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THE PECULIARITIES OF METAPHOR USE IN LITTLE WOMEN BY LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

Little Women is one of the greatest classic books which world has ever seen. Louisa May Alcott created a story that continues to endure in people's hearts, resonating across generations by evoking senses of family, the drive of success, and the hardships faced by women in the 19th-century America. Many connoisseurs of the author's works have analyzed many aspects of the book, including thematic richness and compelling characters. Particularly, the strategic and nuanced deployment of metaphor reveals fresh perspectives on the source of its enduring power. Understanding Alcott's metaphorical landscape is not purely an academic exercise; it illuminates how skillfully she writes, shaping the reader's perception and grasping the emotional depth, and reinforcing the main messages of the novel in ways that are beyond the power of direct presentation.

Nowadays there are a lot of researches which reveal Alcott's masterful use of the language, she examined subjects that carried a lot of emotional weight, deeply revealing the social and cultural aspects of that time. By examining these components, we can gain a richer understanding of the novel's lasting impact.

Metaphor is considered to be one of the most powerful literary devices. It is a figure of speech that implicitly compares two non-similar objects or phenomena, finding and stressing their common or even identical feature.

A. Saja Abdul-Hassan and A. Sa'ad Salman have investigated how L. M. Alcott used metaphors not plainly as figurative and decorative elements, but as essential tools to construct meaning of metaphorical collocations in the first 10 chapters of the novel. The analysis of metaphorical collocations suggests that certain metaphors repeat and engage within the text, creating layers of specific symbolic meanings. This adds depth to the novel, allowing L. M. Alcott to explore intricate ideas and emotions fully and with a sense of wonder [3].

L. M. Alcott constructs the novel narration through the extensive and consistent use of metaphors representing different aspects of characters' lives. Among them we distinguish quite common and widely known ones which get some specific features in terms of the novel's plot. For example, *Castles In The Air* as Jo's way to call the girls' hopes and dreams stressing their unattainability: "Wouldn't it be fun if all the castles in the air which we make could come true, and we could live in them?" (chapter 13, page 187) [1]. This metaphor is recurrent in the novel. Another instance is found in the metaphor of a *Harvest Time* which is used by the author to name a happy time in Mrs. March's life when her daughters get independent and successful due to her continuous education and care. As Mrs. March says to Jo, "Yes, Jo, I think your harvest will

be a good one,” (chapter 47, page 262) [2], further emphasizing this theme of productive outcomes resulting from fostering and guidance. *Beehive* is used to describe metaphorically both business and productiveness of March’s household. The author develops this metaphor further, describing Beth’s quiet yet occupied days, *“Long, quiet days she spent, not lonely nor idle, for her little world was peopled with imaginary friends, and she was by nature a busy bee”* (chapter 4, page 51) [1].

Using them L. M. Alcott invites the reader’s familiar world into newly constructed and depicted one.

Quite interesting example of a novel-specific metaphors we find in the *River*, which stands for Beth’s death, and crossing it means to leave this world and pass away. Using *Gull* to characterize Jo, the author highlights her strength and desire for freewheeling freedom: *“You are the gull, Jo, strong and wild, fond of the storm and the wind, flying far out to sea, and happy all alone.”* (chapter 35, page 11) [2].

It should be noted, that the novel “Little Women” represents a well-balanced combination of conventional and creative metaphors preserving common accessibility and giving personal touch and flavour, opening the space to new interpretations and assumptions.

References:

1. Alcott L. M. *Little Women. Part 1. Folio World’s Classics Series. Kyiv: Folio, 2024. 320 p.*
2. Alcott L. M. *Little Women. Part 2. Folio World’s Classics Series. Kyiv: Folio, 2024. 352 p.*
3. Saja Abdul-Hassan A., Sa’ad Salman A. *A Linguistic Study of Metaphorical Collocations in Alcott’s “Little Women”.* *Journal of Sustainable Studies. 2024. Vol. 6. P. 1124–1150.*