth article, *Little Women: Alcott's Civil War*, Fetterley states how Alcott makes women appear weak and that the girls are raised to be wives and not independent women. Fetterley also states that Alcott only promotes "women's work", such as sewing and cleaning as not being as important as the work that the men did at the time. Given the fact that Fetterley's article was written over 100 years after the original publication of Little Women, and times had obviously changed, does not diminish her point of her review of the novel that Alcott portrays women as a submissive class to men.

I feel that all four of these articles have varying opinions about Little Women, whether they be positive or negative. I think that if you compared four different articles written in each of the four time periods that the information may be similar in regards to the positive and negative aspects of the book. For example, during the time period when the last article was written women were trying so hard to be considered equal to men and the March girls did not portray that image once they became married. Instead, the girls seemed to step down and created an image as if they were beneath their husbands. On the other hand, the third article states how the March family shows a family of goodness and during that time period society needed to view families as that because of the violence that was taking place in society.

## Jennifer Renee Luyckx, 8.2 Changing Scholarship

I did think it was interesting how each one of the writers based what they wrote on how different parts of society viewed the book and the things that were going on during the time the article was written, as opposed to during the time the book was written; I feel this was very evident in the last article. Of course women were looked at differently in the 1860's than in the 1960's but so were many things in society. During the time Little Women was written many of the men were not at home because they were off at war or trying to provide for their family in other places. Today, if a man is not at home they are looked at as being a negative influence to a family; their absence is questioned, as opposed to it being a necessity for the family to survive.

Do any of these articles change my love for Little Women? I would have to honestly answer no. I still enjoy reading the book as much now as the first time I read it. I seem to find out more about the characters and can actually gain a clearer picture of each scene of the story. I can truly understand why Little Women has been a top seller for over 100 years and feel that it will continue to be a top seller in the years to come. Sure, some are not going to love the book the way that others do, but for those that do they are able to understand each one of the March girls, their struggles, and the way that they find themselves.