

**SOCIAL INEQUALITY BETWEEN  
MARCH AND LAURENCE'S FAMILY  
IN LOUISA MAY ALCOTT'S *LITTLE WOMEN***

**THESIS**



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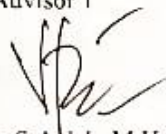
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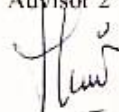
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## ABSTRACT

Arthamevia, Cindy. (2025). *Social Inequality between March and Laurence's Family in Louisa May Alcott's Little Women*. English Literature Department, Faculty of Adab and Humanities, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Advisors: (I) (I) Sufi Ikrima Sa'adah, M.Hum, (II) Itsna Syahadatud Dinnuriyah, MA.

This study analyzes the representation of social inequality in *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott by focusing on the social and economic differences between the March and Laurence families and their effects on daily life, social positions, and life opportunities. The research employs New Criticism to examine intrinsic elements of the text, including characterization, symbols, motifs, and class-based conflicts, while Marxist theory is used to explain how class structure, economic conditions, and access to material resources shape social relations within the novel.

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data. The data obtained in the novel are in the form of words, phrases, sentences, quotations, or characters' thoughts. The descriptive qualitative method is helpful to analyze these kinds of data because the method allows the researcher to interpret a deeper meaning of the data. The researcher uses secondary data obtained from previous e-journals and articles related to *Little Women* novel to enrich the primary data.

The findings reveal that social inequality is represented through contrasting economic conditions, living standards, and social positions of the two families. The March family is depicted as a lower middle class household that depends on labor, self discipline, and moral values to survive economic hardship, whereas the Laurence family represents the upper class, characterized by economic comfort, social freedom, and structural privilege. Furthermore, social inequality is manifested in daily social life through unequal access to education, security, and social mobility. These conditions significantly influence the characters' development, as the March sisters internalize simplicity, independence, and moral restraint, while the Laurence family embodies social protection and freedom derived from wealth. The study concludes that *Little Women* consistently reflects and critiques social inequality by demonstrating how class structure shapes individual life choices and social outcomes in nineteenth century American society.

**Keywords:** Social Class, Social Inequality, Impact of the inequality.

## ABSTRAK

Arthamevia, Cindy. 2025. *Kesenjangan Sosial antara Keluarga March dan Keluarga Laurence dalam Novel Little Women Karya Louisa May Alcott*. Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Adab dan Humaniora, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Pembimbing: (I) Sufi Ikrima Sa'adah, M.Hum, (II) Itsna Syahadatud Dinnuriyah, MA.

Studi ini menganalisis representasi ketidaksetaraan sosial dalam novel *Little Women* karya Louisa May Alcott dengan berfokus pada perbedaan sosial dan ekonomi antara keluarga March dan Laurence serta pengaruhnya terhadap kehidupan sehari-hari, posisi sosial, dan kesempatan hidup. Penelitian ini menggunakan Kritik Baru untuk mengkaji elemen intrinsik teks, termasuk karakterisasi, simbol, motif, dan konflik berbasis kelas, sementara teori Marx digunakan untuk menjelaskan bagaimana struktur kelas, kondisi ekonomi, dan akses terhadap sumber daya material membentuk hubungan sosial dalam novel tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif untuk menganalisis data.

Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif untuk menganalisis data. Data yang diperoleh dari novel berupa kata, frasa, kalimat, kutipan, atau pemikiran karakter. Metode deskriptif kualitatif bermanfaat untuk menganalisis jenis data ini karena metode tersebut memungkinkan peneliti untuk menafsirkan makna yang lebih dalam dari data tersebut. Peneliti menggunakan data sekunder yang diperoleh dari jurnal elektronik dan artikel terdahulu yang berkaitan dengan novel *Little Women* untuk memperkaya data primer.

Temuan menunjukkan bahwa ketidaksetaraan sosial direpresentasikan melalui kontras kondisi ekonomi, standar hidup, dan posisi sosial kedua keluarga. Keluarga March digambarkan sebagai rumah tangga kelas menengah ke bawah yang bergantung pada kerja keras, disiplin diri, dan nilai-nilai moral untuk bertahan hidup dalam kesulitan ekonomi, sedangkan keluarga Laurence mewakili kelas atas, yang dicirikan oleh kenyamanan ekonomi, kebebasan sosial, dan hak istimewa struktural. Lebih lanjut, ketidaksetaraan sosial termanifestasi dalam kehidupan sosial sehari-hari melalui akses yang tidak setara terhadap pendidikan, keamanan, dan mobilitas sosial. Kondisi-kondisi ini secara signifikan memengaruhi perkembangan karakter, karena para saudari March menginternalisasi kesederhanaan, kemandirian, dan pengendalian moral, sementara keluarga Laurence mewujudkan perlindungan sosial dan kebebasan yang berasal dari kekayaan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa *Little Women* secara konsisten mencerminkan dan mengkritik ketidaksetaraan sosial dengan menunjukkan bagaimana struktur kelas membentuk pilihan hidup individu dan hasil sosial dalam masyarakat Amerika abad ke sembilan belas.

**Kata Kunci:** Kelas Sosial, Kesenjangan sosial, Dampak ketidaksetaraan.

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