

## **Gender Inequality Analysis Represented in “Little Women” by Louisa May Alcott**

**Dinar Rosiana Mareta**  
[Pb201210056@upbatam.ac.id](mailto:Pb201210056@upbatam.ac.id)

**Afriana**  
[Afriana@puterabatam.ac.id](mailto:Afriana@puterabatam.ac.id)

**Universitas Putera Batam**

### **ABSTRACT**

Gender inequality is the unequal allocation of opportunities and rights, among people of various genders. This commonly works against one gender, typically women. This research aims to analyze Louisa May Alcott's "Little Women" with a focus on gender inequality. A qualitative approach was used in this study. This study also used theory from Fakhri (2008). The findings indicated that the novel describes five different forms of gender discrimination. The first is subordination, showing that Jo cannot do anything she wants because of her status as a woman. Second, stereotypes, when a woman behaves unfavourably or imitates a man, she will be perceived as a bad woman, like what Jo did because she always does the boyish tricks. Third, marginalization, shown by Jo character that can be the backbone of his family when their father goes to the war. Fourth, the burden of work, where Jo and her siblings not only work to earn money, they also work at home to clean the house. For the last form, which is violence, it did not happen in the novel. In order to rouse women at the time, gender injustice was brought up in "Little Women," and as a result, the subject came to represent the state of American society at that time. The conversation and utterances of the characters make it clear that the female characters struggle to fit in with society.

**Key words:** Gender Inequality; Qualitative Approach; Novel

### **INTRODUCTION**

For women and men to be granted equal privileges in society, feminism as a social movement attempt to give women more voice. Not only are women accepted as housewives, but they may also work and pursue higher education (Tong & Botts, 2018: 13). Furthermore, there are feminist concerns that are widely held in society, with some people holding the view that women are inferior to men as social beings and should not be treated equally. In this study, the researchers used a feminist approach to find out the issues that occur in women that hinder women from getting their rights as human beings. Then, feminist issues also occur a lot in today's society in various worlds. The distinctions between men and women were, as in the past, frequently the subject of public discussion. In this instance, inequity frequently happens, making women feel abandoned in society. As a result, women experience

a range of hardships and resentment in their daily lives (Ayu, 2019; S., 2020; Krismawati, 2021; Maryam et al., 2022).

As explained above, this study emphasizes the issue of gender inequality experienced by various women in the world. Men and women are born with the innate quality of gender, which is socially and culturally formed. The societal construction of gender dictates that males ought to be powerful and tough. On the other hand, because women are expected to be compassionate, it eventually becomes hard to differentiate between gender traits (Abidin et al., 2020; Fakhri, 2008: 8-11; Jacobsen, 2011; Mihira et al., 2021; Shang, 2022; Napsiah et al., 2023). It is understood that this system of society is a biological or divine provision and is thus exactly seen as nature. It is commonly believed, for instance, that raising children and taking care of the home are tasks best left to women. The truth is that males may be able to handle domestic chores and child-rearing (Fakhri, 2008: 11; Mayasari et al., 2020; Alvira et al., 2021).

As long as gender disparities do not lead to gender inequity, they are actually not an issue. However, the issue is that disparities in gender have given rise to many inequalities, affecting men and notably women in this case (Fakhri, 2008: 12-13; Faradita & Kusuma, 2022; Larasati, 2021). In society's view, these women are not appropriate if they do what men do. The woman's only responsibility is to remain at home and listen to the males in her family. The existence of stereotypes like this in women makes women really limited in doing what they want.

As mentioned by Napsiah et al. (2023), the persistence of gender inequality can be attributed to ingrained customs within society. Even though it is not news that customary behaviors have resulted in gender injustice for women, which still occurs, gender inequity cannot simply be stopped. It is crucial to highlight the gender inequality caused by traditional customs, particularly in Indonesia where there are many different ethnic groups. The Lampung tribe, with its many traditional customs, controls the relationship between men and women, which in turn affects women's status. For example, women are traditionally positioned as *mikhul* children in the family, meaning that daughters are in-laws and do not have the same social role as sons. The paternal or male lineage is highly prevalent in the patriarchal society of the Lampung tribe.

In addition to its existence in the actual world, gender inequality is a phenomenon that frequently surfaces as a topic in literary works, such as poetry, prose, novels, or dramas. According to Nurgiyantoro (2015), literary works as a place to voice aspirations or criticisms about issues that are happening in the surrounding environment. Aswar and Juita (2022); Muzaka and Suyanto (2020) stated that novels address a variety of societal themes, including feminism and gender. Novels as an indication that there is an issue or situation that occurs in society in the era when the author of the novel lived (Damono, 2011; Putri & Hariani, 2021). Because the novel contains facts from the environment or society in addition to the author's fiction, it was selected as the data source of this research.

The phenomena of gender inequality also occur in the novel "Little Women" written by Louisa May Alcott. This novel describes his story in the 19th century by telling how the situation was in the era where she and her family lived, partly taken from the true story of the author's life but explained it fictionally (Nungrahenti, 2021). "Little Women" was translated into several languages and published in two volumes in 1868 and 1869. The novel discusses the struggles faced by March Sister (Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy). The problem of women's difficulties in achieving their goals and aspirations is brought up in this story.

The story portrayed the issues facing women in the 19th century. Because American culture at the period affected women's attire, social standing, and patriarchal values, it continued to pose issues for them (Ekasanti & Hernawati, 2019; Santi & Rahmi, 2019; Adzkiya et al., 2022). The public at that time still found it extremely sensitive to discuss gender equality. In comparison to males, women continue to have less positions and possibilities. Women are confined by cultural and environmental contexts, which results in disparities in men's and women's perspectives on society. This viewpoint also gave rise to a stereotype that trapped a lot of women. After considering the previous explanation, the researcher chose to apply Fakih's theory (2008) to examine the problems with gender inequality that arise in the "Little Women" book, which discussed 5 types of gender inequality, namely subordination, stereotype, violence, marginalization, and burden of work.

Louisa May Alcott's book "Little Women" served as the data source for this research. Because the novel recounts the narrative of the main character, Jo March, who has a unique personality and shows how she lives in a time when feminism is still frowned upon, the researchers were drawn to it. This study aims to explore the gender inequity of the "Little Women" story. It is evident from the utterances and dialogues of the characters that the March sisters had difficulties attempting to blend in with society.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Previous Related Study**

Other researchers have examined gender inequalities using a variety of novels, approaches, and ideas since it is an intriguing topic. The first article examined by Alfarini and Tetty (2022), the intention of this research is to examine gender inequality by the main character Kim Ji Young's. Sylvia Walby's (1990) theory was applied in this research. The textual analysis approach was used to conduct this study. The findings demonstrate that Walby's theories of gender inequality are present throughout the novel, and the protagonist battles to overcome the injustices she encounters due to her melancholy, which alters her character.

Second research written by Wurangian et al. (2023), this research uses feminist theory from Betty Friedan to point out gender inequity in Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte. For this research, the researchers are using a qualitative method. According

to the research, Jane Eyre, the main heroine in the novel, has to deal with inequity in her life, including being mistreated by men and society. It is a relief for her to live with her beloved.

Third research discovered by Faradita and Kusuma (2021). The study investigated how the novel *Well-Behaved Indian Women* portrays gender inequity. Beauvoir's existentialist feminist theory is applied in this study. This study employed a qualitative technique. According to the findings of this study, gender disparity forces Nandini and Simran to deal with unfair possibilities in their relationships, careers, and educational paths. They also accept that it is incorrect, seizing the opportunity to choose what they believe is best for themselves and rejecting disparities.

### **Gender Inequality**

Mardiyani and Tawami (2022), different societal conceptions of gender have made the roles that men and women play in their cultures obvious. In actuality, the term "gender" refers to a cultural construct that distinguishes the roles, attitudes, and feelings that men and women experience in society. Prastyowati et al. (2019) stated that inequality is a serious problem that has to be addressed with much more focus, affecting individuals from all backgrounds and across all nations. The community's inequitable behaviors, which are still rooted in the outdated worldview, led to discriminatory treatment of individuals based only on differences in gender, ethnicity, religion, and skin tone.

As mentioned by Fakhri (2008), the mechanism and structure of gender inequality make both men and women victims of the system. There is still inequality against women everywhere in the world. This is a result of the patriarchal system, which subjugates women and places males in positions of dominance. The injustice and uneven chances that someone must deal with just because of their gender are referred to as gender inequality, and this is something that frequently affects women. It can occur in both the public and private domains, impacting facets of an individual's life, including finances, relationships, education, and health (Faradita & Kusuma, 2021). There are several types of gender inequality that warrant consideration.

#### *Subordination*

The first type is subordination. According to Juhana et al., (2021), gender subordination is a result of biological features that produce gender inequality. Women are the source of gender subordination since they are perceived as soft and maternal due to their femininity, while males are perceived as powerful and rugged. Gender-based subordination manifests itself in a variety of ways, depending on the context and the individual (Fakhri, 2008). Gender inequality, characterized by subordination, occurs when one gender holds a greater status than the other.

### *Stereotypes*

Stereotyping is the designation or labeling of a certain group that stems from the perceptions society makes of others depending on their cultural background and point of view. (Mardiyani & Tawami, 2022a). As stated by Fakh (2008), stereotyping is the application of a conventional label or picture to an individual or group on the basis of an erroneous or heretical belief.

### *Violence*

Fakh (2008) explains that an assault or breach of someone's bodily or mental integrity is referred to as violence. Gender-related violence is a subset of violence against a certain sex that results from presumptions about gender. Violence against fellow humans often originates from a variety of factors, violence committed as a result of a perception among the community that one sex is more or less understood than another (Juhana et al., 2021). Men are treated with more discretion than women since women are viewed as weaker beings. Acts of violence inevitably follow the differentiation.

### *Marginalization*

Women are marginalized not just in the job but also in the home, in society, in culture, and even throughout the nation (Fakh, 2008). Discrimination against male and female family members is one way that marginalization of women has happened in the home. Marginalization refers to a process that causes poverty as a result of sex disparities. A individual or group might be marginalized in a variety of ways (Putri & Hariani, 2021). Using gender stereotypes, such as supposing that women serve as extra wage earners, is one method. This presumption is frequently applied to them when they work in the public sector, away from the house.

### *Burden of Work*

As mentioned by Fakh (2008), it is women's responsibility to shoulder a disproportionate amount of the load in low-income households. Furthermore, the woman has a double workload if she is required to work. (Putri and Hariani (2021) stated that when one gender bears a greater task than the other, it is referred to as a double burden. In the meantime, women have a lot of heavy and ongoing obligations. For instance, in addition to providing for her husband sexually, women must also take care of the home, be pregnant, give birth, and nurse their child. Furthermore, she occasionally works for a living (at home), so letting go of the aforementioned obligations does not entail doing away with them.

## **METHOD**

### **Design and Samples**

The qualitative approach was employed in this study to provide sentences and paragraphs that represent the data gathering outcomes. Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated that the significance connected to an individual or group in society or human issues may be found and examined through qualitative research. The object

of this study is the "Little Women" novel that was published in one volume in the year 1800, but the researcher used the novel in the year 2004 because of the limitations in finding the original publication of the novel.

### **Instrument and Procedure**

Fakih's (2008) theory of gender inequality was applied in this study. This research aims to explain the gender inequity that Louisa Alcott's female characters in "Little Women" endured. The observation method was used in this study to gather data from the novel. When anything can be witnessed directly, such as an action, or scenario, observation is a useful technique to employ (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Furthermore, note-taking procedures were used in this study to gather data. The process of gathering data for this study involves three parts. The original data source was read by the researcher first. Second, being aware of the gender inequalities of the female character. Third, gather information by note-taking pertinent statements that show how the characters represent gender inequality.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis for this study was done by categorizing and describing various kinds of gender inequality as described by Fakih (2008) based on the utterances or statements made by female characters in the story. This will make the gender inequalities that the female characters in the novel experience clear to readers. The descriptive method of analysis was employed in this study. The theory and the body of literature must be able to be described by the descriptive method of analysis that is applied to the data (Ratna, 2015). Additionally, these are the procedures for analyzing the available data. First, the researcher looked at all of the information that had been gathered. Second, the researcher looked at the story's feminist themes using Fakih's theory. Thirdly, the findings are presented as statements referring to gender inequalities.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Alcott's book "Little Women" describes the existence of a family during the 19th-century American Civil War that is predominately made up of females. In the book, Louisa May Alcott explains the several castes that were prevalent in that era of civilization. The differences are evident in the novel's interactions and discussions, as well as in the everyday attire of the characters. Gender inequality is also a result of discrepancies in roles and identities that are created by families, communities, and society. The following is how "Little Women" portrays gender inequity:

### *Subordination*

The idea of subordination is the belief that women are emotional and illogical, making it impossible for them to lead and forcing them into subordinate roles. American culture was one of the factors that contributed to the emergence of gender subordination in the 19th century. Compared to men, women are positioned lower.

*...It's bad enough to be a girl, anyway, when I like boy's games and work and manners! I can't get over my disappointment in not being a boy. And it's worse than ever now, for I'm dying to go and fight with Papa. And I can only stay home and knit, like a poky old woman!' (Alcott, 2004, p. 6)*

Jo is shown as a girl who enjoys playing video games like men do. She likes the activities and behavioral traits of boys. She regretted not being born as a free guy who could do anything without interference after learning this. Jo's ambition to enlist in the fighting army was thwarted by the fact that she was a daughter, and at the time, women were not allowed to enlist and were instead forced to wait at home, unlike their father, who also served in the war. The character Jo's thoughts of gender subordination are reflected in this remark. Knitting is seen as a stereotypically "female" hobby, and there are other conventional gender stereotypes that confine women to specific jobs and activities. Jo feels constrained by social norms that push her into conventional positions that do not align with her interests and goals.

Jo's discontent with her gender position and her desire to partake in what are seen as "men's games, jobs, and manners" are also evident in the extract. This illustrates the idea that occupations and activities that are generally associated with men are frequently linked to strength and power. Jo declares that she wants to do things that men do, like fight with her father. This emphasizes the desire to overcome limitations imposed by gender roles and partake in activities that are frequently thought to be reserved for men. Women are viewed as weak beings with several limits who can only be found at home performing menial tasks and household chores, and unlike males, they are not believed to be able to fight in wars. And also, many people's views say that women are only destined to be people's wives and obey their husbands.

*"People don't have fortunes left them in that style nowadays; men have to work, and women to marry for money. It's a dreadful unjust world." (Alcott, 2004, p. 172 )*

This quotation demonstrates knowledge of gender roles in society as well as economic inequalities. In this instance, Meg's elegant and kind nature combined with the most gorgeous face of her younger brothers. Meg is the first woman in the family to get married and start a new family with her spouse. The aforementioned remark serves as an example of how weak women are and how they must embrace being patient as a party. It is believed that males occupy a dominant role and women occupy a subordinate one (Fakih, 2008). A man believes he has control over the lady he has married after they get married. Women believe that they are not treated equally in comparison to men because of this belief, which has dehumanized and hurt them. There is an issue with that unfairness, one that many women face.

The utterance "women marry for money" emphasizes how social norms require women to pick financially stable partners. It represents the belief that women do not have the same access to financial resources as men and are frequently

encouraged to pursue marriage as a means of achieving financial stability. The statement "It's a dreadful, unjust world" expresses the belief that societal standards and economic institutions are unfair. It is becoming clear that gender disparities in the economy lead to an unequal society in which women are frequently restricted to marrying for financial stability. This utterance may also be seen as a criticism of the marital system's emphasis on money. It is often believed that marriage is the sole path to financial stability for women, which is unjust and harmful.

### *Stereotypes*

Stereotypes are frequently connected to recognizable traits. The social and cultural building of society that results in stereotypes is a negative spiral. Gender stereotypes in this situation are frequently harmful to one side, whether it be a man or a woman. Several stereotypes about women are shown in Alcott's "Little Women" novel. This gender stereotype is a result of the belief that women shouldn't act or appear like males.

*... 'You are old enough to leave off boyish tricks, and to behave better, Josephine. It didn't matter so much when you were a little girl, but now you are so tall, and turn up your hair, you should remember that you are a young lady.' (Alcott, 2004, p. 22)*

This quotation occurs when Jo is always acting like a man because she should be acting like a graceful woman because she is starting to grow up. The March family had four children total, with Jo being the second. She enjoys dressing like a man because she finds comfort in that appearance. Women's freedom of speech and movement is curtailed. There will always be shadows, and women will feel confined and limited in their acting due to their dread of criticism or remarks. It has denied women the freedom to express themselves by limiting their mobility. This quotation illustrates how gender stereotypes and conventional standards about women's conduct and appearance are used. It is apparent that the phrase "now you are so tall, and turn up your hair" is a critique of women's bodies. The emphasis on height and hairstyles reflects the notion that women's bodies should meet a specific norm in order to be deemed suitable for the role of "young woman."

The statement "You are old enough to leave off boyish tricks" highlights the idea that as women get older, they should stop doing things that are seen as "boy tricks." This is a reflection of prejudices that prevent women from adopting behaviors that are seen to adhere to established gender standards. The statement "you should remember that you are a young lady" conveys the idea that women should be conscious of their position and gender duties at all times. This establishes expectations for the behavior of a "young lady" and implies pressure to fit into preconceived notions about gender.

*'I'm not! And if turning up my hair makes me one, I'll wear it in two tails till I'm twenty,' cried Jo, pulling off her net, and shaking down a chestnut*



*mane. 'I hate to think I've got to grow up, and be Miss March, and wear long gowns, and look as prim as a China Aster!...(Alcott, 2004, p. 6)*

In this excerpt, Jo shares her dissatisfaction with the expectations society places on women as they mature. Her comment, "And if turning up my hair makes me one, I'll wear it in two tails till I'm twenty," demonstrates her adamant rejection of the concept of adhering to traditional feminine stereotypes. This implies that Jo is unwilling to give up her uniqueness and conform to traditional gender norms. It is possible to interpret Jo's choice to remove "her net and shake down her chestnut mane" as a symbolic gesture of defiance against the limitations of conventional femininity. Her conception of growing up and becoming "Miss March" is linked to prim appearances and lengthy dresses, which suggests a sense of confinement and loss of individuality. The resemblance to "China Aster" could also allude to Jo's dislike of the frail and delicate stereotype of conventional femininity. Jo's will to challenge social norms and her rebellious nature make it clear that she rejects gender stereotypes that force women into predetermined roles and longs for freedom.

#### *Marginalization*

There is a misconception that males play an essential role in every area because women do not play a major part in every aspect. Jo ventured to discuss the injustices she had witnessed at the time against women. Similar to the issue of justice in the workplace, women in the book are unable to obtain respectable employment because their primary responsibility is taking care of the home as housewives. Even if they do manage to find employment, it will only be at a low salary and not be enough to support their daily needs. The three statements below demonstrate this.

*'... I'm the man of the family now Papa is away, and I shall provide the slippers, for he told me to take special care Mother while he was gone.'*  
(Alcott, 2004, p. 24)

The incident described in the statement above occurred on Christmas Day, when Jo March and her brother wished to give their mother a gift because she had been dressing simply. But since they are unemployed, they do not have enough money. They are unable to work like men since they are women who must stay at home. For this reason, they are not employed. However, Jo March, the tomboyish second kid, wants to work and provide for his family just as his father did. In the meantime, his father had departed, and it was he who had taken on the mantle of his father. Jo's utterance, "I'm the man of the family now Papa is away," illustrates a reversal of roles, with Jo—who is generally a woman—taking on duties usually performed by the male head of the home. One way to challenge conventional gender norms and expectations is to observe this reversal.

Declaring herself the "man of the family," Jo is taking on a position that her father would normally fill in the social setting of the era in which the narrative is set. The text implies that Jo feels empowered now that their father is not around them.

Because the female characters in the novel are left to define and assume responsibility for their roles in the absence of a male figure, it also subtly alludes to a sort of marginalization that they endure. It illustrates the intricacies of gender roles and expectations during that historical period by reflecting the difficulties and modifications the characters make in reaction to the absence of the father figure.

*"... 'No, it's mine honestly. I didn't beg, borrow, or steal it. I earned it, and I don't think you'll blame me, for I only sold what was my own.' As she spoke, Jo took off her bonnet, and a general outcry arose, for all her abundant hair was cut short. 'Your hair! Your beautiful hair!' 'Oh, Jo, how could you? Your one beauty.' 'My dear girl, there was no need of this.' (Alcott, 2004, pp. 288-289)*

When Jo March and her sister learned that their father was ill, they gathered money to enable his mother to go take care of him. This is when the aforementioned remark occurred. In the above excerpt from Louisa May Alcott's "Little Women," Jo's choice to trim her thick hair is a pivotal event that merits examination within the framework of gender and marginalization. As she states, "I earned it, and I don't think you'll blame me, for I only sold what was my own," Jo may have decided to chop her hair as a consequence of a business deal. The emphasis on "what was my own" suggests that she controlled her body and decisions. However, the requirement for explanation suggests that one is conscious of social norms and possible backlash.

It is possible to interpret her decision to cut her hair, typically perceived as a sign of femininity and beauty, as a conscious rejection of prevailing gender stereotypes. The other characters' outcry, which reflects their amazement and disappointment, highlights the pressure society places on women to meet predetermined ideals of beauty. Expressions like "Your one beauty" and "Your beautiful hair!" draw attention to how much emphasis society places on a woman's physical appearance as a defining quality. Jo's choice to chop off her hair goes against the idea that a woman's value is determined by how she looks. By voluntarily giving up what some consider to be her "one beauty," Jo affirms her autonomy and defies the limited expectations that are put on women. This act of rebellion against conventional beauty standards may be seen as a way for women to fight being marginalized because of their looks.

*"... I'd write out of a magic inkstand, so that my works should be as famous as Laurie's music. I want to do something splendid before I go into my castle—something heroic, or wonderful—that won't be forgotten after I'm dead. I don't know what, but I'm on the watch for it, and mean to astonish you all, some day. I think I shall write books, and get rich and famous; that would suit me, so that is my favorite dream." (Alcott, 2004, p. 158)*

Jo March said the above when she was talking to Laurie about their dream. She is revealing that she wants to work as hard as a famous novelist. Jo's aspirations show

a desire to break free from traditional gender roles and pursue a path that goes beyond what is expected of women in the time period in which the story is set. Jo's wish to write with a magic inkstand and her reference to Laurie's music indicate that she longs for fame and recognition, similar to what a man like Laurie achieves through his musical pursuits. By expressing the desire to do something splendid, heroic, or wonderful before entering her castle, Jo is articulating a desire for accomplishments and recognition typically associated with men. "I don't know what, but I'm on the watch for it" conveys Jo's proactive search of chances and difficulties as well as her will to control her own fate. Her goal to astound everyone one day is a proclamation of her independence and a defiance of the restrictions placed on women in that historical period.

The mention of producing books, being wealthy, and becoming well-known indicates Jo's desire to break into the traditionally male-dominated public sphere. Writing was not considered a normal career option for women, particularly in the era the book is set in, so becoming well-known and wealthy as a writer would have been unusual and difficult. Jo's aspirations show a desire to go above gender norms and make a contribution to society that hasn't always been possible for women. In order to challenge the restrictions placed on women in the 19th century, this text addresses the issue of gender marginalization by presenting a female character who strives to succeed in areas beyond the roles set by society standards.

### *Burden of Work*

Within the field of gender studies, discussion on the workload might concentrate on the uneven allocation of domestic and childcare duties between males and females. Throughout history, women have frequently performed a disproportionate amount of domestic work, which includes caring for children, cooking, cleaning, and other household duties. When women work outside the house for pay, this unequal allocation is sometimes referred to as the "double burden".

*"Mother didn't say anything about our money, and she won't wish us to give up everything. Let's each buy what we want, and have a little fun; I'm sure we work hard enough to earn it," cried Jo, examining the heels of her shoes in a gentlemanly manner.*" (Alcott, 2004, p. 4)

The aforementioned incident occurred when Jo March and her sister attempted to purchase a Christmas gift for their mother. Jo didn't have enough money to buy their mother anything, nor did her sister. as Meg, Jo's sister, and Jo alone are employed. In actuality, they are paid a meager wage. Jo is addressing the concepts of financial independence and the right to partake in the rewards of their effort when she makes the first statement. Jo's comment implies a wish to maintain control over their earnings in spite of their social and familial obligations.

The statement "Mother didn't say anything about our money" could allude to some degree of financial autonomy or judgment on their part while handling their income. This might be seen as a challenge to the gender norms that were prevalent in the

past, which sometimes limited women to household duties without giving them the same authority over financial affairs. Jo's suggestion that they individually purchase what they like and engage in some leisure activities is an endorsement of individual pleasure and relaxation. This viewpoint, which recognizes the value of taking a break and giving in to personal needs as a reward for their hard work, can be seen as a response to the stress of work.

Jo's addition of the line "I'm sure we work hard enough to earn it" highlights the relationship between the right to benefit from one's labor and effort. This statement affirms the belief that everyone, regardless of gender, should be free to enjoy the fruits of their effort and contradicts the social assumption that women should prioritize unselfish commitment to family and work. Jo's comment illustrates a desire for financial and personal independence despite the limitations imposed by their 19th-century gender norms.

*"You don't have half such a hard time as I do," said Jo. "How would you like to be shut up for hours with a nervous, fussy old lady, who keeps you trotting, is never satisfied, and worries you till you you're ready to fly out the window or cry?" (Alcott, 2004, p. 21)*

Jo is discussing the obstacles and problems she encounters in her profession and offering insight into the weight of work theory, especially as it relates to gender roles. Jo's comment, "You don't have half as much of a hard time as I do," draws attention to what appears to be a difference in how difficult their various jobs are. Jo's description of being "shut up for hours with a nervous, fussy old lady" makes it seem likely that she is talking about employment related to housekeeping or providing care for an elderly or particular person. Words like "keeps you trotting," "never satisfied," and "worries you" illustrate the psychological and physical toll that this type of labor takes. The emotional strain and repeated nature of the labor add to the difficulty of the work she is discussing.

The utterance offers some insight into the difficulties that women may have had in positions related to caring and household duties, particularly in the era in which the novel is set. The expectation placed on women to perform in these capacities—often without receiving the appropriate recognition or gratitude—can lead to an uneven workload. Jo's statement that she feels like she wants to "fly out the window or cry" highlights the emotional toll that her obligations are taking. The burden of work theory recognizes that particular positions may entail not just physical effort but also emotional and mental engagement, and thus emotional labor is an important part of that theory. Jo's comment illustrates the mental and physical toll of caring and household chores connected with conventional gender roles, as well as the perceived disparity in the difficulty of their different activities.

## CONCLUSION

As a conclusion from the examination of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* above, women suffer from four types of gender injustice. The first is subordination, where in the novel depicted men are placed in a more dominant position than women, such as Jo March, considered inappropriate to be able to decide and choose what they want. Second, negative stereotypes are more heavily labeled on women. When a woman behaves unfavorably or imitates a man, she will be perceived as a bad woman, like what Jo did. Third, because women do not play a significant part in every element, there is a presumption that males do, this is known as marginalization. Like Jo, that can be the backbone of his family when their father goes to the war. Fourth, the burden of work. Where Jo and also her sibling in the novel not only work to earn money, they also work at home to clean the house. They get a double load here. For the last form, which is violence, the researchers cannot find the data on violence in the novel because the novel does not tell about the violence that happened to the female character. Gender inequality and the presence of power are the causes of this. One of the factors contributing to gender inequality is patriarchal society, which constantly places women in a subordinate position to males. Since women are not seen as superior to men, they are just permitted to be a part of them and cannot copy them. Because this idea has permeated society, women as well as men will surround one another in an attempt to surpass or emulate a man's status.

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