

The Louisa May Alcott Society | Call for Papers
American Literature Association Conference | May 2021

Deadline for Submissions: January 15, 2021

Name of Organization: The Louisa May Alcott Society

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The Louisa May Alcott Society will sponsor two panels at the 32nd Annual Conference of the American Literature Association, to be held May 27-30, 2021, Westin Copley Place, 10 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02116.

Please send 300-word abstracts for either panel to Gregory Eiselein at eiselei@ksu.edu. The deadline for proposals is Friday, January 15, 2021. Early submissions welcome.

Alcott and Adaptation

For over a century, Louisa May Alcott's writings have been adapted in many ways—for stage, radio, television, and film. As scholars such as Beverly Lyon Clark, Elizabeth Keyser, Elise Hooper, and others have documented, Alcott's work remains timely and continues to inspire adaptations and spinoffs for diverse audiences. The best known, of course, are the numerous film adaptations of *Little Women*. Each new production of Louisa May Alcott's classic novel both represents and reinterprets the lives of the four March sisters for a new audience.

We invite proposals for a panel on film adaptations of Alcott's works, including but not limited to *Little Women*. The many adaptations of *Little Women* include the 1933 RKO Pictures production directed by George Cukor and starring Katharine Hepburn, the 1949 MGM feature directed by Mervyn Leroy and starring June Allyson, the 1994 Columbia Pictures production directed by Gillian Armstrong and starring Winona Ryder, and the newest adaptation of *Little Women*, premiering in December 2019, directed by Greta Gerwig and starring Saoirse Ronan. Other adaptations of *Little Women* include the 2018 Clare Niederpruem film and the BBC/Masterpiece miniseries as well as the transmedia series, *The March Family Letters*. *Little Men* and *The Inheritance* have also been adapted for the screen.

These are just several examples among the many artistic interpretations of Alcott's works that could be discussed in papers exploring the ways film adaptations transform and reinvent Alcott's stories and characters.

Potential topics may include:

- gender equality and feminism(s)
- representation and diversity
- sexuality and class
- textual fidelity and nostalgia
- (a)politics of Alcott
- labor and work
- adaptive challenges of the text (i.e., casting different actors as Amy at different ages)
- adaptations in conversation with each other

Teaching Alcott: Alcott in Proximity to Other American Realists, Regionalists, Romantics

In college-level American literature anthologies, Louisa May Alcott enjoys an eclectic reputation. Her writings may appear in context with those of other Civil War or Realist writers or be cataloged as Transcendentalist works. Alternately, they can be regarded as Local Color or Regional writings, or considered in connection with the Gothic or with American Romanticism.

This panel seeks to consider Alcott's works in proximity to other nineteenth-century American authors, including but not limited to figures such as Davis, Fuller, Hawthorne, Melville, Sedgwick, Spofford, Whitman, and/or others. Attention to her Gothic tales, writings for adult readers, and works other than *Little Women* is especially welcome. Papers offering a pedagogical approach are desired. At the conference, associated curriculum guides and other resources for teachers would be welcome.

We aspire to showcase up to five presenters for this panel, aiming for papers of approximately 6 pages and lively audience follow-up during Q and A.

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Additional details about the 2021 ALA Conference may be found online at:

<http://americanliteratureassociation.org/ala-conferences/ala-annual-conference/> . For more

information about the Louisa May Alcott Society, please visit the Society's website at:

<http://www.louisamayalcottsociety.org> .