



A LIFE DRAGGED INTO PSYCHOSIS: REPRESENTATION OF EVERY WOMAN AS NOBODY IN *KIM JI-YOUNG, BORN 1982*

PSİKOZA SÜRÜKLENEN BİR HAYAT: *KİM Jİ-YOUNG, DOĞUM: 1982'DE HER KADININ HİÇ KİMSE OLARAK TEMSİLİ*

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Özet

Cho-Nam Joo tarafından 2016 yılında kaleme alınan *Kim Jiyoung, Doğum: 1982*, toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini ve standartlarını belirleyen kurumlara şiddetle karşı çıkmakta, kadınların ataerkil bir toplumda yaşadıkları deneyimlere odaklanırken aynı zamanda karşılaştıkları cinsiyete dayalı ayrımcılığı ve duygusal istismarı eleştirmektedir. Anlatı, toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı ücret farkı, işyerinde taciz, duygusal istismar, kadın düşmanlığı, gaslighting ve geleneksel toplumsal cinsiyet kalıplarına uyma baskısı da dahil olmak üzere, kadınların kendilerini savunurken ve toplumdaki yerlerini belirlerken karşılaştıkları zorlukların ilgi çekici bir analizini sunuyor. Bu makale, bu zorlukların psikoza sürüklediği bir toplumda, tüm kadınların temsilcisi olarak ortaya çıkan, ancak ataerkil paradigmda herkesin ve her şeyin altında kategorize edilen kadınların iç ve dış dünyasını Kore toplumuyla ilişkili olarak keşfetmeye çalışacaktır. Makale, daha fazla toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği ve toplumsal değişim ihtiyacını vurgulayarak okuyucuları daha eşitlikçi ve adil bir topluma nasıl katkıda bulunabilecekleri konusunda düşünmeye teşvik eden bu romanı, kendilerini hapsedilmiş hissettikleri ve patolojik deliler olarak görüldükleri ataerkil bir toplumda yaşamaya çalışan tüm kadınların temsili açısından inceleyecek ve kadınların toplumsal cinsiyet normlarını aşma iradesine ses vermek için yaratılan alternatif bir kadın anlatı öznelliğini Batılı feminist teoriler çerçevesinde bağlamsallaştırma yoluyla analiz edecektir.

Abstract

Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982, written by Cho-Nam Joo in 2016, vehemently opposes the institutions that typically determine gender roles and standards, focusing on women's experiences in a patriarchal society while also criticizing the discrimination on the basis of gender and emotional abuse that women encounter. The narrative offers a compelling analysis of the difficulties women encounter in asserting themselves and locating their places in society, including the gender pay gap, workplace harassment, emotional abuse, misogyny, gaslighting, and the pressure to adhere to traditional gender stereotypes. In a society driven to psychosis by these challenges, this article will try to explore the inner and outer world of women who emerge as representative of all women, but who are categorized below everyone and everything in the patriarchal paradigm, in relation to Korean society. The article will examine this novel by means of its portrayal of women and gender dynamics and contextualizing it within the frameworks of Western feminist theories, which encourages readers to think about how they can contribute to a more egalitarian and just society by emphasizing the need for greater gender equality and social change, from the point of view of the representation of all women trying to live in a patriarchal society where they feel imprisoned and are considered pathological lunatics and analyze it through its contextualization within Western feminist theories of an alternative female narrative subjectivity created to give voice to women's will to transcend gender norms.

INTRODUCTION

“What if ... What if the baby is another girl? What would you do, Daddy?”

(Cho, 2016/2020, p.12)

That is the linchpin of the book. A life journey of a woman to live with the idea of being “the second sex” to the men who are “the first sex,” meaning that women have traditionally been excluded from positions of power and influence and have been subjected to a range of gender-based discrimination and oppression. A way of understanding what has been going on since earlier times. This little sentence that shapes the book and indeed the world consists of many concerns about living as a woman. A seemingly insignificant cause can lead to a substantial effect. Oh Misook, Kim Jiyoung’s mother, asks her husband in fear (p.12), but it is such a “devilish idea” that he is reluctant to even contemplate it.

Korean parents, like any other patriarchal society, previously preferred to have sons over daughters. Such discrimination was caused by the fact that men often inherited the majority of a family's assets and carried on the name because, in a Confucian society based on a strictly patriarchal system, a son merely meant the honor of the family (Śleziak, 2013, p.33-36). If you have a son, your generation will continue, denoting your family name will always be alive. Therefore, we encounter a powerful and disappointing idea affecting people's lives for years and even pushed people to abort their unborn daughters. Like any other feminist writer, contemporary South Korean author Cho Nam-Joo argues that women have been marginalized and oppressed due to the patriarchal structures that exist in society.

With the character of Jiyoung, she illustrates the challenges that women face in a society that values men more highly than women. Jiyoung serves as the central protagonist, portraying the experiences faced by a typical Korean woman born in the year 1982. The story follows Jiyoung's life, delving into her personal struggles, societal expectations, and the various forms of gender discrimination and inequality she encounters throughout her journey, leading her to a complex psychiatric condition. Through Kim Jiyoung's experiences, the novel aims to shed light on the broader issues and systemic barriers faced by women in Korean society, highlighting that women are regularly and repeatedly discriminated against in all aspects of their lives, from education and employment to marriage and motherhood. It depicts how women are expected to sacrifice their own aspirations and ambitions for the sake of their families and children, with little recognition or reward for their efforts.

The author reproduces very real events about Korea related to abortion, the economic situation, Hoju system², sexual harassment, and gender discrimination by using some articles and books based on actual research and situations with the footnote references therein, her work is based. She successfully weaves her fiction and the reality of Korea, giving the reader the impression that these characters exist in the world in societies where the rigid male-dominated system prevails. This book explores the concepts of world change and whether Koreans still adhere to Confucian philosophy or not. Confucianism has historically reinforced gender-based stereotypes and discrimination, particularly in its emphasis on the importance of family and social hierarchy, placing a strong emphasis on the role of men as leaders and providers and on the role of women as wives and mothers. It reinforces gender-based hierarchies, with men traditionally occupying higher positions in society and having greater access to education and economic opportunities than women (Orozco, 2017, p.7-21). Highlighting the impact of patriarchal structures on women's lives, it emphasizes the importance of equal opportunities and access to resources for women to achieve their full potential. The work challenges the societal norms that perpetuate gender inequality and is sort of a call for systemic change to create a more equitable society for women.

Writing in 1929, Woolf hoped and believed that “in a hundred years...women will have ceased to be the protected sex...All assumptions founded on the facts observed when women were the protected sex will have disappeared” (1929, p.42). However, we truly understand throughout Cho’s novel, the little laws, agreements, and conventions have not altered though the world has drastically changed. After all, even in contemporary society, being the second sex means that women continue to face a range of challenges and obstacles as a result of their gender, and they are still underrepresented in positions of power and continue to experience discrimination and harassment in the workplace. They also face higher rates of poverty and violence and are often subjected to gender-based stereotypes and expectations that limit their opportunities and experiences.

SPIRITUAL DEATH OF A WOMAN

Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982, consists of six chapters, exploring the women’s experiences, and their struggles through the main character’s life from childhood to maternity, managing to display that it does not seem reasonable that there are men despising women, and even some

² Meaning “‘traditional household system’. Under such system, a household had the house head at its core where only direct male descendants inherit the position to serve as successive household heads.” Korean Law via the Internet, Hoju system, *KoreanLII*, http://www.koreanlii.or.kr/w/index.php/Hoju_system, (Date of Access:9. 05. 2023)

women being against women, apparently being a more devastating issue. The novel explores how women are incapacitated from a young age to accept the roles of a wife, mother, and caregiver, often at the expense of their own dreams and ambitions. Cho Nam-Joo's approach to the first chapter of the book, *Autumn*, foreshadows that something is imprecise since the fall is a symbol of decay, decline, and even death in literature. The falling leaves and withering plants are often used to represent the inevitable decline of all things, including human life. Not any physical death here, but a more powerful one awaits, the death of one's dreams, aspirations, and the essence of their being. The mental and spiritual death of a woman who is constantly pushed to be the “second” in the process from her childhood to adolescence, from her adulthood to motherhood. Unable to shout out what she wants to say, a woman seeks to defy this patriarchal society by splitting her “other-selves.”

As Simone de Beauvoir aptly stated, “[a]ll oppression creates a state of war. And this is no exception” (1987, p. 674), underscoring the inherent nature of conflict and struggles that arises from oppression. The oppressed have to fight against their oppressors in order to gain their freedom and equality, and this creates a state of war. She argues that this principle applies universally to all types of oppression, irrespective of the specific context or situation, stating that “this is not an exception.” In this way, the quote reminds us that oppression is not only unjust but also inherently destabilizing as it creates a constant state of conflict that can be detrimental to individuals, communities, and society as a whole. Nam-Joo’s main character’s psychotic disorder is her war; by taking on the personas of those around her, including her mother, friends, and other women going through the same struggle in general, she represents any woman who wants to speak up but remains silent. Jiyoung, yearning for liberation and equality by impersonating other personalities, engages in an arduous battle against their oppressors, immersing herself in a delusion. Through this subversive act, she challenges the oppressive forces that seek to confine her, initiating an internal state of warfare where the boundaries between self and the other blur.

Woolf, in one of the touchstone essays of feminism, *A Room of One's Own*, highlights the systemic and structural barriers that women have faced throughout history in pursuing their passions and developing their talents. Her examination of the challenges faced by women in asserting their identities and achieving recognition aligns with Kim Jiyoung's quest to understand and reveal her true self. Just as Woolf sheds light on the limited opportunities available to women throughout history, Kim Jiyoung similarly experiences the weight of societal expectations and gender-based limitations in her pursuit of self-expression. Not only is

she modeled for every woman because of maternal blues or postpartum depression, but she also inclines every woman due to her cracked surroundings in both her past and present.

Readers literally go through time with the author as she uncovers the root of Jiyoung's "abnormal behavior" (p.3) described in the opening chapter. Her multiple personalities stemming from dissociative identity disorder are a reflection of the difficulties she has faced in her life. The challenges arising from gender discrimination and the boundaries experienced her entire life. The author, Cho Nam-Joo, illustrates these challenges with such exquisite and evocative examples that the female readers feel as though they are walking Jiyoung's route. Kim Jiyoung does find some ways to express herself and assert her agency. She begins to speak out about her experiences and the discrimination and harassment she faces and connects with other women who share her experiences. Through these interactions, she begins to gain a sense of solidarity and community and finds ways to resist and challenge the forces that limit her opportunities and experiences. Consisting of predatory teenagers, abusive teachers, and cynical adults whom she encounters throughout her life, the male characters do not hold back from blaming the victim, making everything look like it was all her "fault." Victim blaming is an ideological progression centering on personal responsibility, and masculinity ideology endorses the idea of man's independence, toughness, and dominance, which is clearly demonstrated in the novel through a boy, throwing her shoes, another one stalking her, a coworker abusing her, and a father blaming her because of her behaving or dressing "unladylike." Ultimately it leads us to the following thought: "... (men) describe (the world) from their own point of view, which they confuse with absolute truth" (Beauvoir, 1987, p.162).

Men tend to see the world through their own perspectives and experiences, which they often believe to be the objective truth. This perspective can be biased by their position of power and privilege in society, leading them to overlook or dismiss the experiences and perspectives of others, particularly women. In this context, the phrase mentioned above "confuse with absolute truth" (1987, p.162) suggests that men may mistake their subjective experiences and perspectives for objective reality, leading them to overlook or downplay the experiences of others who may have a different perspective, which can create a kind of blindness to the experiences and struggles of marginalized groups, perpetuating inequality and discrimination. This behavior of men can be called gaslighting and manipulation. The term "gaslighting"

originates from a play and film called *Gas Light*³, in which a man intentionally manipulates his wife into believing that she is going insane by dimming the gas lights in their home and denying that the lights have changed (Thomas, 2018, p. 117). After all, men want “full control of feelings, thoughts or actions” of women (Petric, 2018, p.1).

All women in a patriarchal society, which creates confusion or chaos in order to maintain power and control over women, do is to question their own sanity, rely on the abuser for validation and confirmation, and believe in invalidating their feelings and experiences. They are always told they should be wise mothers instead of breadwinners since otherwise they will not be accepted by society. When Kim Jiyoung tries to express her feelings about being a mother and caregiver to her husband, Dae-Hyeon dismisses her concerns and makes her feel as if she is being irrational and delusional (Hong, 2020, p.16). That he is trying to be supportive makes it more unbearable since he wants to “help out” (p.94). However, helping out feels like he is “volunteering to pitch in on someone else’s work” (p.95) although raising a child is clearly parents’ common work. Similarly, when she tries to confront her boss about workplace discrimination, he denies any wrongdoing and makes her feel as though she is having a distorted perception. Kim Jiyoung's father repeatedly implies that she is just a girl and cannot achieve the same things as her brother who “already planned his career and competed to achieve his goals” (p.44) as well as belittles her mother and makes her feel as though she is crazy or unstable, which ultimately exposes them to their mental breakdown.

The narrative insinuates that people believe men who are valuable breadwinners should get a better education and work in better professions so that they can get a good salary and earn a living later since they believe no matter how much a woman tries, she will never be paid as much as a man. Therefore, as an idea that has permeated society, women are often financially dependent on men and do not have the means to pursue their own interests or create their own spaces for their creative pursuits since men already have decided on women’s lives. As Woolf argues, women needed "a room of one's own" - a physical space and financial independence - to be able to develop their own creative voices; however, it is not easy in a patriarchal society. She argues that if she was allowed, if she could find a place in the workplace without sacrificing anything, our subject would be so different than we argue now, not about how women are considered the second sex, but about “archaeology, botany, anthropology, physics, the nature

³Gas Light is a 1938 thriller play, set in 1880s London, written by the British novelist and playwright Patrick Hamilton & the 1940 British film *Gaslight*, directed by Thorold Dickinson. *Gas Light* (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gas_Light, (Date of Access: 20. 06. 2023)

of the atom, mathematics, astronomy, relativity, geography.” (Woolf, 1929, p. 21). However, men have already decided what a woman should do and how she should react, making women believe in those mindsets and operating gender in society, as well.

As things stand, gender is a set of social, cultural, and historical norms, expectations, and roles that are assigned to individuals based on their perceived sex. What is considered masculine or feminine is not fixed or universal but varies across cultures and historical periods. Gender roles, expectations, and identities are shaped by social practices and institutions, including family, education, media, religion, and law. These practices and institutions create and reinforce gendered norms and stereotypes that can limit people's opportunities and freedoms based on their perceived gender identities (Butler, 2004, p.343-344). Jiyoung, her mother, Oh Misook, and her sister, Eunyoung, all are constructed by society and the men around them. Women, therefore, have never been given the full right to develop themselves in all aspects, and in the 21st century, we are still talking about whether it is right for women just to be mothers, to stay at home, and not work.

Men who try to impose their own wishes about women by ignoring their wishes objectify and devalue women in this way by constructing them in society. Women like Jiyoung, who want to be valued and accepted as individuals but are marginalized, may feel imprisoned, helpless, and orphaned as they accept manipulation. They may not even realize whether this is abuse or not, like Jiyoung's mother-in-law, who is already imprisoned in a patriarchal system but does not make a sound. Conformity and acceptance are a way out of a state of madness. The author, who argues that women's opinions should be valued more by limiting men's perspectives, emphasizes the need to change this internalized understanding of the world. The constant manipulation she receives from her environment push Jiyoung into depression and pathological derangement. She begins to question her own worth and capabilities and struggles to find validation and support from those around her. Nobody is supportive but makes her feel “guilt over already thinking about having someone else look after their child” (p.89) Should she continue her career or give it all up? Will she regret it if she does? Why does she have to give up while her husband gives up nothing? Is her husband's career and dreams more valuable than hers? "What does he have to lose by having a child?" (p.99). Ultimately, her breaking point emerges, leading her to a dramatic and tragic climax.

This dramatic and tragic peak of Kim Jiyoung marks the emergence of the "new woman" in the novel, which refers to the evolving attitudes and actions of women who wanted greater independence, education, and possibilities outside the traditional domestic sphere. The new

woman emphasizes the cultural shift in women's roles and goals. Jiyoung is portrayed as a doll-like figure who exists solely to fulfill the desires and expectations of her surroundings like her father, her boss, her husband, and his family. Jiyoung, who conforms to societal expectations of a submissive and dependent wife, begins to challenge societal norms and fight for her rights in an excruciating way. However, as the novel unfolds, she begins to question and challenge these traditional gender roles by splitting into some personalities. The personalities who want to talk but keep silent because of patriarchic society. In the modern world, she desires personal growth, autonomy, and self-fulfillment outside the confines of her marriage, wishing to secure her own financial independence, a bold move that defies societal norms and expectations. This act of asserting herself and seeking self-realization aligns with the ideals of the "new woman."

Nam-Joo's portrayal of Jiyoung challenges the traditional gender roles and societal expectations of women in Korea. In conjunction with her metaphorical and symbolic but real psychosis, her character represents a departure from the passive, subservient woman to a more assertive and self-aware individual, embodying the spirit of the "new woman" who seeks greater independence and agency in her life. However, the end of the novel indicates, arduously, changing the mindset of Korean society, which for years has been driven by traditional Confucian values is not that easy to achieve. Even if they meet this strict requirement, they nevertheless face hostility and shame for carrying out the idea of being a wise mother and good wife they have been under constant pressure to perform throughout the course of their lives. If they cannot represent the entrenched idea of women about how they should be in Korean society, they are stigmatized as impractical and useless (Hirami, 2021). In this context, you can hear someone on the subway muttering "[a]bout to pop and still taking the tube to go make money..." (Cho, p. 92), but at the same time, you can see someone else in the park uttering that women take the husbands' money, and these women are being labeled as a "mom-roach" (p.110). Korea's confused ideas, oppressive demands for women, and stigmatizing behavior result in her war, leading her to madness.

On the other hand, her family, especially her grandmother, Koh Boonsoon, is a cultural paradigm of a patriarchal society that cherishes the son of the house. She internalizes patriarchal attitudes and beliefs, leading her to devalue other women. This can take the form of belittling other women's accomplishments, criticizing their existence, or perpetuating gender stereotypes. Traditional gender roles and expectations limit their opportunities and experiences and contribute to a broader culture of misogyny and gender-based discrimination. Her idea of these roles promotes that women should be passive, submissive, and focused on domestic duties. This

can limit women's opportunities and perpetuate gender inequality. The devaluation of women is linked to the devaluation of femininity, which is often associated with weakness and submissiveness (Lorde, 1995, p.1). She, therefore, conforms to social norms and expectations that devalue women and girls, such as placing a higher value on male children. Much more significant than Jiyoung's life is the grandson's formula. "How dare you try to take something that belongs to my precious grandson! Her grandson and his things were valuable and to be cherished; she wasn't going to let just anybody touch them..." (Cho, 2016/2020, p.12). Not being worth as much as food since her childhood, Jiyoung has been treated as nothing, "ranking below anybody," or even anything, with little to no power or influence. She represents every woman in the patriarchy, while also being nobody. It is contended that throughout history, women have been disadvantaged due to gender discrimination and exclusion from opportunities, highlighting that women have been held back by a lack of access to education, the expectation of domestic duties, and social and cultural barriers to entry into the world. As a young child, Jiyoung is cognisant of these double standards due to her home and educational setting, but when she starts attempting to hold down a position as a woman, these issues become intolerable in this "male gaze" realm.

Man has "human rights," but women have "female human rights," vividly portraying human rights are not women's rights, not considering women as human beings. The idea of inherent contradictions and power imbalances that can arise within men and women in patriarchal societies, where men assert dominance and privilege despite espousing principles of equality is famously expressed in the quote "[a]ll animals are equal but some are more equal than others" (Orwell, 1945, p.24), openly echoing in the form of gender discrimination throughout the novel, *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*. The exclusion of women from workplaces, education, and even public spaces has led to a biased representation of women's experiences and perspectives. Inasmuch as women face barriers to accessing education and training, which limit their opportunities for economic success. This is due to factors such as gender-based discrimination, poverty, and cultural norms that prioritize male education over female education. The novel emphasizes the need for women's voices and for experiences to be included and for them to be respected in the educational, public, and work spheres. Public instructions imply that women are less employable because they might require maternity leave, or they are marginalized and dismissed as lacking in strength and intelligence that men have. All humans are equal, but men are more equal, and she wants to be the survivor of this discrimination.

Toxic masculinity permeates the novel like a stench that spreads as badly as a decomposed corpse. The father figure, for instance, is portrayed as a traditional and conservative patriarch who adheres to gender roles and reinforces societal expectations of women. Jiyoung's father believes that his son is more valuable than his daughters, and he often criticizes his wife for not being able to give him a son earlier. He has limited expectations for his daughters' education and future prospects, believing that investing in his daughters' education is a waste of money since they will eventually marry and become a housewife. The father figure exerts patriarchal control over his daughter's life by making decisions on her behalf and limiting her opportunities, deciding what she should wear and behave, and reinforcing the belief that women are inferior and that men are entitled to power and control. This influence of patriarchal norms can lead to women's experiences of madness.

Women who resist gender norms or who challenge patriarchal authority may be labeled "hysterical" or "mad," which can be used to delegitimize their experiences and undermine their agency. This causes Kim Jiyoung to struggle with anxiety, depression, and dissociation as a result of the discrimination and violence she experiences. The representation of madness as feminine is a cultural construct that reflects and reinforces gender stereotypes and biases, as highlighted by Showalter who states "madness, even when experienced by men, is metaphorically and symbolically represented as feminine: a female malady" (1985, p.4). This representation highlights the need to challenge gender norms and patriarchal power structures that have contributed to the marginalization and oppression of women. This challenge can sometimes be physical, sometimes mental, sometimes emotional, and even sometimes all at once. In Jiyoung's case, however, it is more mental and emotional for the reason that she is not allowed to do anything physical except passive-aggressive actions. The novel highlights the need for greater recognition of the harmful effects of gender-based violence on women's mental health and for societal change to address these issues.

The female characters in the novel have sacrificed their lives for their brothers, daughters, sons, husbands, and parents. So much so that this sacrifice is not a "choice to refuse or heal quickly," eventually making the family break up (p.45). Kim Jiyoung is forced to give up her career after having a child, which limits her economic independence and personal agency. Her mother has sacrificed her life for her brothers because "[a]ll women lived like that back then" (Cho, 2016/2020, p.29) and for her children because "[a]ll mothers live like this these days" (Cho, p.29). Self-sacrifice often has ulterior motives, such as coerced responsibility, duty, guilt, or protecting one's reputation. Jiyoung's mother, who is forced to abandon her dreams of

becoming a teacher due to gender-based discrimination in the workplace (p.20), sacrifices herself in order to fulfill her responsibilities as a mother since she is repeatedly told that women's dream of pursuing a career and living independently is unrealistic and selfish. Therefore, the novel explores the ways in which women are excluded from the workforce and economic opportunities due to gender-based discrimination and stereotypes. Not only the other women characters, but also the protagonist of the book, Jiyoung, has given up on her life, desire, and career in order to protect her 'good wife and wise mother' reputation, while her husband is expected to focus on his career and provide for the family. Self-sacrifice perpetuates gender inequality as well as limit women's opportunities for personal and professional growth. While it should be recognizing and valuing women's contributions to their families, as well as creating more egalitarian and supportive social structures that enable women to pursue their own goals and aspirations, a patriarchal society prevents this and further stigmatizes them. Given the theme of misogyny, self-sacrificing might be a minor theme in the book but it has a major role in people's lives, especially among women.

The novel also highlights the gender-based pay gap and the difficulties women face in balancing work and family responsibilities. Just like her mother, her elder sister, Eunyoung, sacrifices her life by becoming a teacher according to her parents' wish although she wants to become a television producer. Women characters in the novel serve as a bridge for the idea of encountering significant obstacles when it comes to accessing education and nurturing their intellectual growth. Throughout history, numerous feminist writers, like Hooks, have eloquently articulated this inequality. It has been "[t]old time and time again by male professors that we were not as intelligent as the males, that we could not be "great" thinkers, writers..." (Hooks, 2015, p.13). These writers argue that women are often denied equal educational opportunities, limiting their ability to develop their intellectual capacities and contribute to society on an equal footing with men. They are often excluded from institutions of higher learning and denied access to libraries and other resources, and this lack of access to education and resources had a profound impact on women's ability to develop their own ideas. While some may view this as a noble or selfless act, it is important to recognize that such sacrifices are often the result of systemic inequalities and power imbalances that limit women's agency and autonomy. They face economic or social pressures that limit their ability to make choices that align with their own interests and goals.

As if it were not enough that women face limited employment opportunities due to gender-based discrimination and stereotypes, as well as cultural norms that privilege men in the

workforce, they may also earn less than men for the same work employed in low-paid and precarious jobs, which can limit their economic opportunities and entail poverty and inequality. Sherly Sandberg highlights its impact on women's economic security and long-term financial well-being, noting that women have been underpaid and undervalued for their work, even when performing the same job as men. In this context, she poignantly states, “[m]en are continually applauded for being ambitious and powerful and successful, but women who display these same traits often pay a social penalty” (2013, p.28), encapsulating the prevailing double standards that persist in society, where men are praised for their ambition while women face societal repercussions for exhibiting the very same qualities. She argued that economic independence and security are crucial for women to pursue their creative and professional ambitions. They are disproportionately affected by the gender pay gap and often face additional barriers to achieving economic security, earning less than men on average for the same work. Efforts to address the gender pay gap continue to be an important issue for achieving gender equality. The author, Cho, once more, provides the actual information through *The Economist* “The gender pay gap in Korea is the highest among the OECD countries.” (Cho, 2016/2020, p.63) She highlights how difficult it is to be a working woman in Korea. This gender pay gap perpetuates gender inequality by limiting women's economic power and independence. (Steinem, 1969, p.8)

Women who are the targets of patriarchal persecution end up as slaves till they pass away. *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*, likewise, tells that kind of a story of “so-called slave women” who are careful not to commit any “crimes” such as seducing a man with a dress, or transgressing against their husband and even mother/father in law. The idea of slavery alienates the women, giving them fear and despair, just like Woolf also alluded to “...always to be doing work that one did not wish to do, and to do it like a slave...the stakes were too great to run risks...” the ability of women to accomplish something, this gift is “perishing and with it herself, her soul.” (Woolf, 1929, p.40-41). This fear of becoming a slave is destroying women in their hearts, mind, and body just like Kim Jiyoung. Instead of homogenizing women, it is crucial to recognize and celebrate diversity and address the needs of women from all walks of life.

Family relations are an indication that the novelist uses cultural elements to the marrow, and she is aware that everything starts here. She is constantly told by her family and society that she must prioritize her family and husband above all else, despite having aspirations and ambitions of her own. This socialization perpetuates the patriarchal structures that limit women's opportunities and perpetuate gender inequality. The writer tries to show with a very fine line the women's struggles in order “not to go astray.” Feminist thought of the fact that

women historically have been denied access to education, professional opportunities, and financial independence has made it difficult for them to have a voice in society. They have been relegated to the domestic sphere, where they were expected to perform traditional gender roles and support their male counterparts. Similar to the aim of “in-your-face” theatre, this novel, with its astonishing strategic use of a psychotic disorder as a result of inequality, is like a slap in the face showing that women are always blamed, shown as unsuccessful, treated as the second, and silenced. Although the world is full of perverts on the bus, in the church, at the school, and in the workplaces, “[a]ll women could do was remove themselves from the scene” (Cho, 2016/2020, p.31) and “unwittingly hid all the odious experiences with men in their hearts” (Cho, p.31). Reflecting systemic inequalities and power imbalances that limit the agency and autonomy of women in various contexts, such as the workplace, politics, and personal relationships, it reflects a culture or social norms that reinforce gender roles and expectations that limit women's ability to assert themselves and advocate for their rights and needs.

Misogyny has reached every bit of the novel, so the novel that transforms society has shown that this misogyny has been embedded in society as well. Jiyoung is constantly belittled and discriminated against by her male colleagues, who view her as inferior simply because she is a woman, reflecting the broader reality that women in many parts of the world continue to face discrimination and harassment in the workplace. Further, she is subjected to unwanted advances and lewd comments from her male colleagues, which create a hostile and intimidating work environment. This reflects the broader reality that women are often subjected to sexual harassment and assault, and that these experiences can have a significant impact on their mental health and wellbeing. The narrative additionally scrutinizes conventional gender roles and preconceptions that can subject women to misogyny.

Despite her talent and passion, Kim Jiyoung is supposed to prioritize her responsibilities as a wife and mother and put her career on hold. The fact that many women are still expected to adhere to traditional gender norms and standards is reflected in this, which might restrict their chances and feed misconceptions about gender. Kim Jiyoung begins to experience anxiety and depression as a result of the discrimination and harassment she faces, highlighting the toll that misogyny can take on women's mental health and well-being. The narrative provides a powerful critique of misogyny and the impact that it has on women's lives and experiences, inviting readers to reflect on the need for greater gender equality and social change. By shedding light on the various forms of discrimination and harassment that women face, Jiyoung experiences a sense of alienation and frustration and struggles to find meaningful ways to

express herself and her desires, concluding the novel with a depiction of a non-physical death, one that carries a more profound and impactful significance in a psychiatrist's room since she is struggling with the personas of women she is not, acting like them. After Jiyoung candidly shares the personal challenges she has faced as a woman, an intriguing perspective emerges from her psychiatrist. In contemplating the potential consequences of Jiyoung's quitting her work, the psychiatrist deems it necessary to ensure that his own female colleague's replacement is unmarried because a sudden leaving of his employee means "a bottom-line loss" (p.116) even though she is the best employee he may ever have.

CONCLUSION

By depicting a world where their identities, privacy, and even rights are not respected, and where they are humiliated, tried to be placed by certain rules and subject to stereotypes, not accepted into workplaces for no reason, and seen as sexual objects, the author has managed to display their struggles with a fictional yet realistic character very powerfully. She, therefore, forms an alliance of all females opposed to misogyny. Her novel serves as an important reminder of the ongoing struggle for gender equality and social justice in Korea and around the world. By shining a light on the experiences of women like Kim Jiyoung, the novel seeks to challenge and dismantle the systemic biases and discriminatory practices that contribute to gender inequality and oppression. She has shown every woman who desires to challenge all these limits with the character of Jiyoung, who sheds her submissive energy in a different but effective way. The protagonist's mental condition prompts the reader to wonder if the character is unwell or whether her environment is ill.

A representation of the modern woman is shown by many diverse female characters such as Jiyoung and her sister, Eunyong, with the author's unique and powerful method, clarifying how the difficulties of growing up in a patriarchal society shape every woman's fears and worries. *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* and almost all the other feminist works share a common concern with the ways in which gender discrimination limits women's potential and restricts their ability to live fulfilling and meaningful lives. By reaching out from a specific name to a general community, the end of the novel depicts the generational and gendered aspects of the protagonist's life in a patriarchal society by suggesting that despite the ongoing efforts to promote gender equality and address the challenges faced by women, there are still instances where traditional and shallow thinking persists, leading women to their spiritual and mental death

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

South Korean author Cho Nam-Joo's work *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* was first released in 2016. The book attracted a lot of interest and generated discussions regarding women's rights and disparities between genders in South Korea. Kim Jiyoung, the main character, embodies the hardships of numerous Korean women. She is a typical woman who manages the obstacles and demands placed on her because of her gender. In the narrative, she is depicted from birth to adulthood, with many examples of sexism, inequality, misogyny, and institutional discrimination being highlighted.

Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982 explores the constraints women face in Korean society, including gender inequality in the job, the pay gap, the unfair distribution of domestic duties, and social expectations towards marriage and parenthood. The novel illuminates the common occurrences that fuel the systematic discrimination experienced by women in patriarchal societies through the narrative of Jiyoung. The representation of the "everywoman" encounter in the story received appreciation, and this generated a wider conversation about gender discrimination in South Korea. It promoted discussions about the need for change and gender equality in different facets of society and served to highlight the ongoing fight for women's rights.

Reducing the title to the name of a single woman, Kim Jiyoung, represents that the story is not unique, but rather each group of women facing the same challenges. Kim Jiyoung's experiences become a reflection of the shared struggles endured by many women within a patriarchal framework. By highlighting the universality of the subject matter, this narrative device ignites empathy and understanding among readers, fostering a collective recognition of the systemic nature of oppression faced by women.