



Inequality Act Faced by The Main Character in Novel *Kim Ji Young, Born 1982*: A Gender Based Study

Dinda Alfarini¹, Morada Tetty²

^{1,2}, English and Literature Department, Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia

Correspondence E-mail: alfarinidinda@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze Gender Inequality based on Gender Study of the main character in novel *Kim Ji Young, Born 1982*. This research was conducted by applying the textual analysis method. The data source is taken from the novel by Cho Nam Joo, entitled *Kim Ji Young, Born 1982* which was translated into English by Jamie Chang. This study used the theory of Gender Inequality by Sylvia Walby (1990) and that there are 6 types of gender inequality, namely household

production, paid work, the patriarchal state, male violence, sexuality and culture. The results show all types about gender inequality by Walby can be found in the novel and the main character struggles to face the inequality act that she experiences is the depression she experiences which changes her personality.

Keywords:

Gender, Gender Inequality, Novel

INTRODUCTION

A few decades ago, gender issues such as gender inequality were taboo to be discussed. With the birth of feminist theories and the activists looking for gender and interests of each sector especially during the globalization era, information and communication technology is increasingly easy to use in bringing topics to the audience. Gender inequality is a condition where there is injustice or differences between men and women to the point of discriminatory appearances. Various forms of gender inequality like marginalization, subordination, stereotypes, violence, and double burden. This inequality can occur in various sectors, for example, the economic, political, entertainment, religious, social, cultural sectors, and even in the education sector. The role of women is often underestimated and is considered to have little contribution compared to men.

Based on WHO statistics (2009), up to 70% of women in the world experience gender inequality at least once in their life. Harassment of women may occur physically or verbally. One example is what happened in India. The caste status used by this nation is familiar in the world, making women face injustice there.

Gender inequality in a patriarchal society become an interesting topic to be raised writer especially in country with Eastern culture. Meanwhile, in South Korea, they still have the perception that women should be good mothers and good housewives. Married women end up becoming housewives in South Korean society. A wife is responsible for all family laws, including children, with conservative laws in other countries, while a man is responsible for earning a living.

This study to analyze the gender inequality of main character in the novel use the theory by Sylvia Walby, the novel entitled *Kim Ji Young, Born 1982*. Because the topic still rarely discussed in the society. The topic discusses how women lose their rights compared to men. In society in general, men are considered to be superior in position because they are considered stronger in accommodating burdens such as earning a living and being proud of their birth, while women have traits such as being housewife who must be able to cook, take care of children, husband and family and are not allowed to work.

In this research, the researcher wants to explore the inequality faced by the main character and how the main character faces the gender inequality she experiences.

According to Galliano (1995: 3), "the study of gender is the study of women and men". Furthermore, he also explained from the beginning of the creation of a history that many people wrote about men and women. Men are also described as rational, masculine, and powerful.

Gender is a social construct in which men and women both have a role to play in social life so that women are not simply subordinate beings to men with minimal social influence (Mansour Fakhri, 2008:8). According to Mansour Fakhri's perspective, gender is influenced and framed by a broad range of factors, including cultural values, religious beliefs, social and political factors. On social norms in some socio-cultural systems, where women are represented as people who are worthy to care for their children, husbands, and household relationships, while men are portrayed as figures who are forced to work outside the home (Ace Suryadi and Ecep Idris, 2010: 36). Stigma like this is already very common in society. Whereas when it comes to social roles, both men and women have the

same right to acquire them as long as the character is formed following the values of the society in which they live.

Patriarchy is one aspect of gender study. Based on Walby theory (1990), patriarchy is a system of social structures and behaviors in which men rule, oppress, and exploit women. Walby describes patriarchy as operating through six distinct structures, rather than embracing the flawed concept that there is one overarching form of patriarchy.

Household Production

Walby calls this a "household production." She argues that men benefit from women doing unpaid work at home. A woman has to work for free at home and ask for her husband's wishes. According to Walby, men continue to benefit from unpaid female labor. The majority of housework and childcare are still done by women as if it were their absolute job.

Paid Work

Through paid work, gender division of labor in the household which forces women to take primary responsibility for work household and childcare, even when women are at work full time outside the home. Women may be trapped in a marriage that is unsatisfactory because they can't find a paid job good to support themselves and their children.

The patriarchal state

Through policies and laws, the state can basically oppress women. Society is basically supported by a male majority. According to Walby, the state remains patriarchal, racial, and capitalist. They claim that little has been done to improve the status of women in the public arena, and that women's equality of opportunity laws are still very rare or not even enforced.

Male Violence

Walby noted that the hallmark of a patriarchal society is the threat of male violence against women. One of the ways in which women are controlled by men is that men can use their physical as well as verbal force to force them to comply.

Sexuality

There are very different expectations and standards between men and women when it comes to sexual behavior and relationships. There is more condemnation (disapproval) of young women having sexual partners than young men and this includes sexual harassment.

Culture

Women are always at a "cultural disadvantage" which glorifies femininity, which if a woman refuses, she will experience cultural losses. Many aspects of society, such as the media, religion, and education, promote and maintain patriarchal views of women. These perspectives then influence women's perceptions of femininity. Walby believes that Western countries' cultures have always differentiated between men and women and expected various behaviors from them, but that the expected patterns of behavior have changed.

Kim Ji Young, Born 1982 Novel

Kim Ji Young is described as a housewife who spends all her time taking care of her husband and daughter who is still a toddler. Throughout the day she also takes care of household needs and little time to take care of herself. Ji Young is depicted rarely or almost never expresses anger or frustration. Although she doesn't seem to be complaining about her routine, Ji Young often feels boredom and fatigue as a housewife until unknowingly she was depressed. The readers are shown Ji Young's past as a child, school teenager until when she was single and worked in a company. From the scenes in the novel show how Ji Young's character is tough, intelligent but often suffers misfortune just because she is a woman.

This novel tells the story of South Korean women who face a lot of discrimination, including gender inequality. The novel offers a lot about life as a woman, especially about what women are expected to behave and the values that must be followed in the traditional and patriarchal South Korean culture in society. It tells the effect of the great fear faced by women by Kim Ji Young, the main character.

METHOD

This study uses textual analysis by Alan McKee (2003), textual analysis is a method to gain knowledge about how individuals understand and express life and life experiences by the words, symbols, and/or images found in the text. Visual, textual, and spoken information all provide clues about how communication can be deciphered.

This method is used to analyze the gender inequality faced by the main character in the novel *Kim Ji Young, Born 1982*, and how the main character struggles. This study focuses on the character's utterances and narrator point of view contained in the novel.

The data source is taken from the English novel version of *Kim Ji Young, Born 1982*

by Cho Nam Joo. There are 95 pages and consist of 6 chapters. The data are all conversations, dialogues and the narrator point of view of the character in the novel that are written in the form of words and sentences containing gender inequality including the narrative text accompanying the plot.

The technique of collecting data are the researcher observes the main data by reading intensively the novel, the researcher marks the important utterances and takes note on the character's utterances related to the analysis. When the data were collected, they were analyzed by using the textual analysis related to Walby's theory.

Finding out the dominant type of politeness maxim used in the utterances of *Wuthering Heights* Novel, describing the reason of the use politeness maxim in the utterances of *Wuthering Heights* novel, and the last is describing the results and findings of the study.

RESULTS

The data analysis shows the inequality act faced by the main character in the novel. The results showed from 29 data related to gender inequality in the novel there are 6 types of gender inequality used in the novel, namely *household production, paid work, the patriarchal state, male violence, sexuality and culture*. The six types are based on theorizing patriarchy by Sylvia Walby (1990).

Household Production

This is the data was found in the novel and it is included in one type of gender inequality, namely household production, the type of household production is explained as follows.

In the end, they concluded that one of them had to be a stay-at-home parent, and that one person, of course, was Jiyoung. Daehyun's job was more stable and brought in more money, but, apart from that, it was more common for husbands to work and wives to raise the children and run the home. (Joo, 2016, p. 74)

This data shows that there is a type of gender inequality, namely household production where women generally have to take care of the house and raise children while men work.

In 2014, around the time Kim Jiyoung left the company, one in five married women in Korea quit their job because of marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childcare, or the education of their young children. (Joo, 2016, p. 75)

The data shows that on average Korean women stop working because of their responsibilities towards marriage, child care and their child's education.

Paid Work

There are 4 data found in the novel and it is included in one type of gender inequality, namely paid work, the type of paid work is explained as follows.

“You’re not giving me a hard life, Daddy,” she said. “We’re working hard together to make it. So stop feeling sorry for yourself as if our home is your responsibility alone. No one is asking you to, and, frankly, you’re not doing it on your own,” (Joo, 2016, p. 13)

The dialogue also shows that in their family it is not only the father who works to bear all the expenses in the family.

“It’s true. In elementary, I got the best grades out of all five of us. I was better than your eldest uncle.”

“So why didn’t you become a teacher?”

“I had to work to send my brothers to school. That’s how it was with everyone. All women lived like that back then.”

“Why don’t you become a teacher now?”

“Now I have to work to send you kids to school. That’s how it is with everyone. All mothers live like this these days.” (Joo, 2016, p. 15)

This data shows the existence of gender inequality, namely paid work, where women lose their ideals after becoming mothers and it’s a must to be a mother, which means they must also be responsible for taking care of their children's education.

The Patriarchal State

There are 10 data found in the novel and it is included in one type of gender inequality, namely the patriarchal state, the type of patriarchal state is explained as follows.

This was a time when the government had implemented birth control policies called “family planning” to keep population growth under control. Abortion due to medical problems had been legal for ten years at that point, and checking the sex of the fetus and aborting females was common practice, as if “daughter” was a medical problem. This went on throughout the 1980s, and in the early 1990s, the very height of the male-to-female ratio imbalance, when the ratio for the third child and beyond was over two to one. (Joo, 2016, p. 11)

In this data, the government even suggested abortion to fetuses labeled "family planning" in order to reduce the female population and increase the male population in Korea. Despite the fact that this violated human rights regulations, it is clear from the narrative that Jiyoung's mother doesn't want an abortion for the female unborn child she is carrying.

Jiyoung was number thirty on the roster of forty-nine. Boys were numbers one to twenty-seven, and girls were twenty-eight to forty-nine. The numbers were assigned in order of birthdays. Jiyoung's birthday was fortunately in April, so she was the thirtieth in her class to get her food, but girls with late birthdays were only able to sit down to lunch around the time the lower-number students were done. Naturally, the students who were routinely told off for eating slowly were mostly girls. (Joo, 2016, p. 19)

The data shows the type of gender inequality, namely the patriarchal state, where boys are always the first and foremost in everything and girls are the last and that has become a natural thing for them.

Male Violence

There is one data found in the novel and it is included in one type of gender inequality, namely male violence, the type of male violence is explained as follows.

Her first obstacle in school life was the “pranks of the boy desk-mate” that many

schoolgirls experienced. To Jiyoung, it felt more like harassment or violence than pranks, and there was nothing she could do about it besides run crying to Mother and Eunyoung. They weren't much help. Eunyoung said boys were immature and that Jiyoung should just ignore him, and Mother chided Jiyoung for crying and complaining over a classmate who was just messing around because he wanted to play. (Joo, 2016, p. 16)

According to the narration, it appears that men enjoy playing games with women. This appears to be instilled in children by their parents, as Jiyoung's mother did. Acts of harassment should be prevented and reported as soon as possible; some seemingly innocuous behaviors can have a negative impact on the psychology of women who accept them. As Jiyoung discovered, his male friend was always bothering him, but when he complained to his mother, the mother just assumed it was normal, even an invitation to play, without knowing what was on Jiyoung's mind at the time.

Sexuality

There are 3 data from the novel which are included in the type of gender inequality, namely sexuality, the type of sexuality is explained as follows.

School was no better. There were always male teachers who reached up and pinched the soft flesh of the underarm, patted students on the bottom, or ran their hands down the spine over the bra strap. Her tenth-grade homeroom teacher was a man in his fifties, who carried around a pointer that had a hand pointing just the index finger on the tip, which he used to poke girls in the breasts under the guise of drawing attention to missing nametags, or to lift girls' skirts to "check their school uniforms." (Joo, 2016, p. 30)

This data shows gender inequality, namely sexuality, where schools are no longer a safe place due to sexual deviations committed by teachers in their schools.

It'll ruin this company's reputation if word gets around in the field. The accused male employees have families and parents to protect, too. Do you really want to destroy people's lives like this? Do you want people to find out that your pictures are out there? (Joo, 2016, p. 81)

This data shows that there is gender inequality, namely sexuality, in which their superiors even defend male employees who make mistakes and try to cover up this case.

Culture

There are 8 data from the novel which are included in the type of gender inequality, namely culture, the type of culture is explained as follows.

The unbelievably meager wages from working day and night, popping caffeine pills, and turning jaundiced went toward sending male siblings to school. This was a 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. The daughters gladly supported the male siblings. (Joo, 2016, p. 14)

This data shows the gender inequality experienced by girls at that time where they had to work from day to night just to pay for their brother's schooling because it was considered that boys were the core of success and the backbone of the family.

The couple didn't have a preference, but they knew the family elders were expecting a boy, and a small sense of dread came over them to think of the stressful situations that might occur the moment the parents found out it was a girl. Jiyoung's mother said, "It's okay, the next one will be a boy." Daehyun's mother said, "I don't mind." Jiyoung very much minded what they'd said. (Joo, 2016, p. 73)

This data shows one type of gender inequality, namely culture, where the birth of a boy in a family is still highly expected than a girl.

DISCUSSIONS

Ji Young's personality changes begin to change described in Chapter 1 and is also reinforced by the narrator's point of view in chapter 4. Because she doesn't work and only cares for her baby at home, the paragraph shows Ji Young's eccentricity, as she is too open about how she feels every day about herself being tired of helping prepare for the big day in Busan right at her mother-in-law's house. This is the form of struggle of the main character in the novel.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings found after analyzing the inequality act of main character in *Kim Ji Young, Born 1982* novel, there are six types gender inequality that used in the novel, that is *household production, paid work, the patriarchal state, male violence, sexuality and culture*. The results show there is 29 data in the novel related to gender inequality based on *Theorizing Patriarchy* by Sylvia Walby.

Each version of Jiyoung's character that was built with social inequality against women forced her to confront it with various forms of defense patterns in order to face the gender inequality that occurred. Gender is influenced and framed by a wide range of factors, including cultural values, religious beliefs, social and political factors, according to Mansour Fakhri's (2010) perspective. On social norms in some socio-cultural systems, where women are portrayed as worthy of caring for their children, husband, and household relationship, while men are portrayed as figures forced to work outside the home. This is presented in Jiyoung's life after marriage and having children. Where Jiyoung's husband demands Jiyoung to be a housewife enough, because (Jiyoung's husband) feels he has the ability and has power over his wife to determine the rights to their household. It can be concluded from the six types of gender inequality by Sylvia Walby is the main character's form of inequality act in dealing with gender inequality and in it there are also struggles of the main character in dealing with it.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, M. H. (1999). *Glossary of Literary Terms Seventh Edition*. Boston, Massachusetts: Earl McPeck.
- Baik, S. J. (2020, September 22). *Korean Novel Longlisted for Prestigious U.S. Literary Prize*. Retrieved from The Chosunilbo
- Chaney, L. H., & Martin, J. S. (2011). *Intercultural business communication (5th ed.)*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall
- Cho, N. J. 2016. *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*. (J. Chang, Trans). New York and London: Liveright Publishing Corporation.
- Cho Nam-joo *LOGLIST, (2020 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS)*.
<https://www.nationalbook.org/people/cho-nam-joo/>
- Eagleton, Terry. (2003). *Literary Theory: an introduction / Terry Eagleton - 2nd ed.* Blackwell Publishing

- Fakih, Mansour. (2013). *Analisis Gender dan Transformasi Sosial*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar
- F Levin, H. (1949). *René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature. The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory*, 24(4), 303–306.
- Galliano G. (2003). *Gender: Crossing boundaries*. Belmont, CA: Thomson
- Helen, Tierney (ed). (1989). *Women's Studies Encyclopedia, Vol. 1*. New York: Green Wood Press) 153.
- Hillary M. Lips. (1993). *Sex & Gender; An Introduction*, (California: My Field Publishing Company, 4
- Lee, C.Y. 2012. *Korean Culture And Its Influence on Business Practice in SouthKorea. The Journal of International Management Studies*. 7(2):184–191.
- Oakley, Ann. (2016). *Sex, Gender and Society*. 10.4324/9781315243399..
- Pradopo, Rahmat Djoko. 1994. *Prinsip-prinsip Kritik Sastra*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Ratnayake, Rangajeewa. (2007). *Gender Aspects in Urban Human Settlement Planning*
- Reeves, H., & Baden, S. (2000). *Gender and development: Concepts and definitions*. Institute of Development Studies, BRIDGE report Number 55, Brighton.
- Verboord, Marc. (2012). *Female bestsellers: A cross-national study of gender inequality and the popular–highbrow culture divide in fiction book production, 1960–2009*
- Walby, S. (1989). *Theorising Patriarchy. Sociology*, 23(2), 213–234.
- Walby, Sylvia (1990) *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Wiegman, Robyn. (2002). *Women's Studies on Its Own: A Next Wave Reader in Institutional Change*.
- West, C., & Fenstermaker, S. (1995). *DOING DIFFERENCE. Gender & Society*, 9(1),8–37.
- Yodanis, Carrie L. (2004). *Gender Inequality, Violence Against Women, and Fear A Cross-National Test of the Feminist Theory of Violence Against Women*.