

CALL FOR PAPERS: Louisa May Alcott Society

American Literature Association Conference, San Francisco, CA, May 24-27, 2018

(1) The Newness of *Little Women*

When it initially appeared in 1868, *Little Women* broke new ground. Fresh, lively, and distinctly American, in the eyes of its first reviewers, the novel offered up singular depictions of young women and men playing, talking, dreaming, creating, and learning in ways that embodied its era and region and that also immediately generated passionate responses. For this roundtable, we anticipate an animated conversation inspired by concise and stimulating perspectives about the newness of *Little Women*. Proposals might consider questions such as the following: In what ways did Alcott's book revolutionize the novel as a genre or form? In what ways did Alcott's slangy diction transform the language of American literary realism? What are *Little Women's* most distinctive contributions to the development of literary or popular culture? How did the novel change the ways writers could represent young people, mothers and families, art and ambition? How does *Little Women* represent in unique or ephemeral ways its own moment in history? We would also welcome emerging approaches to *Little Women*: What are the newest or most innovative ways of examining and teaching the novel, and how can they help us see it with fresh eyes? Please send 300-word abstracts by email to Gregory Eiselein eiselei@ksu.edu and Anne K. Phillips annek@ksu.edu. The deadline for proposals is Friday, January 19, 2018. Early submissions welcome.

(2) Alcott in the Classroom

Despite the fact that Louisa May Alcott spent a fair amount of time as a teacher in the 1850s and early 1860s, and that James T. Fields supposedly told her in 1871, "stick to your teaching" since she couldn't write, Alcott herself found teaching "hard work" that she didn't like. Nevertheless, the contemporary classroom remains a place of prime opportunity, not only for probing the breadth and depth of her work but for continuing and expanding her readership – even more so now than it had been for many years, since so much more of her *oeuvre* is now available to us. This panel seeks innovative ideas for including Alcott's works in courses, either as the prime focus in those dedicated specifically to her or among other writers in courses dedicated to any number of themes. Do you teach *Moods* in an examination of transcendentalism? *Work* in a course on feminist writers? Her children's novels in a course on children's literature or nineteenth-century child studies or education? Her Civil War fiction in a course dedicated to that particular literature? Do you teach Alcott parallel to or contrasting with other writers she admired (or didn't!) – Goethe, Bronte, Hawthorne, Davis, Twain, Henry James? What kinds of approaches have been successful in bringing students to a greater understanding of her work? We hope to explore these possibilities and more in the presentations for this panel. Please send 300-word abstracts by email to Christine Doyle at doylec@ccsu.edu by Friday, January 19, 2018. Early submissions are welcome.