

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

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 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 means being a regulator, and women under or have the sense of being a regulated group. Therefore, gender oppression exists because it comes from consumption, perspectives, and mindsets.

With the society's mindset that differentiates gender, there is an injustice experienced by one group. The issue of gender oppression still occurs today. The many issues of gender oppression occur in everyday life. 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 at home and men have to earn money.

Because there are still many issues of gender oppression among the public, this issue of gender oppression has caught the attention of Cho Nam Joo, which she wrote in her first novel entitled *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*. Cho Nam Joo is a female writer from South Korea. Cho Nam Joo was born in 1978 in Seoul, South Korea. Cho Nam Joo graduated from Ewha Woman's University in 2001. Cho Nam Joo wrote her first novel with the title *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*, by raising the issue of gender inequality experienced by women inside and even outside the home and aims to trace the lives of women's concerns. Ordinary and describes how the character rejects and opposes gender oppression. *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* novel also seeks to explain the life full of frustration and resignation experienced by ordinary women portrayed by several characters. After releasing her first novel, Cho Nam Joo returned with her second novel entitled *Saha Mansion* in 2019. Her second novel was written in 2012 and took seven years because research has needed to write the novel.

Of the two novels by Cho Nam Joo, the writer chose a novel entitled *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* to be the object of research material. *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. *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* is a work of fiction inspired by issue that still occur around novel writers. Cho Nam Joo raises several issues that still happen in South Korea relating to women. The problems raised in this novel about a woman's struggle to live and fight stereotypes about women who are considered weak since childhood and have even occurred from generation to generation. Because it raises a sensitive issue in South Korea, this novel has received strong resistance from various anti-feminist parties. Strong opposition from various anti-feminist parties happens because there is still a patriarchal culture in South Korea. *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* has a total of 192 p.s and is divided into six chapters: (1) Autumn, 2015, (2) Childhood, 1982-1994, (3) Adolescence, 1995-2000, (4) Early Adulthood, 2001-2011, (5) Marriage, 2012-2015, and (6) 2016. Kim Jiyoung is the main character in this novel, telling about the life journey of Kim Jiyoung from childhood to having a family. To showing the gender oppression of women, this novel not only focuses on the struggles of Kim Ji Young but also raises several female characters who face gender oppression.

Kim Jiyoung was born into a simple family. Koh Boonsoon, Kim Jiyoung's grandmother, always expects a grandson to be born. During Oh Misook's first pregnancy, Koh Boonsoon hoped that Oh Misook's first grandchild would be a boy, but her hopes did not come true. The baby born was a girl and named Kim Eunyong. In addition, when her second child arrived, it turned out that the baby was a girl. Oh Misook given her daughter name is Kim Jiyoung, after which her mother-in-law said it was okay, but Oh Misook's subsequent pregnancy had to give birth to a boy. At the time of her third pregnancy, Oh Misook was worried because in the 1980s to the early 1990s, there was an imbalance in the number of men and women. Because of this policy, the number of abortion activities on female fetuses has become routine for ten years. The presence of a grandson is highly expected because Koh Boonsoon thinks that boys are people who can be relied upon and responsible for all matters. There must be a son in a family that has passed down from generation to generation.

The presence of a grandson in the family makes Koh Boonsoon's behavior different from her grandchildren. It has been going on for generations that boys come; first, this

is what happened to Kim Ji Young and her older sister. Kim Jiyoung and Kim Eunyoung were always required to share, while their younger brothers received special treatment. Unlike her mother-in-law, Oh Misook tries not to discriminate in her treatment of her children, and she always tries to be fair. Oh Misook, who has dreams of having a bigger house and a better life, decides to work too because relying on her husband's salary will not be enough. She has been doing work since she was young with his sisters; this she has done because it is to pay for his family's needs and her younger brother to continue his studies. At the time of their teens, at the age of thirteen, Kim Jiyoung and Kim Eunyoung attended the same school, an all-girls school. Once upon a time, a girl protested because of the teacher's injustice towards female students; the girl protested why only boys are allowed to wear shirts and shoes. During adolescence, several incidents of gender oppression often occurred around Kim Ji Young, and some rejected or opposed gender oppression. However, not all of them have been accepted by society.

When Kim Eunyoung was about to graduate from middle school, her mother told Eunyoung to choose a teacher training college. Hearing his mother's request, she immediately refused. She said she did not want to become a teacher and wanted to do something or choose something she wanted, not because of coercion from others. Her mother told Eunyoung to become a teacher because she thought there was no good job for women other than being a teacher. Finally, Eunyoung agreed to her mother's wish for her to go to teacher training college. Unlike her sister, Kim Jiyoung can determine her future when she enrolls in faculty at university. Besides, Kim Jiyoung's mother saved her husband from investing in Chinese companies and managed to open a chicken shop. After graduating from university, Kim Jiyoung became an employee at a company in Seoul. Because she is considered a new female employee, Jiyoung has always been treated as an errand boy, but she always obeys and never opposes her.

While working at the company, Kim Jiyoung was a much disciplined employee. Even though she is a disciplined employee and has worked there for a long time, Kim Jiyoung has never received a promotion. Promotions will only be given to male employees even though they have only briefly become employees; this is because men are considered more responsible and alert in all situations. After working at the office for a few years, Kim Jiyoung will marry Daehyun. With a heavy heart, that Kim Jiyoung had to leave her job when she was pregnant, Kim Jiyoung did not want to quit working, but South Korea has a culture that a wife should stop working and focus on

home affairs that Kim Jiyoung's in-laws also emphasized culture to her. After coming home from her mother-in-law's house, Kim Jiyoung experienced something that was when she was quite suddenly he would talk like someone else, sometimes like his mother or grandmother or like she had another personality. Realizing his wife's condition, Daehyun advised his wife to go to a psychologist. At that time, Jiyoung felt confused because when the boss from her previous office worked, she offered a job again. Hearing this, Kim Jiyoung's in-laws were very angry and thought that her daughter-in-law was destroying her son's career. This made Kim Jiyoung's mother angry because she thought Daehyun's parents glorified men more than women. At the end of the story, Kim Jiyoung chose to refuse a job offer from his former boss and chose to recover by going to a psychologist for a recovery period.

The reason people are interested in Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982 is because of the storyline, the way the story is conveyed, and the topics raised by the novel's authors, who are considered to be related to the realities of today's life that are happening around society. Some of the positive responses from readers about Kim Jiyoung, Born in 1982, were taken from the Twitter application and goodreads.com. Eliana Reynoso: "The depiction of the female character in this novel is powerful. Although it is a fiction novel, the story depicts everyday life and real events." Ryshel: "In Kim Jiyoung's novel, Born 1982, readers can see another side of South Korea, namely the gender disparity that is rarely shown when learning about Korean culture". Naoki: "Telling about Kim Ji Young's life path from child to an adult who faces injustice based on gender. I recommend this novel to be read in order to know the problems that women often face." Jananie: "This novel is exciting, informative, funny, wise and very neatly tells what problems are happening and faced by women living in South Korea."

However, apart from the positive responses, there are some negative responses from readers for this novel. Negative feedback contains writing style, translation and is considered a less interesting story. Charlotttr Burt: "The writing style is too exaggerated, unlike a novel or academic work, so it is not enjoyable to read. The content of this novel is almost the same as that of 1950s Europe, and it is boring. Thank goodness this novel has short p.s." Demi: "The writing style makes me unable to give five stars, maybe because the translation is not good or the original version is not good. His writing style makes it difficult for readers to understand and connect with the characters in the novel." Em Lost In Books: "a novel that tells about gender discrimination, but the main character fails. I could not relate to the storyline of this novel throughout the

story. The story in this novel lacks emotion, so I assume that there is nothing extraordinary in this story, and it is very boring."

Not only from readers but from this novel by Cho Namjoo also received responses from the industry. Cho Namjoo's novel that was released in 2016 has been nominated several times. A year after its release, Kim Jiyoung's novel *Born 1982* received a nomination at the Emile Guimet Award for Asian Literature in France for being included in the ten best works of Asian literature. After that in 2020, the novel was nominated for the National Book Award, which is one of the most prestigious awards in the United States. The National Book Foundation awards in five categories, namely fiction, nonfiction, music, translated literature, and youth literature. In the National Book Award award, *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* was included in the category of literary translation.

When publishing a novel work, the market is the goal of the author. Cho Namjoo's novel *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* received a good market response. Because the original version was Korean, it was translated into English by Jamie Chang and has sold over one million copies. In 2020, it noted that this novel had been translated into 12 languages. Because it has considered many responses from various circles of society, this novel has finally appointed in a film with the title *Kim Jiyoung: Born 1982* with a duration of 1 hour 58 minutes. *Kim Jiyoung: Born 1982* was released on November 20, 2019, and has directed by Kim Doyoung. It was featuring two well-known actors in South Korea, Jung Yumi as Jiyoung and Gong Yoo as Daehyun. This film has nominated for Best film at the Blue Dragon Film Award in 2021. During its screening at the box office, it already earned 27.7 million USD.

In this study, the researcher chose a novel entitled *Kim Jiyoung Born, 1982* as a material object. The research was interested in several things. There are several reasons researchers are interested in this novel, which is divide into four parts. The four reasons consist of character, plot, theme, and novel writer. The first reason is that some female characters in the novel experience gender oppression. The author is interested in each of the female characters in dealing with the pressure they get because the writer sees that every female character has her way of coping with gender oppression.

The second reason is the plot in the novel. Researchers are interested because this novel uses a mixed plot, where the story tells Kim Jiyoung, who has a husband and daughter. The next chapter describes when Kim Jiyoung was a child, then tells when Kim Jiyoung's mother was young, then continued with Kim Jiyoung as a teenager. But

the final chapter again describes the adult Kim Jiyoung. The mixed storyline makes the reader focus more on understanding the story, not to be confused, and that is one of the exciting locations of the novel *Kim Jiyoung Born, 1982*.

The third reason researchers is interested in this novel is the theme. In *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*, the novelist raises several themes, but researchers are interested in gender oppression. Researchers assume that the theme of gender oppression is still closely related to a issue that still frequently occurs today, especially experienced by women.

The fourth reason is the novelist. *Kim Jiyoung, Born in 1982*, is Cho Namjoo's work inspired by her personal life. Researcher is interested in Cho Namjoo because she tries to describe her situation where being a woman must take care of the house even at home. However, Cho Namjoo defies this implied rule by proving that women can be housewives and career women. Cho Namjoo, who had a career as a news writer in a private television station in South Korea, has become a woman who has two roles: a professional who has two novels and is a housewife. That way, Cho Namjoo can fight discrimination, injustice, and oppression as a woman and prove that women also have the right to have the same rights as humans.

Based on the above background, the researcher is interested in researching the novel *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* by Cho Namjoo to discuss the problems. The author forms a thesis with the title, **REBELLING AGAINST GENDER OPPRESSION IN KIM JIYOUNG, BORN 1982: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**.

1.2 Problem Statement

The main problem of this research is how the issue of gender oppression has reflected in the novel entitled *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*. The research problem will be further dissected into several research questions as follows:

1. What are the main indicators of gender oppression in the novel *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*?
2. How is gender oppression depicted in *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*?
3. Why did Cho Namjoo specifically discuss gender oppression in *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Identify indicators of gender oppression in Kim Jiyoung's novel Born 1982.

2. Describe how gender oppression is depicted in *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*.
3. To reveal specific reasons why gender oppression is discussed in the novel *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*.

1.4 Significances of the Study

1. Theoretical Significance

This study is expected to contribute to knowledge in the field of literature about gender oppression and feminism theory to analyze the research conducted.

2. Practical Significance

This study is expected to add and enrich the author's understanding of gender oppression. The researcher hopes that this research can also add information and knowledge for students of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta or other universities about the issue of gender oppression and feminism theory.