

The Partnership of Patriarchy and Capitalism in Cho Nam-joo's *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*

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ABSTRACT

Socialist feminism, which emerged in the 1970s, aims to solve female oppression and make a comprehensive and innovative understanding of gender, class, capitalism, and male domination. As the mainstay of the socialist feminist school, the ideas of Hartmann and Young make significant contributions to the development of the theory. Hartmann first proposed dual systems theory, and Young published her single system response shortly after. To a certain extent, Young's new thinking and questioning of dual systems theory also supplement and go into some of the arguments by Hartmann that are not clear enough. *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* is an English-translated novel written by contemporary South Korean writer and screenwriter Cho Nam-joo. The novel was translated into English by award-winning translator Jamie Chang in 2020. The plight of women highlighted in this novel caused widespread controversy in the international community, especially in East Asian countries. This article examines the oppression of women in *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*, by the long-term interaction between patriarchy and capitalism. This study adopts

a research method combining theoretical interpretation and close reading of the text. It addresses the research gap by focusing on a new perspective on the causes of Cho's female characters' oppression through the dual systems theory by Hartmann.

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INTRODUCTION

Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982 (82년생 김지영) is a feminist novel written in Korean by Cho Nam-joo in 2016. It was translated into English by Jamie Chang and published in 2020. Cho graduated from the Department of Sociology at Ewha Womans University, and *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*, is her third novel. The novel narrates the life process of the protagonist Jiyoung from birth to motherhood. Cho captures Jiyoung's life in a few sentences on the back cover of the book,

Kim Jiyoung is a girl born to a mother whose in-laws wanted a boy. Kim Jiyoung is a sister made to share a room while her brother gets one of his own. Kim Jiyoung is a daughter whose father blames her when she is harassed late at night. Kim Jiyoung is a model employee who gets overlooked for promotion. Kim Jiyoung is a wife who gives up her career and independence for a life of domesticity (2020, p. 164).

Different social identities confer different responsibilities on Jiyoung. However, the same dilemmas for her remain constant in various aspects, such as working situations, household chores, close relationships, inter-generational communication, and friendship maintenance.

When the narrative of a certain stage of Jiyoung's experience is completed, the story begins with phrases like "[T]his was a time when..." (Cho, 2016/2020, p. 18) at the next stage. Cho tries to express not just a fictional story but an authentic experience in a broader context. Data from the magazines, Korean statistics, news, reports, internet media, and other aspects are inserted to support

the social and historical context closely related to Jiyoung's growing experience. Although the narrative subject of the novel is Jiyoung, it tells the situation of three generations of women, including Jiyoung's mother Oh Misook, and her grandmother Koh Boonsoon. These expanded materials provide a new generation of South Korean youth and foreign readers with the necessary background knowledge for reading and give this novel a unique characteristic of non-fiction.

Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982 has received mixed reviews from the public since it was first published in South Korea in 2016. On the one hand, it has tremendous positive social influence. Cho won the 41st Today's Writer Award in South Korea for this novel. People from all walks of life in South Korea, especially President Moon Jae-in and the supreme leader of the Justice Party Roh Hoe-chan, have made recommendations for the book and called on society to do more to support women. On the other hand, most South Korean men had extremely negative reviews of the book, according to Cariappa's (2020) research. They denounced the content of the novel for making groundless accusations against men. Even after a female idol singer publicly recommended the book, male netizens committed a series of online violence, such as verbal abuse and boycotts of her performances against her (Cariappa, 2020, p. 14). The fundamental reason for the polarization of reviews is that the content of this work reflects the difficult situation of women in South Korean society, which poses an unprecedented query for South

Korea's deep-rooted patriarchy. Both the author and translator of *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* are women. Therefore, the novel's narration introduces female voices and perspectives on a large scale to restore women's experiences. Its publication refocused attention on women's issues in South Korea and created a huge ripple effect.

Reviews of previous studies on this novel reveal that most researchers focused on reader discourse analysis and translation studies. The research focused on women's issues for this book is as follows. Rahmah et al. (2020) mentioned the oppression of South Korean women in a patriarchal society. Their article uses feminist literary criticism study as a research method to explore the gender oppression issue through text and data analysis. From the aspects of Jiyoung's family, school, workplace, public places, and her in-law's family, this research conducts a comprehensive analysis of the oppressed status of Cho's female characters. In addition, Ahmed Lahsen et al. (2020) published an article in the same year. With the selected novel, Ahmed Lahsen et al.'s article applies the data provided by the labor market in South Korea, discusses male and female employees' income and life satisfaction. It concludes that overeducation is widespread in South Korean society, especially for female employees. By starting from different points of concern, these two studies clearly explained the status quo of the South Korean female group represented by Jiyoung and the continuing harm of these circumstances. However, for the time being, no research focused on

the causes and solutions of this situation. From the perspective of socialist feminism, which is committed to solving the issues of female oppression, this study combines Hartmann's (1976, 1979) dual systems theory to examine the injustice suffered by Cho's female characters.

METHODS

This study adopts a research method combining theoretical interpretation and close reading of the text. First, the research places the interpretation of the theory in the context of modernization, industrialization, and globalization and pays attention to the real problems presented in the selected novel. This approach helps to understand better the complexity and diversity of today's women's issues and its new characteristics and rules. Next, in discussing the selected novels, this study combines the trajectory of the roles' lives with the historical reality in which the novels are written. Thus, to some extent, the experiences of Cho's female characters reconstruct the living conditions and environment of South Korean women in that era.

By analyzing patriarchy and capitalism in Hartmann's dual systems theory, this study examines the root causes of the predicament encountered by female characters in *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*, and the way out to break their plight. Hartmann proposed and developed her dual systems theory in her works in 1976 and 1979. According to Hartmann, the subordinate status of women is maintained under the long-term mutual influence

of patriarchy and capitalism. Patriarchy predates capitalism, controlling women within the family and manipulating women's labor rights within all social structures that exclude the family. Capitalism's leading role in oppressing women is to restrict women's access to the labor market. In the process, the patriarchal system also supported the growth of capitalism. This study first explores the negative impact of the patriarchal system on women by combining the constraints and imprisonment of patriarchy experienced by Cho's female characters within the family and other social structures. Secondly, through the interpretation of the image of professional women that appeared in *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*, this study investigates how capitalism controls and oppresses women by restricting women's entry into the labor market. The contribution of this study lies in the systematic and innovative understanding of the unfair treatment suffered by the female characters in the selected novel from the perspective of socialist feminism, which provides a presupposition for the practice of Hartmann's dual systems theory.

Theoretical Framework

From the 1970s to the late 1980s, the theory of socialist feminism absorbed the ideas related to Marxism and feminism and criticized patriarchy and the power system derived from it. Ehrenreich attempted to popularize the term "socialist feminism" to the public in her 1976 essay. She combined the traditional Marxist thought with the existing feminist ideas at that time to create

a worldview—socialist feminism—to solve the oppression and exploitation of women. The pure Marxist theory lacks the interpretation of sexual oppression, while the single feminist thought does not pay attention to the problems of capitalism. Therefore, the emergence of socialist feminism has made an outstanding contribution to solving women's issues; it offers new systematic thinking on gender, class, capitalism, and male domination.

Theories of socialist feminism in this period advocated that capitalism and patriarchy jointly produced the oppression of women. However, there are two viewpoints and analysis methods in western academic circles on how the two operate. One is the dual systems theory, which considers that women are oppressed and enslaved by the capitalist and patriarchal systems. The other is the single system theory, which holds that the capitalist system itself is patriarchy. The representatives of the dual systems approach mainly include Juliet Mitchell and Heidi Hartmann. Mitchell (1984) published her ideas of the dual systems approach in her 1984 paper *Women, the Longest Revolution*. The spokespeople of single system theory mainly include Iris Young and Alison Jaggar. Young elaborated on her single system response from the perspective of gender division of labor. On the premise of insisting on the standpoint of the single system, Jaggar (1983) made a comprehensive critique of the phenomenon of alienation of women. Her representative work is *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (1983). All these theories focus on

one problem: the criticism of the realistic elements of capitalist society that restrict the development of women. They all point to a goal, that is, women's self-liberation and development.

Different understandings of the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy also lead to differences in cognition within dual systems theory, represented by Mitchell and Hartmann. Mitchell lays more emphasis on understanding patriarchy as an ideology and psychological structure. She believes that patriarchy acts on capitalist society through ideological reinforcement, which worsens the situation of women. Another group represented by Hartmann maintains that society is composed of a patriarchal system and a capitalist system, which are separated from each other but closely linked. Among them, each system has its material basis and development power.

Hartmann analyzed the dominance of men over women/the relationship between men and women based on the material base. Meanwhile, she also explored the social situation of women's oppression by the combination and cooperation of patriarchy and capitalism. Hartmann's paper "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a more Progressive Union" was published in 1979. In this paper, Hartmann analyzed the limitations and advantages of traditional Marxism and radical feminism. She advocated combining the outstanding theories of the two schools to explore the development of capitalism and women's issues. Her claim arouses the

so-called dual systems theory about the relationship between feminism and Marxist theory. She believes that traditional Marxist feminism is the marriage between Marxism and feminism. Many Marxists believe that women's issues are not as important as class conflicts, or at most are part of class issues and could be incorporated into class issues. Such marriages are destined to be unequal. In the face of such a situation, feminists must establish a more progressive union of Marxism and feminism. Only in this way can most women's interests be satisfied, and women can be truly liberated. Hartmann emphasized that both capitalism and patriarchy must be challenged to realize a society under the ideal of socialist feminism. In addition, Hartmann first proposed in her article "Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex" (1976) that patriarchy and capitalism as two independent systems are interwoven inseparably for a long time, exerting a decisive influence on the oppression of women. Hartmann also pointed out the harm of the division of labor by sex. She advocated eliminating its impact at all levels of society and maintaining job segregation by sex to liberate women. Hartmann's dual systems theory assumptions will be interpreted and discussed in more detail along with Cho's novel in the next section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Partnership of Patriarchy and Capitalism

Hartmann believed that the composition of patriarchy is determined by the socio-

economic structure of specific production relations at the time, so she summarized patriarchy as “a set of social relations between men, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women” (1979, p. 11). In Hartmann’s view, patriarchy is the main reason for androcentrism and female subordination. Men unite to maintain their dominance over women to sustain this benefit. Weedon mentioned that “b[B]iological differences between the sexes are a major material ideological support and guarantee of patriarchal social structures, from the sexual division of labor and the structure of contemporary forms of femininity, to women’s position in society at large” (1995, p. 126). The biological characteristics of the sexes cause men and women to undertake different social and domestic work. The critical feature of the patriarchal system is that it exaggerates the physical differences between men and women. It believes that the gender role of men determines that they are always in the active dominant position, always associated with the qualities of courage and justice. Correspondingly, women are asked to be submissive and kind-hearted, and they are always in a dependent and disadvantaged position in society. Under the influence of this social concept, the standard that men identify with is the social consensus. Then with this logic of thinking dominated by men, the notion that men are superior to women arises.

The three families related to Jiyoung in the novel all reflect the negative influence of patriarchy. The first is Jiyoung’s new family with her husband and child. Although Jiyoung’s husband Daehyun showed support for his wife with an open mind, he still retains the ideology of a patriarchal society in essence. Jiyoung is still enjoying the happy time of the couple after marriage; however, she has realized the predicament that she will face in the future from previous experiences of former generations. She was urged to marry when she fell in love, have children after marriage, and have a son after she had a daughter. It seems that endless requests deprive women of their freedom. They are imprisoned in the family and do not have enough liberty to pursue their dreams and realize their values. Before giving birth, Jiyoung discussed with Daehyun about raising the child and proposed that she continue working. However, she finally reluctantly quit her job and became a housewife. Jiyoung offers to take a part-time job while her daughter is in school, but Daehyun also vetoes that. Day after day of housewife life made Jiyoung feel disconnected from society, and this increasing pressure eventually led to her mental problems.

The second type of family is Jiyoung’s nuclear family, made up of her parents and siblings. Two of Jiyoung’s siblings and herself live with their parents and grandmother, Koh Boonsoon. For the so-called giving birth to boys to pass on the family line, Jiyoung’s parents believe that giving birth to a daughter is “the devil

idea[s]” (Cho, 2016/2020, p. 18), and only sons are the hope of the family. Koh Boonsoon has a fondness for her grandson since the three siblings were children and even “smack Jiyoung[her] on the back, so hard powder exploded from Jiyoung’s[her] mouth and nose” (p. 14) just because Jiyoung ate the little brother’s formula. Although among the four sons of Koh Boonsoon, only Jiyoung’s father fulfills the obligation of supporting the elderly, Koh Boonsoon still demands Jiyoung’s mother Oh Misook, “y[Y]ou should have a son. You must have a son. You must have at least two sons” (p. 17). Jiyoung, who grew up in such a family immersed in patriarchal thoughts, has always resisted the additional demands society imposes on women. However, her childhood education has imprinted itself in the depth of her mind, hindering her pursuit of personal ideals.

The third type of family is Jiyoung’s in-laws’ family. The pressure brought by Jiyoung’s mother-in-law is the source of the oppression Jiyoung feels in this family. After Jiyoung’s daughter Jiwon was born, her mother-in-law thoughtfully comforted her, “I don’t mind” (Cho, 2016/2020, p. 129). It seems to imply that Jiyoung, who gave birth to a daughter instead of a son, should have been guilty. When Jiyoung’s family of three returned to her in-laws’ home for the *Chuseok* harvest holidays, Jiyoung spent all day preparing *Chuseok* food for the whole family while worrying whether her mother-in-law would be dissatisfied. Daehyun’s sister Suhyun takes on heavier housework at her in-laws’ family than

Jiyoung. However, she does not show any consideration to Jiyoung, who is in a similar situation with her. Instead, Suhyun enjoys special treatment in her parents’ house and pushes all the chores to Jiyoung. As an outsider from her in-laws’ family, Jiyoung’s accumulated pressure broke out, and for the first time, she showed her demon-possessed symptoms in public. Jiyoung seemed to have become another person. She talked to everyone in her mother’s tone, told about Jiyoung’s difficulties, and asked everyone to treat her poor daughter Jiyoung well. These three families seem to be a firm net, imprisons Jiyoung in the shackles of patriarchy.

Hartmann believed that patriarchy exists in the material base, which is reflected in “men’s control over women’s labor power” (1979, p. 11). This control takes place in two areas: production resources and sexuality. Hartmann believes that the domination of men over women in these two fields is realized in the following two forms.

The first is monogamous heterosexual marriage (Hartmann, 1979). This kind of marriage structure controls and exploits women with the family as a unit. Women are required to serve men in personal and sexual ways and are forced to take on the critical task of raising children. Jiyoung’s grandmother Koh Boonsoon raises her four sons alone while her husband “never worked a day in his life” (Cho, 2016/2020, p. 16). She “worked someone else’s field, peddled someone else’s wares, took care of domestic labor at someone else’s home” (p. 16) to run her own homes. Koh Boonsoon,

meanwhile, genuinely believes she married a good husband simply because he is “not sleeping around and not hitting her” (p. 16). In the generation of Jiyoung’s mother, Oh Misook, women are often deprived of the right to education for the sake of their brothers’ future. Oh Misook begins to help the family farming after she finished elementary school. At the age of 15, she gives up her dream of being a teacher and becoming an ordinary textile worker. She must help her brothers pay for school. By the generation of Jiyoung, the negative influence of patriarchy on women has not improved. Jiyoung faces an unprecedented blow during college graduation and job hunting when women are discriminated against in the job market. During this time, Jiyoung’s father admonishes her, “just stay out of trouble and get married” (p. 93). In her father’s view, the workplace does not belong to women. Getting married and having children is the best way out for women. Not only the conservative father, but Daehyun, the seemingly supportive husband of Jiyoung, also hands over the child-rearing task to his wife imperceptibly. He said to Jiyoung, “I’ll help you out” (p. 131); when they are faced with parenting responsibilities, such as childcare and education, both husband and wife should share that. This patriarchal ideology does not change with the change of time but is maintained and strengthened through generations as a family unit.

The second form is to take over “all the social structures that enable men to control women’s labor” (Hartmann, 1979, p. 12). Women serve men in the home, but they

also experience the shackles of patriarchy in all social structures outside the family. Since elementary school, the position of the monitor in Jiyoung’s class has always belonged to men. Although there are many intelligent and capable female students, they can only be appointed by teachers “to run errands for them, grade quizzes, and check homework” (Cho, 2016/2020, p. 37). This situation persists after Jiyoung comes to college. Most members of the hiking club are men, and there never appears a female president. In the eyes of the male members, the female members are just decorations to “brighten up the club with their[your] mere presence” (p. 78). Not only do women not have a voice in these social structures, but they also face the potential risk of being harassed, just like Jiyoung’s female classmates are harassed by male employers and male customers while doing part-time jobs. “Employers harassed them for ‘being inappropriately dressed’ or ‘not having the right attitude,’ and held their wages ransom. Customers thought the right to harass young women came with their purchase” (p. 52). This case is also reflected in school, where some male teachers take advantage of their age and status to harass female students sexually. In the novel, some male teachers “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” (p. 52). The family is the primary place but not the “exclusive locus” (Hartmann & Markusen, 1980, p. 89) for women to experience patriarchal social relations. To synthesize these two

forms, the principal basis of patriarchy lies in controlling women's labor force by property-owning men using the state and a set of hierarchical social relations among men. They prevent women from accessing any economic resources and deny women control over their sexuality, even fertility.

When analyzing the partnership of patriarchy and capitalism, Hartmann specifically identified the disadvantages of a sexual division of labor. She also pointed out that “[T]he creation of a wage-labor force and the increase in the scale of production that occurred with the emergence of capitalism had in some ways a more severe impact on women than on men” (1976, p. 147). The development of capitalism relies on the patriarchal power structure, which keeps women out of the labor market. In other words, the role of male employees and capitalists in limiting women's entry into the labor market cannot be ignored. Although male employees consciously maintain the sexual division of labor, many of them are deliberately guided by capitalists. Hartmann pointed out that capitalism utilizes patriarchy to intentionally exacerbate gender differences to “serve to obfuscate the basic two-class nature of capitalist society” (1976, p. 166). At the same time, capitalists take advantage of the lack of skills and low salary of female labor to reduce the salary of male employees to achieve the exploitation of male labor.

There is no doubt that the role of capitalists in limiting the position of women in the labor market cannot be underestimated. South Korea's economic system belongs

to the peculiar *chaebol* capitalism—the norm at most *chaebols* in South Korea is the “family control” (Witt, 2014, p. 6) giant group. The management model of this type of enterprise is considered to be “authoritarian and top-down in nature, personalistic and paternalistic” (p. 7). In the *chaebol* entrepreneurs, the “owner's interests supersede those of employees” (p. 14). As a result, society lacks innovation vitality, job competition is fierce, and unemployment is high. *Chaebols* crush small businesses, and small enterprises squeeze their employees. It exacerbates the disadvantages of women in the job market, causing women to voluntarily or be forced to give up their jobs and concentrate on taking care of their families. Jiyoung wanted to continue to work after her daughter was born, but she could not find a nanny to take care of her child, and “even if they[we] found someone suitable, the cost would be considerable” (Cho, 2016/2020, p. 72). She may not afford a full-time nanny on her salary, so eventually, she must give up the job. Kang Hyesu, a former colleague of Jiyoung, takes an entirely different path from Jiyoung. She temporarily gives up her personal life and childbirth plans and focuses on working hard for her career. However, her promotion journey is bumpy—her male colleagues who entered the company simultaneously have achieved higher positions than her. Since capitalists “did not think of female employees as prospective long-term colleagues” (p. 111), female employees often need to make more tremendous efforts to gain the same recognition as men.

In addition, male employees also made a significant contribution to restricting women's entry into the labor market. In Jiyoung's era and after, a growing number of South Korean women choose "delayed marriage and childbearing," (Yoo & Sobotka, 2018, pp. 552, 566) even live a single life without marriage or children to remain competitive in the job market. Many talented women are more popular with employers than men. In the context of economic downturn and limited employment opportunities, the contradiction between capitalists and job seekers has been transformed into the dichotomy between male and female job seekers, as well as between men and women.

Men and women are in a tense and contradictory relationship. Many South Korean men worry about women taking their jobs, but they also despise full-time mothers with no salary. Jiyoung's team leader, Kim Eunsil, delegates parenting and housework to her mother. She is only responsible for working and making money. Although she is serious and responsible at work and has outstanding ability, she still cannot avoid the sarcasm and accusation of male staff and is considered that she "had a heart of stone" (Cho, 2016/2020, p. 98). Instead, her husband is recognized as "an obliging person" (p. 98) simply because he is willing to live with his mother-in-law, even though he never shows up in the company. Jiyoung is taunted by several male passers-by as "mom-roaches" while drinking coffee in a park with her daughter (p. 153). Several young male office workers

whispered, "I wish I could live off my husband's paycheck ... bum around and get coffee ... mom-roaches got it real cushy ... no way I'm marrying a Korean woman ..." (p. 153). It is an insulting term to describe a young mother who leaves her children undisciplined in public and lets them make noises that disturb others. These male passers-by belong to the middle and upper-income groups with higher education. Their abuse of this term reflects the harshness of society towards women.

Men's contempt and disrespect for women even develops to the point that when they saw the secretly filmed videos of their female colleagues on pornographic websites, they did not come forward to stop or inform the women but chose to circulate the videos privately. Hidden cameras were found in the women's restroom of Jiyoung's former company. The male colleagues circulated these candid videos and pictures privately, and "[N]o one yet fully knows how many men passed the pictures around, what kind of conversations they had about them, how many photos, or for how long" (Cho, 2016/2020, p. 142). The exclusion of women by male employees in the workplace is not only their conscious action but also, to a certain extent, by the guidance and indulgence of capitalists. The male director did not take any countermeasures after the privacy of female employees was exposed but waited for the matter to be forgotten by the public. The male staff did not receive any punishment, and the female staff did not even receive an apology. The male director's handling of this affair exacerbates

the disadvantaged position of women in the workplace, and their fundamental rights and interests are not even guaranteed.

“Way Out” for Cho’s Female Characters

Jiyoung performed well and received unanimous praise from the leaders and colleagues after joining the company. However, when the opportunity came up for a promotion, Jiyoung lost out to two less-competent male employees. Jiyoung found out later,

the men were picked because the planning team was a long-term project. The head of the company knew that the nature and intensity of the marketing agency job made it difficult to maintain a decent work-life balance, especially if childcare came into play, and therefore he did not think of female employees as prospective long-term colleagues. He had no intention of giving employees better hours and benefits, either. He found it more cost-efficient to invest in employees who would last in this work environment than to make the environment more accommodating. That was the reasoning behind giving the more high-maintenance clients to Jiyoung and Kang Hyesu. It wasn’t their competence; management didn’t want to tire out the prospective long-term male colleagues from the start. (Cho, 2016/2020, pp. 111-112)

After hearing the inside story of unequal hiring in the company, Jiyoung “was standing in the middle of a labyrinth. Conscientiously and calmly, she was searching for a way out that didn’t exist to

begin with” (Cho, 2016/2020, p. 112). The so-called “way out” is actually a possibility to break through the dilemma of the female group represented by Jiyoung. Jiyoung’s demon-possessed symptoms can be treated as a “way out,” allowing her to express her pain and needs in the mouth of others instead of saying what others want to hear. Cho set up a group of caring family and friends around Jiyoung and a group of women who bravely speak for themselves in a patriarchal society. Oh Misook actively participates in family decision-making and does not blindly follow her husband’s views; Kim Eunsil and Kang Hyesu, who struggles for their career; the professional woman who chased down the bus to protect Jiyoung from harassment and bullying. Cho tries to bring comfort and hope to millions of women who are in the same predicament as Jiyoung in this way, and it is perhaps another meaningful “way out.”

Ironically, the novel ends unexpectedly. After the male psychologist in charge of treating Jiyoung learned about her situation, he realized “what it means to live as a woman, especially as a mother, in Korea” (Cho, 2016/2020, p. 86). He recalled his wife, a former “professor of ophthalmology” (p. 157) and “math prodigy” (p. 160), who now become a “stay-at-home mummy” (p. 159). While tutoring her son, she took an interest in elementary school math problems and thought it was challenging and fun, initially puzzled the male psychologist. After treating Jiyoung, he decided to care more about his wife in the future. The novel would be a healing and heartwarming story

if it ends here, but the plot development is more realistic than idealistic. Lee Suyeon, one of the counselors at the same clinic, came to declare her resignation due to pregnancy. The male psychologist believes that Lee Suyeon is “undoubtedly [been] a great employee,” but he still cares most about the loss that her resignation may bring to the clinic and make a decision in his mind to “make sure her replacement is unmarried” (Cho, 2016/2020, p. 163). Because of the determination of this male counselor who claims to understand the struggles of female groups in the same situation as Jiyoung, many women who have or will become mothers lose their job opportunities and the possibility of integrating into new social groups. This kind of ending does not provide a “way out.” Instead, the emphasis on “way out that didn’t exist to begin with” (p. 112) highlights the difficulties that cannot be solved by individual efforts or temporary pity. As Jiyoung despairingly discovered, “the world had changed a great deal, but the little rules, contracts, and customs had not, which meant the world hadn’t actually changed at all” (p. 119).

Hartmann argued that from the perspective of socialist feminists, women should not believe in men’s promise to liberate them after the bourgeois revolution but should “organize a practice which addresses both the struggle against capitalism” (1979, p. 24). For women to obtain their ultimate liberation, to achieve the full development of their potential, to end male dominance, “it is necessary to eradicate the sexual division of labor

itself” (p. 168). To eradicate sexual division of labor, “they must fight against both patriarchal power and capitalist organization of society” (p. 168), with the prerequisite that eliminates gender differences imposed by society. Among Cho’s female characters imprisoned by patriarchy and capitalism, Kim Eunsil and Oh Misook’s performance aligns with Hartmann’s proposal. Kim Eunsil, Jiyoung’s team leader, supported other victims to maintain legal rights for the candid camera incident in the ladies’ toilet. After knowing the handling of the male director, she plans to start her own company and take all the female employees with her. Jiyoung’s mother, Oh Misook, is not a woman of the old times who sticks to traditional ideas. Although she must be constrained by the existing gender order, she tries to exert her initiative in the limited family space. She actively participates in critical decision-making in the family, and it is with her intervention, her family does not fall into the crisis of economic downturn.

CONCLUSION

Hartmann’s dual systems theory holds that the oppression of women stems from the effects of capitalism and patriarchy. She regards patriarchy and capitalism as systems that are both different and mutually conditional. There is neither pure capitalism nor pure patriarchy. Capitalism acts in the field of production, while patriarchy acts in the area of family, which together constitute the institutional root of women’s oppression. Patriarchy is a system of social relations in which men have authority

over women. Capitalism promotes the control of production for capitalists to workers. In capitalist societies, there is a strong and positively related partnership between patriarchy and capitalism. These two different systems constitute the current social, political, and economic system. In *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*, the oppression suffered by Cho's female characters comes from the dual influence of patriarchy and capitalism. These dual systems give men the power to control and exploit women in the field of production and the family. The union between men promotes the maintenance of this system, which is a vicious circle of oppression for women. Capitalists take advantage of the sexual division of labor to exacerbate gender differences intentionally. They guide male employees to marginalize women in the workplace and benefit from this way. To break this status quo and gain freedom, women must unite to eliminate the sexual division of labor and bravely challenge patriarchy and capitalism.

Although Jiyoung does not find her "way out" at the end of the novel as readers expected, we can see the hope of women breaking the shackles of capitalism and patriarchy in several other female characters. According to Hartmann, the blind confrontation and tearing between the sexes cannot solve the current problems, let alone make women out of the dilemma of being disciplined. Hopefully, women in the same situation as Cho's female characters will learn from this book to speak up for themselves and no longer need to make difficult family, career, and marriage choices.

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