

### ***Little Women* and Its 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Editors**

Preparing the Norton Critical Edition of *Little Women* entailed a five-year process of exploration and discovery. In contrast with earlier editions of the novel, which merely reproduced the text of a single early printing of Alcott's work, the Norton edition reflects its co-editors' familiarity with thirty-one separate copies of early printings of the first and second volumes of Alcott's novel. Co-editor Greg Eiselein and I examined Alcott holdings at Harvard and the University of Texas, among other resources, and we compiled all of the differences we discovered between those editions, resulting in complete list of the variants between the first edition (1868 and 1869) and the one-volume "regular" edition (1880). We also crafted entirely new notes for our edition. Since the Norton edition was published in 2004, three additional scholarly editions of *Little Women* have appeared, and this presentation will address the differences in the editors' approaches to those editions, while also tracking what aspects of the Norton edition are represented or retained in them. Celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *Little Women*, this presentation thus will address specific textual issues related to Alcott's most well-known and enduring work while identifying larger philosophical issues concerning textual editing in general.