

**REBELLING AGAINST GENDER OPPRESSION  
IN KIM JIYOUNG, BORN 1982: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**



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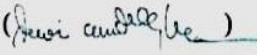

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Amalia Nurul Prastiwi

# REBELLING AGAINST GENDER OPPRESSION IN KIM JIYOUNG, BORN 1982: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

## Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas tentang penindasan gender dalam novel berjudul Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982 dengan menggunakan pendekatan feminis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dan membahas masalah apa yang menyebabkan penindasan dan mengapa penulis mengangkat topik penindasan gender dalam novel tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan sebuah novel berjudul Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982 sebagai objek bahan dan data primer, sedangkan data sekunder menggunakan penelitian yang diambil dari artikel dan buku-buku yang berhubungan dengan penelitian di internet sebagai referensi. Peneliti menggunakan penelitian kualitatif dengan metode analisis dokumen. Dalam mengumpulkan data, peneliti menggunakan membaca novel lebih dari satu kali dan mengambil kutipan dalam novel. Dari hasil penelitian ini dapat ditarik kesimpulan: 1) Ditemukannya indikator-indikator penindasan gender dalam novel. 2) Mengetahui mengapa novelis mengangkat penindasan gender sebagai salah satu topik dalam novel tersebut.

**Kata Kunci :** feminis; penindasan gender; kim jiyoung, born 1982; penelitian kualitatif

## Abstract

This paper discusses gender oppression in a novel entitled Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982 using a feminist approach. This paper aims to analyze and discuss what problems cause oppression and why the novelist raises the topic of gender oppression in the novel. This study uses a novel entitled Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982 as the object material and primary data, while secondary data uses studies taken from articles and books related to research on the internet as a reference. The researcher uses qualitative research with the document analysis method. In collecting data, the researcher used reading the novel more than once and taking quotes in the novel. From the results of this study, conclusions can be drawn: 1) The finding of indicators of gender oppression in the novel. 2) Knowing why the novelist raised gender oppression as one of the topics in the novel.

**Keywords:** feminis; gender oppression; kim jiyoung, born 1982; qualitative research

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Gender oppression is a problem that often happens in society and generally occurs in women. Gender oppression occurs because it is related to gender norms, relationships, and the strata of society that have been passed down from generation to generation. In addition, gender oppression occurs due to a patriarchal system in society that creates separation. Men have placed above, which has the meaning of being a regulator, and women under or have the sense of being a regulated group. Therefore, gender oppression exists because it comes from people's consumption, perspectives, and people's mindsets. One of the gender oppressions that still occurs in everyday life is an unwritten rule that assumes that a man is always above a woman's position. For example, there are still many give high places only to male

employees in a company. In contrast, women are only allowed to occupy employee positions—regular and different amounts of salary. Often seen as weak creatures, their husbands usually ask women to take care of the house because they think that a woman's nature is only to be a housewife. Gender oppression has caught the attention of Cho Nam Joo, which she wrote in her first novel entitled *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*. *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* is a novel that has released on October 14, 2016. *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* novel originated from South Korea and has been published for the first time in Korea. The original title of the novel is *Palsip Yi Nyeon Saeng Kim Jiyeong*. The publisher of the novel is Minumsa. To conduct this research, the researcher used *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*, the English version translated by Jamie Chang, which consists of 108 pages. This novel raises the story about the conditions experienced by ordinary women in an environment that still holds a patriarchal culture. By depicting the characters in the novel, it can be seen that there are characters who are the oppressors and the oppressed. Although this novel is a fiction novel, the topic chosen by Cho Namjoo is inspired by personal experiences and ordinary women who are still often bullied.

There are previous studies that have raised the same topic as discussed in this study, namely gender oppression. The first researcher belongs to Erliska (2003) with the research title "Power and Gender Oppression in Lauren Weisberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* and Seth Graham Smith's *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*." This study discusses the indicators of power caused by the ruling class in the two novels. Class power impacts gender oppression. The character of women experiences exploitation, helplessness, marginalization, and imperialism where women work. This study uses a subtype of feminist theory, namely Marxist feminism. The second research belongs to Pittman (2010) with the research title "Race and Gender Oppression in the Classroom: The Experiences of Women Faculty of Color with White Male Students," This study discusses faculty from an oppressed group who are vulnerable to class oppression. The third research belongs to Warren (2020) with the research title "Meeting myself: race-gender expression and a genre study of Black men teachers' interactions with Black boys." This study shows that there is a function of black male teachers to help restructure the mental or humanity of black boys by fighting against gender oppression. The fourth research is a study with the title "Swimming in Histories of Gender Oppression: Grupo XIX de Teatro's Hysteria" this title belongs to Aston (2010). Problems addressed in this study of sex and racial discrimination also the oppression of women in Brazil in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This study uses a method that leads to feminist criticism, which eventually forms the first wave, which creates or creates ideas about feminism. The fifth researcher belongs to Hutson (2007) by the title "Gender Oppression and Discrimination in South Africa." This study discusses gender discrimination in South Africa, which comes from ethnic traditions in multi-cultural communities. So that women are required to obey the traditions. The sixth research belongs to Rahmah et al., (2020) with the title "Patriarchal Oppression in Kim Ji-Yeong, Born 1982 By Cho Nam Joo: A Feminist Literary Study." The problem discussed in this

study is a patriarchal culture that has been preserved from generation to generation, such as oppression and gender injustice in the novel *Kim Ji-Young, Born 1982* by Cho Namjoo. This study, using feminist literary studies. The eighth research belongs to Srinivas (2021) with the title "Gender Oppression in Patriarchy: An Analytical Study of Sivakami's *The Grip of Change* and *The Taming of Women*." The result of this study is that women must fight gender injustice by fighting the roots of their problems in their daily lives. Using the Marxist method proposed by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, this study facilitates the analysis of two novels in one study. The ninth research is a study entitled "Semiotic Analysis of Gender Discrimination and Patriarchal Culture in Film *Kim Ji-young's, Born 1982*" with authors Christy Gracia & Harilama (2020) The result of this study is the discovery of 17 scenes in the film that were grouped by the researcher based on the classification of signs based on representamen, object, and interpreting—and divided into five indicators of gender discrimination such as workload, marginalization, subordination, stereotypes, and violence. The tenth study is the research of Graciella Stephanie Ganadhi (2021) with the study title "Women Gender Discriminations In South Korea Leading To Kim Ji-Young's *Hwabyung* Seen In Cho Nam-Joo's *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*". The problems discussed in this study consist of three things: how the author describes the characteristics of a Kim Ji-Young, identifying the type of discrimination experienced by Kim Ji Young on a gender-based basis, and finding out the relationship between gender discrimination and Kim Jiyoung in the novel. The eleventh research is research belonging to Lahsen & Alan (2020) with title of the journal "Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982, and the Labor Market: Overeducation, Gender, Income, and Life Satisfaction. Evidence panel from Korea. "The problem discussed in this study is about the amount of discrimination in the labor market, especially for women. The twelfth research is research belonging to Szlyk & Gulbas (2018), using the title "I Just Kept It to Myself": The Shaping of Latina Suicidality through Gendered Oppression, Silence, and Violence." This study found that the intergenerational experience of gender oppression can be one of the reasons Latina teenagers commit suicide. The thirteenth research is research belonging to Sennott (2011) with the study title "Gender Disorder as Gender Oppression: A Trans feminist Approach to Rethinking the Pathology of Gender Non-Conformity Gender Disorder as Gender Oppression: A Trans feminist Approach to Rethinking the Pathologization of Gender Non-Conformity." The problem addressed in this study is the argument against Gender Identity Disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders because it is profitable. And the thirteenth research is research owned by Erez (2017) study entitled "Gender, Palestinian Women, and Terrorism: Women's Liberation or Oppression?" This study states that there are women involved in terrorism; this is done because they feel they have freedom and there is no gender oppression. However, there are consequences that they receive, namely being shunned by others because they are considered to have violated their gender expectations and cannot continue their traditional gender roles.

Through previous studies in the previous paragraph, there are differences with research conducted by researchers. Like a previous study entitled "Patriarchal Oppression in Kim Ji-Yeong, Born 1982 By Cho Nam Joo: A Feminist Literary Study" by Rahmah et al. (2020), this study raised the topic of patriarchy. Then's research Desi Angrraini, Elfiondri (2021) entitled "An Analysis of the Image on Woman as Seen in The Novel *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*" discusses the topic of women's resistance. In addition, there is a study by Graciella Stephanie Ganadhi (2021) entitled "Women Gender Discriminations In South Korea Leading To Kim Ji-Young's Hwabyung Seen In Cho Nam-Joo's *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*", the topic raised in this research is the experience of character discrimination. Although using the same object material, there is a gap between previous research and research by researchers. The gap is contained in the discussion of research, and three previous studies discussed one of the problems in gender oppression and oppressed characters. In contrast, this study discusses the indicators that cause gender oppression problems and the character of the oppressor and the oppressed. In addition, this study explains why Cho Namjoo was a novelist who raised the topic of gender oppression in the novel. However, there are similarities between the researcher's research and previous studies using feminist theory. In this study, researchers tried to connect feminist theory with the phenomenon of gender oppression in the novel. According to Andriyeni and friends (2020, p.15) in their book entitled 'Menguak Realitas dan Perjuangan Perempuan di tengah Politik Patriarki dan Krisi Multidimensi,' the author states that feminism is an ideology that emerged because it came from women's experience of injustice. The oppression they often experience and face. Besides that, women are considered to have various situations and layers of identity, thus creating a layer of injustice that results in differences in women's vulnerability due to gender and sexuality and different layers of identity. Besides that according to Josephine Donovan (2000, p.212), in his book entitled 'Feminist Theory *The Intellectual Traditions* Third Edition' states that feminism is an explanation of the condition of women through verbal communication, symbols, or political movements and urges recognition of women's conditions as a primary political identity. The feminist perspective pays attention to the interests of women by identifying and representing these interests. The development of feminism into various perspectives is based on different understandings of several issues, such as the origins and mechanisms of gender inequality or gender oppression and the different strategies used to combat the problem.

## **2. METHOD**

In this study, researchers used qualitative research. Qualitative research helps to analyze the act of gender oppression on the characters in the novel by using a feminist approach. There are two research objects, namely material objects and formal objects. The materials object use is a novel with the title *Kim Ji Young, Born 1982*. The novel was published on October 14, 2016, written by Cho Nam Joo and



published by Minumsa. As for the formal object, the researcher focuses on a rebellion against gender oppression in Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982. The researcher will analyze the indicators of gender oppression in the novel how gender oppression is described through experiences that have been experienced by female characters so that it has its trauma in Kim Ji Young.

There are two types of data sources in this study: primary and secondary data sources. The primary data source used is a novel named Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982 by Cho Namjoo. Meanwhile, secondary data sources are taken from articles, online journals, public responses, and other sources related to research. In addition, researchers use document analysis as a method of collecting data. Moreover, the method of data analysis, the researcher used qualitative because it make it easier for researcher to collect data by taking text and context in the novel. Qualitative can help interpret the data in the novel has a relationship with a feminist view that finds the phenomenon of gender oppression experienced by female characters in the novel *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* through indicators related to feminist theory.

### 3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Findings

##### 3.1.1 *Indicators Of Gender Oppression In Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*

###### *Mother must give birth to a son*

The idea of having a son has been around for generations, so it can be said that it is a traditional thought. Boys are considered to have a higher position in the family. Boys are also considered to be able to take responsibility and do everything compared to girls. From the data above, it is explained that Jiyoung's grandmother thinks that it is the son who will take care of his parents or treat his parents with full responsibility. Therefore Jiyoung's grandmother emphasized on Oh Misook to have at least two sons. The presence of sons is very exalted and valuable because they are considered leaders and successors of the family.

*“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, and Jiyoung ranked below this: anybody.” Eunyoung probably had the same impression.” (p. 13)*

*“Still, I get to eat warm food my son made for me, and sleep under warm covers my son arranged for me because I had four sons. You have to at least four sons.” (p. 14)*

*“You should have a son. You must have a son. You must have at least two sons...” (p.*

*14)*

### *Forced to work to meet family needs*

Oh Misook has a sister and a brother, but only she and her sister work. The girls work as factory workers, and they do this to earn money so that their brothers can continue their higher education. Boys are prioritized in pursuing higher education because they are considered to achieve success for the family. In contrast to women who are considered only economic complements in the family when they work, women are often placed in lower jobs.

*Oh Misook got a job at the same factory and moved into a chicken coop dormitory the two sisters shared with two other girls. The factory girls were all about the same age, level of education, family background and so on. (p. 19)*

*The unbelievably meagre wages from working day and night, popping caffeine pills, and turning jaundiced went toward sending male siblings to school. This was time when people believed it was up to the sons to bring honor and prosperity to the family, and that the family's wealth and happiness hinged upon male success (p. 19)*

### *Women as sexual objects*

The office is also often unsafe for women—many cases of women as sexual objects such as physical abuse or harassment by placing hidden cameras. Female employees who know that they have been monitored and made sexual objects by men may experience depression. The mentality of female employees can be shaken so severely that they have to get medical treatment and even stop working because of the treatment of male employees. Many female employees are afraid to report cases of harassment they experience. Female employees are afraid that reporting to their superiors will be rejected or not heard or dismissed from work.

*“Listening to Hyesu, Jiyoung thought how her picture would have been taken by one of the spycams if she hadn't quit. Shaken up just like other female employees at the company, she might have needed meds and eventually quit her job.” (p. 94)*

*“The security agent set up hidden cameras in the women's toilets, and her male colleagues passed them around.” (p. 94)*

### **3.1.2 Reason Of Addressing Gender Oppression In Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982**

#### *Personal expression*

Cho Namjoo has reasons why she brought up the topic of gender oppression in her novel. However, for some reason, she has a personal reason that is lifted from his personal

experience. As a woman, wife, and working in a television station makes her feel tired. Cho Namjoo is tired of all the demands of women to handle everything, especially in domestic matters. With her personal experience of getting unfair treatment and oppression, she wrote in her first novel.

### *Social context*

Cho Namjoo often mentions incidents where women used to get bad treatment from men. With her writings, Cho Namjoo wanted to tell people out there widely that ordinary women often have miserable lives. Besides, Cho Namjoo also hopes that the South Korean president can see clearly that the problem with women in Korea is still severe. Moreover, Cho Nam Joo also hopes that the president pays attention to women's issues and can take firm action. With the reality of ordinary women's lives around her, Cho Namjoo describes the forms of oppression and injustice against women in his novels. The unfair treatment makes Jiyoung filled with frustration and resignation. Cho Namjoo also made some characters who experienced and dared to fight against oppression. Hopefully, readers can take the same action when they get oppressed.

## **3.2 Discussion**

Through the data obtained, the researchers found two findings: the indicators of gender oppression in the novel and why the novelist raised the topic of gender oppression in the novel. In this discussion stage, the researcher will discuss two findings from a feminist perspective. The indicators of gender oppression found in the novel are in the form of the mother must give birth to a son, being forced to work to meet family needs, and women as sexual objects. Starting the indicator of a mother who has to give birth to a son, this is due to patriarchal thinking still attached to the family. The assumption that only men can be relied on in all matters makes the necessity of having sons implied and has been passed down from generation to generation. If there are daughters and sons in the family, the sons are treated with special privileges, while the daughters must always succumb. The next indicator is forced to work to meet family needs. Girls are required to work to pay for their brother's schooling until they graduate from college, while girls are only allowed to graduate from high school. The last indicator is women as sexual objects, which makes women feel uncomfortable. Even at home, they are often only seen as satisfying their husband's lust. In contrast, women experience much harassment outside the home, such as installing hidden CCTV in the bathroom, catcalling, and demeaning women. From the feminist perspective, the three indicators of gender oppression in the novel have violated women's rights. The position of women is often underestimated because of the view that men are born leaders. Nevertheless, rather than being protective leaders, men often oppress women. The selfishness of men makes women feel disadvantaged. Unfair actions and the absence of equal rights between men and women make

women feel tortured. In the feminist perspective, the indicators of gender oppression found in the novel are considered not to respect women because they do not provide justice to women, thus making the female characters accept that they are weak. If the indicators of gender oppression are contrary to being a feminist, it is different from the reason for the novelist who raised the topic of gender oppression. Cho Namjoo as a novelist has reasons for bringing up the topic of gender oppression, namely personal experiences, experiences of women who do not have privileges around them, and the state of the country where the population still adheres to patriarchy. Cho Namjoo wanted to state that he was on the side of oppressed women and voiced women's rights to get gender equality. Cho Namjoo's reasoning aligns with feminist goals, namely to demand equal rights and justice for women in various ways. According to the views of feminists and Cho Namjoo, justice rights are not to violate nature or to outperform men but to be respected and recognized for their existence.

Through the material objects and theories used, this research has similarities with previous studies. There are differences in the topics raised by the researchers with previous research. In this study, previous studies with different topics by Rahmah et al. (2020), this study uses the same material object and the same theory, namely feminism. Besides, the research results are about the patriarchal culture preserved from generation to generation, such as oppression and gender injustice in the novel. Then research Desi Angraini, Elfiondri (2021) uses the same material object. The results of this study found that there are four images and women's resistance to the image of women in the research activities. This study also uses feminist theory. In addition, there is a study by Graciella Stephanie Ganadhi (2021) using the same material. However, the results of this study are about how the author describes the characteristics of a Kim Ji-Young, identifying the type of discrimination experienced by Kim Ji Young on a gender-based basis, and finding out the relationship between gender discrimination and Kim Jiyoung in the novel. Thus, this research is research that is to support previous studies.

#### **4. CLOSING**

Based on data analysis, this study arrived at the following points: the discovery of indicators of gender oppression in the novel, how gender oppression describe in the novel, and why the author of the novel raised the topic of gender oppression. The first thing is indicators of gender oppression. Researchers found three indicators that led to the novel's topics: the mother must give birth to a son, be forced to work to meet family needs, and women as sexual objects.

Second, it can be seen why Cho Namjoo discussed the research topic in her novel. Cho Namjoo voiced a female voice and showed her position on the side of oppressed women. With personal experience and ordinary women around her, Cho Namjoo has the idea to make a novel on gender oppression. Cho Namjoo raised her experience when she faced injustice as a woman. Besides that, Cho

Namjoo hopes that by bringing up the topic of gender oppression against women, she can raise public awareness.

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