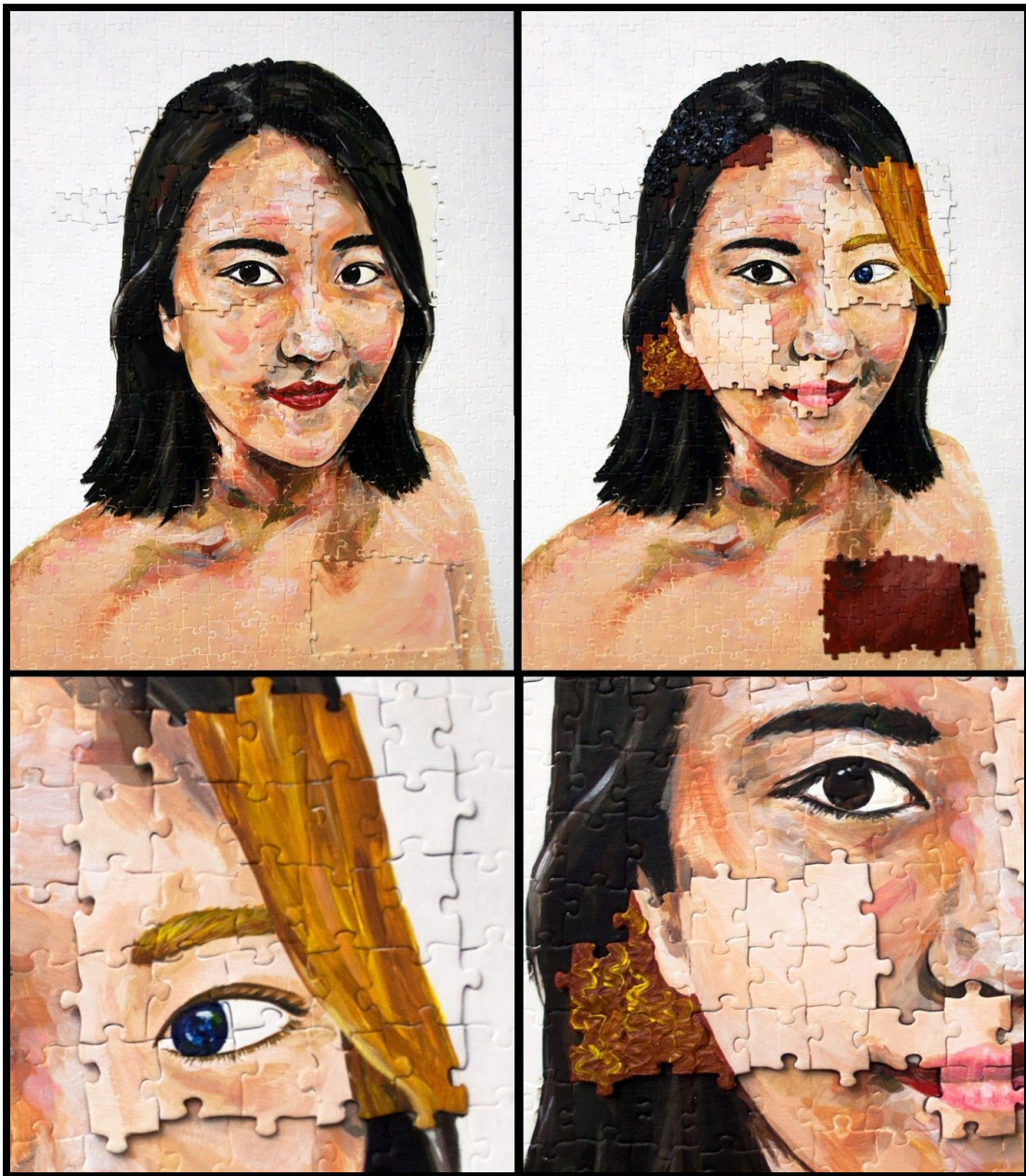




Final Paper



Diversity, Discrimination, and Love



by Boram Choi on May 21

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Cover Picture: We Are the One

Before I changed my major to psychology, I had studied fine art for about 8 years. Three years ago, I made an art portfolio to apply for transfer as a design major. The cover picture is a painting that I drew and painted for my portfolio. First of all, it is not a canvas. It is an assembled jigsaw puzzle. After finishing assembling all the pieces of the puzzle, I painted my portrait of me as an Asian. And, I painted different races of myself on partial puzzles. Living in New York, I have experienced diversity and differences, including race and culture. One thing I felt was that we were all the same human, even though we looked different on the outside. In other words, we are the one. As we as individuals have different personalities, backgrounds, and experiences, we have different looks. But, we are still same human. I expressed my thought of diverse races and cultures in the painting. As I have read books and poems about racism and sexism, I reminded of the painting, and I chose this painting for the cover page since I believe that the painting may represent the topic of my paper.

Importance of Global Literature

My name is Boram Choi. I was born in Korea, grew up, and spend most of my time in Korea, where is a homogeneous country. Where I came from, the Korean culture, does not pursue individualism, diverse personalities, and differences, rather, we pursue collectivism, unity, and conformity. It is more important for us to adhere to the social norms for a better sense of belonging as a community. So, we think more about how we might influence the other people and the community than we think of themselves as individuals. The advantage of this is that it creates tighter bonds and a better sense of community awareness. But, there are always cons and pros in everything.

From a different perspective, these values are not always beneficial. Collectivism has made me have a certain way to see the world, which could be very narrow and shallow in a particular way. At schools, I was not taught to think creatively and critically. I just had to memorize all things from the textbook to take the exams and to get a good grade. The exams were mostly multiple choices. If there was a book to read, the teachers gave me the right interpretation instead of my own interpretation. This restricts me to develop my own thoughts and to see the world more broadly. Ultimately, it yields many solid stereotypes and prejudices which lead to discrimination no matter it is conscious or unconscious.

Since I came to New York and attended college, I had such a hard time because most classes required me to read many articles and books and to write my own thought which I haven't done before. I just wanted to know the right answer, not my interpretation. However, at some point, by reading many different kinds of book, discussing with classmates and Professors, and paying attention to my own thought, myself, and other's opinions, I realized that the world is much bigger and much more diverse than I thought and imagined. Listening to the differences that the world has and other stories has changed the way to embrace otherness.

Global literature has become a crucial part of me to see, listen, and be aware of the things that I could not see and experience longe before and of the things that are easy to be ignored. This helped me to understand the fact that everyone has different backgrounds,

stories, experiences, beliefs, and cultures. That is to say, I was able to get out of the previous stereotyped way to think the world. Also, as a person who studies psychology, I believe that I need the ability and the capacity to embrace differences and otherness, which could be obtained by reading global literature as an indirect means. Global literature gives me an opportunity to grow me as a person and a psychology student.

In this midterm paper, there are two major topics covered, racism against black people and women's rights. The overlapping theme is oppression. I divided into two parts: (1) racism and (2) sexism. In each part, I will introduce topic-related books and poems and share my experiences and thoughts. For the racism theme, *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates, *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin, *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and three poems, *As I Grew Older*, *Demands*, and *Harlem [Dream Deferred]* by Langston Hughes, speak up about racism against black people. While reading and writing these books and poems, I have noticed that the common feature is the oppression stemming from racial discrimination, and I have additionally read a Korean poetry characterized by oppression, *Poem That Is Written Easily* by Dongju Yun. For the women's rights theme, I cover the discrimination against women in different cultures including South Korea—*The Patience Stone* by Atiq Rahimi, *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor* by Nawal el Saadawi, *Kim Ji Young Born in 1982* by Nam Joo Cho, and *Please Look After Mom* by Kyung-Sook Shin.

Part 1: Racism

Before I dig into part 1 for racism, I would like to introduce one of my childhood experiences which came to my mind while reading books. I was in elementary school. It was a drawing and painting class with crayons. Among the many different colors of crayons, there was a beige color which we called it 'skin color.' Every Korean people call it 'skin color' because it is like our skin color. I had learned that beige was skin color from an early age and thought that way all the time. Before going to middle school, I had re-learned that it is not 'skin color.' I, as an elementary student, was surprised and I could not understand. The color of beige looked like my skin color. Why is it not skin color? But, I came to know that there are various skin colors depending on races around the world. Therefore, the skin color can appear to be different, and it cannot be just one color.

Now, it seems funny that I thought and believed that everyone has one skin color which is light beige color. As I said before, Korea was a single-race nation. Until I was in my early 20s, it was very rare to see foreigners in schools and in the streets. I saw a white person in my neighborhood from time to time, but the presence of the person made everyone surprised and curious. But, I have never seen a black person in my neighborhood. Korea was an ethnically homogeneous society for a long time. Considering this characteristic of Korea, it is not surprising that I as a child actually believed that beige is skin color. However, It becomes very different now. If you go to Korea now, you can see and meet people of different races and nationalities in any street, and I believe that children these days naturally think and learn that skin color is not the only one color.

Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates

In Between the World and Me, Ta-Nehisi Coates writes a letter to his son regarding racism and discrimination against African American. In the early part of the book, he states quite clearly why he writes this letter and the purpose of it; "You must never look away from this. You must always remember that the sociology, the history, the economics, the graphs, the charts, the regressions all land, with great violence, upon the body" (Coates 10). Later on, he

acknowledges that there must be some differences between his experience as a black man and as his son. However, he believes his son has not truly faced “the plunder everywhere around” (21) them, and he continues to tell his son about his experiences as a black man such as his family, the street he grew up, the school he went, the police he faced with, etc and about how he was struggling to find the answers to the questions he has had from books, poems, and history.

“You preserved your life because your life, your body, was as good as anyone's, because your blood was as precious as jewels, and it should never be old for magic, for spirituals inspired by the unknowable hereafter” (34). This sentence conveys the core meaning of his letter to his son by using cause and effect, repetition, and analogy. He gives the message that you are good and precious as others by comparing “your blood” to “jewels” and “your body” (34) should be protected and be preserved against forces that threaten your existence, dignity, and sanctity. The world that has been built on discrimination against black people, which has been made by “America’s progress” (6) and “American history” (6), is not allowed to destroy your precious self.

It is noticeable that he uses the crucial body parts including blood, skin, and hair to explain that black people are equally precious and dignified.

Black is beautiful-which is to say that the black body is beautiful, that black hair must be guarded against the torture of processing and lye, that black skin must be guarded against bleach, that our noses and mouths must be protected against modern surgery. (34)

I think, quoting of these physical features by Coates to explain the importance and sanctity of a black person suggests that it basically indicates that discrimination begins with physical features. Hence, when it comes to the question of whether physical prejudice is worse than the prejudice against language, behavior, and intellect, I cannot tell which one is worse. They are equally bad and irrational. However, I can distinguish them in a certain way. The physical prejudice is the starting point toward discrimination. Because some people have different colors of skin, shape of eyes, nose, and face, and other features of the body, the dominant group, which the society arbitrarily has defined with history, started to consider them as a subordinative group or as an inferior group. That is to say, the discrimination starts from the physical appearance, and then the behavioral, linguistic, and intellectual prejudices become created. Therefore, Coates emphasizes the body by speaking with the desire that his son would understand the very basic cause of discrimination which is wrong.

***The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin**

In *The Fire Next Time*, Baldwin starts with a letter to his nephew like Coates. The letter acknowledges that there are hardships and difficulties in living the world as a black person and that the hardships come along just "because you were black and for no other reasons" (Baldwin 7). The discrimination against black people by white people has influenced them to consider themselves as 'a nigger' (4), and his grandfather had believed that way. He emphasizes that what white people believe does not tell you who you are, but who they are. And, he tells his nephew that he has to embrace the white people with love, which he describes as "the really terrible thing" (8).

In the chapter of 'Down at the Cross: Letter from a Region in My Mind,' he digs more into the hardships for black people including his personal experiences. Most of all, his religious experience is well addressed. As he went to the church as a young minister, he came to realize that what the minister says about "love all" (31) did not mean everyone. It meant everyone except white people. As an example, he reminds that the minister told him that he should not "give my seat to a white woman" (40) because white people do not do the same. He came to believe that "there was no love in the church. It was a mask for hatred and self-hatred and despair" (39), and he left the church. Similar to the church, when he had a conversation with Elijah Muhammad, the leader of the National of Islam movement, and some people who followed Muhammad, he was told that a white man was a devil although Baldwin could not agree with them. He sincerely believes that hatred, contempt, and revenge cannot solve the tension and discrimination between black and white people in the same nation, but love could be the key to that. Love is more important than color (71).

Perhaps we were, all of us—pimps, whores, racketeers, church members, and children—bound together by the nature of our oppression, the specific and peculiar complex of risks we had to run; if so, within these limits we sometimes achieved with each other a freedom that was close to love. (40)

I have found his belief and attitude toward racism against black people. I believe that it may address the main message of Baldwin. He went to the church as his secure place, but the illogical aspect of minister's saying and the church made him see the contradiction and paradox. The church had taught people the importance of giving love and embracement for the

people like them, also, at the same time, they had taught people hatred and revenge toward white people. He acknowledges that there are severe discrimination and oppression around them. However, he believes that racial discrimination cannot be solved by hatred and revenge, but rather it can be solved by love and embrace. Eventually, he left the church because he came to know the hypocrisy of the church and his own belief did not correspond with them.

As I Grew Older

It was a long time ago.
I have almost forgotten my dream.
But it was there then,
In front of me,
Bright like a sun—
My dream.
And then the wall rose,
Rose slowly,
Slowly,
Between me and my dream.
Rose until it touched the sky—
The wall.
Shadow.
I am black.
I lie down in the shadow.
No longer the light of my dream before me,
Above me.
Only the thick wall.
Only the shadow.
My hands!
My dark hands!
Break through the wall!
Find my dream!
Help me to shatter this darkness,
To smash this night,
To break this shadow
Into a thousand lights of sun,
Into a thousand whirling dreams
Of sun!

Langston Hughes

Demand

Listen!
Dear dream of utter aliveness—
Touching my body of utter death—
Tell me, O quickly! dream of aliveness,
The flaming source of your bright breath.
Tell me, O dream of utter aliveness—
Knowing so well the wind and the sun—
Where is this light
Your eyes see forever?
And what is the wind
You touch when you run?

Langston Hughes

Harlem [Dream Deferred]

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
Like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Langston Hughes

A Poem That is Written Easily

The night rain whispers outside the window
The six-tatami room is a stranger's country,

Though I know the fate a poet is doleful
Shall I craft a line of a poem,

The smell of my parents' sweat and affection
Fills the envelope containing my tuition

With a notebook under my arm
I head for an old professor's lecture.

When I think about it, after losing
One, two, and all of my friends from childhood

What do I hope for
Do I merely sink to water, alone?

Life is hard to live,
and a poem is written so easily.
It is a shameful thing.

The six-tatami room is a stranger's country
While the night rain whispers outside the window,

Turning the lamp on, the darkness goes away,
I, as if a man on the last day, await the morning to break forth like a new age.

Offering myself my small hand
I propose the first handshake in tears and comfort.

Yun Dongju (1917-1945)

I have read books regarding racism. These books illustrate their personal experiences as a black man, their background, history, and thoughts. As a form of a book, the authors could convey a more delicate and specific message of what they want to say. And, it is easier for the readers to understand the context and the purpose of the book. On the other hand, a poem provides much shorter length and information. Even though it may not have one of the

advantages of the book, the poem may convey a stronger impression and sharp message, which also brings rich emotions from the readers. Actually, I am not a close friend with the poem because sometimes I feel frustrated by the lack of information in the poem. Also, I feel confused. But, one thing I can tell for sure is that the poem has a great power that evokes certain emotions and feelings. It feels like I am not reading the story, but reading the feeling the emotions of the poem.

These three poems, *As I Grew Older*, *Demand*, and *Harlem [Dream Deferred]* by Langston Hughes, share the same theme which is oppression as a black person along with Coates and Baldwin. But, the noticeable feature is that these three poems talk about a dream that has vanished. This dream seems to be the result of racial discrimination and oppression. Coates and Baldwin also mention about the dream. In *Between the World and Me*, Coates says:

Fear ruled everything around me, and I knew, as all black people do, that this fear was connected to the Dream out there, to the unworried boys, to pie and pot roast, to the white fences and green lawns nightly beamed into our television sets. (29)

And, in *The Fire Next Time*, Baldwin says:

We are controlled here by our confusion, far more than we know, and the American dream has therefore become something much more closely resembling a nightmare, on the private, domestic, and international levels. (89)

As I Grew Older starts with his realization that he used to have a dream. The dream is so bright like the sun. His dream was warm, bright, and hopeful. However, he has forgotten the existence of his dream due to a growing wall. The wall never stops growing until it reaches the sun and until the shadow from the wall hides his dream. He says directly, "I am black." and "I lie down in the shadow." The dark shadow camouflages his black body. There are only the wall and the shadow. It seems like he is disappearing with his dream into the dark shadow. But, he reminds him that he has had the dream. He is determined to break the thick wall, the oppression, with his hands. He is heading to the bright sun and the bright future for his dream.

Demand starts by saying, "Listen!" It almost sounds like shouting with desperation. He depicts his body as "utter death." He is alive but dead because there are no lights and no winds. When you think about the light and wind, these are nature that anyone freely can enjoy. Light and wind seem to mean the basic human right for every human being. However, he cannot see the bright light and touch the soft wind. This may mean that he does not have the basic human

rights. He longs for them. He is a human being who needs these fundamental human rights. He asks where the light is and whether you can see the light and touch the wind. But, there is no answer back to him.

In *Harlem [Dream Deferred]*, it starts with a question, “what happens to a dream deferred?” And, it is composed mostly of questions. Life as a black man is surrounded by discrimination and oppression. In this life, their dreams are deferred, distorted, and frustrated apart from their will. The circumstances given to them cause their dreams to dry up and rot. However, what does the last question mean? Explode? It may have two interpretations. First, their dreams eventually explode and become ashes in the air. Second, the dreams that their frustrated dreams are finally coming to the light, and their dream get to achieve.

To compare and contrast with a different culture, I additionally chose a Korean poem, *A Poem That Is Written Easily* by Dongju Yun, which relates to oppression. Through the books and poems I read about racism, what I felt in common was the repressed life and oneself created by the outside environment, prejudice, and discrimination. And, it made me think of the time when Korea were oppressed by Japan, and remind of the great poet of that era. Even though *Poem That Is Written Easily* is not about racism, all the books and poems on racism that I have read and this poem that I chose are characterized by oppression.

Since it is a Korean poetry characterized by historical background, I would like to first introduce its background and the general information about the poet, Dongju Yun. The time when Yun lived was the period of Japanese colonial rule over Korea, which was a nation before Korea divided into North Korea and South Korea. Japan used force and violence to take over Korea with suppression and oppression. As a result, Korea lost sovereignty. At that time, many Korean people were brutally sacrificed, suffered, and killed by the forcible occupation of Japan. If the Korean people tried to fight back to reclaim Korea back, Japanese troops tortured and killed people and even innocent pregnant women, young children, or elderly people for no good reasons. They forced Koreans to write and speak Japanese and renamed Koreans to Japanese names.

At that time when *A Poem That Is Written Easily* was written, Yun went to Japan to study and went to college. On the other hand, in Korea, many young people of the same age as Yun and many people went out to fight and protest in order to regain the country. Many of them

were being tortured and dying. In such a disturbing situation, Yun expresses himself through writing poetry instead of going out and fight for his country.

In *A Poem That Is Written Easily*, the line, “six-tatami room is a stranger’s country,” indicates the Japanese style of a room. Considering the situation of the time, he thinks “the fate of poet is doleful.” He writes poetry and receives money from his parents in his hometown to attend school. But, at the same time, he thinks about his friends “from childhood” who died fighting against Japan. “Life is hard to live,” his friends are dying, and his country is dying. He is ashamed to study in a country that invaded Korea. He is ashamed to write poetry easily. And, he repeats: “The six-tatami room is a stranger’s country.” Through this repetition, I see his complex and tough mind. At the end, he turns the lamp on, and he drives away the darkness. As the morning comes like a new age, he eagerly desires that Korea break away from Japanese colonialism. However, in fact, this poem was never easily written. I can see his pain in every single line. I can feel his sorrow, his shame, and his guilt.

All the three poems by Hughes and *A Poem That Is Written Easily* by Dongju Yun made me, as I followed every line, visualize the light, the wind, the wall, the shadow, the rotten meat, explosion, the six-tatami room, and the smell of my parents’ sweat and affection. Hughes well expressed the oppression and frustrating reality they had gone through by using symbolism, simile, and metaphor. There is a difference between the poems in terms of how it ends. *As I Grew Older* begins with an awareness of the existence of a dream he used to have and confronts the obstacles blocking it. But, he finishes the poem with a positive ending with the will to break the thick and long wall that interferes with his dream. However, *Demand* and *Harlem [Dream Deferred]* do not seem to end up positively. Rather, these poems seem to play a great role in raising awareness of how their discrimination and oppression has affected their dreams. *A Poem That Is Written Easily* is ends with hope that the darkness will vanish soon.

Someone is directly and physically oppressed, tortured, or killed, and someone is mentally and psychologically suppressed. The oppression may come from racial discrimination or from conquest. Whatever kind of oppression, those who are oppressed lose their basic human rights, their dreams, and lives. All of them fight in their own way to escape and break this oppression and take back their rights and dreams. Their fights are never easy.

Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad

Before reading *Heart of Darkness*, I knew that this book was published in 1899, which is a long time ago, and that it was about racism and colonialism. I usually expect something about a book if I start reading the book by knowing the subject and year of the book. In the case of racism books published a long time ago, I usually anticipate lives for black people as slaves and the pains from it. But this book is quite different from what I expected even though this book mentions many times about the miserable lives of black people.

Marlow who is the narrator and protagonist of the book has relatively progressive eyes. As he dreams of an adventure to the Congo river and begins his great journey, he finds racism along with colonialism and barbarous human nature with endless greed which can be found in European people. And, he sees these with a skeptical attitude. The first thing I noticed was his perspective on the black people of that time. He says:

‘Black shapes crouched, lay, sat between the trees leaning against the trunks, clinging to the earth, half coming out, half effaced within the dim light, in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment, and despair. Another mine on the cliff went off, followed by a slight shudder of the soil under my feet. The work was going on. The work! And this was the place where some of the helpers had withdrawn to die. They were dying slowly—it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now—nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom. (Conrad 25)

In this passage above, as he describes the sick and dying black people in detail, he brings up the opposite image and says, "The work was going on. The work" (25)! And, he clearly says that they are neither the enemies nor the criminals. Also, in the depictions of black people, Marlow does not give a simple depiction, but he seems to have a critical view on it. This was a surprise to me. For example,

A nigger was being beaten near by. They said he had caused the fire in some way; be that as it may, he was screeching most horribly. I saw him, later, for several days, sitting in a bit of shade looking very sick and trying to recover himself; afterwards he arose and went out— and the wilderness without a sound took him into its bosom again. (Conrad 36)

His attitude was incompatible with those around him. For instance, “What a row the brute makes!’ said the indefatigable man with the moustaches, appearing near us. ‘Serve him right. Transgression—punishment—bang! Pitiless, pitiless. That’s the only way. This will prevent all conflagrations for the future” (40).

As I thought of this Marlow's perspective on black people, I came up with a sushi roll. The sushi roll is now one of the world's most beloved foods. It was a food that was unfamiliar



and different taste long ago except for the Japanese people. Over time, it has gradually been embraced globally and became a food that is relatively easy to find in eastern and western countries, including the US and European countries. But that does not mean that everyone around the world knows and likes the sushi rolls. Some people may be

unfamiliar with the sushi roll and they might think it is a strange food. Some people may start to try and adapt the sushi roll a little bit.

I think Marlow's perception of racial discrimination is similar to the global spread of sushi rolls. In the era when Marlow lived, racism was rampant, but he was skeptical. As time went by, more and more people like Marlow have come to the surface, and racial discrimination has been improving and racism is considered as an important issue globally. However, to some people, the stereotype and discrimination against certain races still exist no matter it is conscious or unconscious. Some people may try hard to get out of their stereotypes regarding racism.

***Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

You may recall my childhood story of 'skin color.' The reason why I introduced my experience above is that I feel that there is a similar relationship between Ifemelu and me. As she lived in Nigeria for a long time, she never thought of herself as a black person. In the country where she lived, there are the people who all looked alike. They have similar physical features such as skin color, body shape, hair, etc. So, to her, it was perfectly natural that her skin is dark, and there was nothing strange to her. But since she moved to the United States, she faced various degrees of discrimination because of the color of skin. I had never been aware that I am Asian with small eyes and a small body while I grew up in Korea because all of my friends, families and other people around me were alike. And, I have never considered myself as yellow skin. When I

heard that Asian people are yellow. I laughed. Well, how could you think my skin is yellow? It is obviously not yellow, but beige! Like Ifemelu, I came to New York City to go to college and I came across a variety of people and cultures than I expected. I was confronted with the differences and discrimination which lead to the cultural shocks and conflicts in my mind. These experiences led me into deep loneliness and depressed mood. I felt alone, and I think I do not belong here like Ifemelu was depressed once.



Coates, Baldwin, Adichie, Hughes, Conrad, and Yun have common main themes, which are racism against black people and their lives except Yun. But, they all talk about discrimination and oppression which take place in different culture and time period. Baldwin and Coates, as African Americans and victims of racial discrimination, show how their physical, psychological, and social aspects have been devastated from the long and harsh history of racism, by addressing their personal experiences and their beliefs on black and white. I have found that often uses of the word “fear” in both books. It might mean that being a black and the life as a black are deeply connected to live with fear which comes from discrimination and oppression. Also, both of them contain letters to their relatives, Coates’ son and Baldwin’s nephew. As a person who has gone through all the hardship because of the color of skin, both authors write the letters to his son and his nephew to tell them the history of themselves, of black people, and racism. They emphasize that it is very important not to forget the history and remember the difficulties that they had to and have to go through. Also, not only Coates and James but also Adichie make sure to put the message clear in the letters that a black body is beautiful, that hair of black people is beautiful the way it is, that black people are not inferior to white people, and that they are same as others.

All writers have some common features, but there are also some differences between other authors in terms of their time background, personal and historical experience, vocabulary, and voice. *Between the World and Me* was published in 2015 and *The Fire Next Time* was published in 1963, *Americanah* was published relatively recently, and *Heart of Darkness* is the

oldest one which was published in 1902. Because of that, they cover different background and history regarding racism.

Adichie and Conrad also tells stories in different perspective. Conrad tells stories in an White European's perspective. Adichie tells many stories in a non-American black female's perspective, so it includes difficulties and discrimination of women and non-American. Also, even though the general topic is not light since her language is more humorous and bolder at the same time than other authors, the topic does not get too heavy. In addition, her language makes Ifemelu's personality appears to be more attractive and interesting.

Especially to compare Coates and Baldwin, Coates rather focuses on a black body, and Baldwin focuses on a negro. The voices of Coates and Baldwin are the one that I first noticed when I started to read *The Fire Next Time* after *Between the World and Me*. Coates has a stronger and more intense voice, on the other hand, Baldwin has a softer and more delicate voice. For example, Coates says:

The point of this language of "intention" and "personal responsibility" is broad exoneration. Mistakes were made. Bodies were broken. People were enslaved. We meant well. We tried our best. "Good intention" is a hall pass through history, a sleeping pill that ensures the Dream. (Coates 33)

As I read this passage, I could feel his determination and strength. Especially, the several short sentences and the words, "broken," "enslaved," and "a sleeping pill," shows more power. Whereas, Baldwin's language is more elegant. For instance, he says:

To be loved, baby, hard, at once, and forever, to strengthen you against the loveless world. Remember that: I know how black it looks today, for you. It looked bad that day, too, yes, we were trembling. We have not stopped trembling yet, but if we had not loved each other none of us would have survived. And now you must survive because we love you, and for the sake of your children and your children's children. (Baldwin 7)

In this passage, the style of writing is obviously different from Coates'. Looking at the words, he uses lots of word related to love such as "loved," "loveless," and "love." Also, compared to Coates, it has more longer sentence by selecting warm words.

Other difference is that Coates believes that studying and knowing about the black body based on the history may be same as struggling, but it would help you to understand yourself as one of the black body and the values of it. Baldwin's voice may correspond with his belief in love

and acceptance. He believes that love is essential in order to remove the tension between black and white and the discrimination against black from white.

My answers To a Test for White Privilege

In *Americanah*, Ifemelu posts 'a test for White Privilege' (Adichie 429) in her blog. As a non-American Asian, I responded to the test for White Privilege. My experience and thoughts seem to have another aspect. It may not correspond with racism against black people. But, it may share several things to a certain degree. I thought it would be interesting to share several answers.

Q. When you go shopping alone at a nice store, do you worry that you will be followed or harassed?

A. Not really, but occasionally, I have a concern that I may encounter a racist. As an Asian woman, I have several experiences that total strangers said something racism like "Ni-hao" and had the racist gestures of the slanted-eyes toward me. This happens quite often. When I took photos of myself with Asian friends, some random white people behind me looked at my camera and had the slanted-eye gesture, and they laughed and disappeared. The worst experience took place when I was having dinner at a restaurant with my boyfriend and my roommate (they are all Asian.) We were sitting next to a big window. There were people passing by, and a white man saw us, suddenly pulling down his pants, mooning us through the window, and laughing with his friends and disappeared. All of us stopped eating and talking in significant shock. None of us could speak or get angry. We just froze for a minute. We never had that kind of insult before. It was full of shock. We could not finish our meal because of the disgust. I had thought that there was no severe racial discrimination against Asian, especially in New York. But since that day, I have been furious but also scared and frightened. And, I closed my mind to white people. This can be a terrible prejudice, but once you have a shocking experience, it is not easy to break the prejudice and open your mind. After that happened, of course, I have met very sincere and good white people. But still, I find it difficult to approach them and open my mind first.

Q. When you apply for a bank loan, do you worry that, because of your race, you might be seen as financially unreliable?

A. No, I do not worry about that.

Q. If you criticize the government, do you worry that you might be seen as a cultural outsider? Or that you might be asked to “go back to X,” X being somewhere not in America?

A. I have never been this kind of situation. I have little interest in government. But, I have heard “go back to your country” in a different situation.

Q. If you want to move to a nice neighborhood, do you worry that you might not be welcome because of your race?

A. No, I do not think so. But, when I lived in an apartment where many Asian people lived, my cap driver said, “it’s an Asian apartment.” And, I said, “yes, there are many Asian people live here.” I was a bit offended, but it was kind of truth. But, there are also some different races live this apartment too.

Q. When you use the “nude” color of underwear and Band-Aids, do you already know that it will not match your skin?

A. No. I spend most of my life in Korea and I never worried about that. I was not even aware of the various colors of skin. Since I came to NY, I came to realize it. When I go to a cosmetics shop, I see a variety of lipstick colors and foundation colors which I cannot find in Korea. But, I heard that recently there are many foundation colors coming up in Korea considering various races.

As I answer to these questions, I could relate to Adichie’s opinion:

American racial minorities—blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Jews—all get shit from white folks, different kinds of shit, but shit still. Each secretly believes that it gets the worst shit. So, no, there is no United League of the Oppressed. However, all the others think they’re better than blacks because, well, they’re not black. (253)

I am an Asian. I had never experienced racial discrimination in Korea. But, as soon as I came to New York and sometimes when I traveled abroad, I could not avoid discrimination. It could be useless to judge which race “gets the worst shit.” The important thing is to be aware of the existence of racism against many races. I do not particularly agree with the sentence, “all the others think they’re better than blacks.” However, I agree that being blacks, being Asians, being

Hispanics, being Jews, or being whites are totally different. And, it may be difficult to understand other's position and perspective. Here is another important thing. Whatever race we are, we should always listen and pay attention to what the other person says. This would be the first step.

Reading this book, I felt that there are a number of prejudices and stereotypes from the beginning. Along the way, all characters in the book including Ifemelu, Americans, and non-Americans all live with their own standards and prejudices. Ultimately, Ifemelu also views everything from her own perspective as a non-American black, African American, black woman, and immigrant. Not only in this book but also in other books that I have mentioned in this paper, everyone has prejudices. Sometimes, prejudices and stereotypes are helpful to judge something. Sometimes, it is not helpful at all. Oppositely, it is harmful. Especially, when it causes oppression and discrimination which damage human rights, prejudices and stereotypes are severe poison that can cause physical and psychological injure

Part 2: Sexism

The Patience Stone by Atiq Rahimi

In *The Patience Stone*, a Muslim woman takes care of her husband who is in a coma. She starts to talk to him about things that she cannot talk if he is not in the coma. Actually, it seems more like a confession than just telling stories. As she confesses her secrets, she becomes to consider him as a patience stone which is a magic stone she can tell any burden



and any secret of hers, and the stone sets you free from all the hardships you have been suffering.

I could not just read her story for fun because I know this kind of culture and I have been told about a similar thing when I was younger. Especially, the story that she got beaten from her husband made me very upset. In their culture, menstruation is treated as something unclean and nasty which is nonsense. The main female character "never understood why, for you men, pride is so much linked to blood" (Rahimi 34). And, so did I. I have been told that keeping chastity before marriage is important and many guys want virginity of women. The hymen is a proof of your virginity. If a woman does not bleed on the first night with a man, the man would assume that she is not a virgin. So, he may think further that she had intercourse with another man. I was young. I believed what others told me without question. However, as I was getting older, I thought it did not make any sense. Why do people care so much about the woman's virginity and the blood from the hymen? What about men? Do they also keep their virginity as women do? If not, why should only women be virgins? Isn't it obviously unfair? Thankfully, the notion of a woman's virginity has weakened. However, sadly, in some cultures and countries, there still are many women who are treated as like prostitutes just because they lost their virginities. I have heard that some women who are not virgins have surgeries to recover the hymen before their marriages. It is a cruel and miserable reality for women in some cultures.

In this book, it keeps telling the readers that the cruel reality that women face in everyday life in Muslim culture. Along with the issue about virginity, there are more issues regarding women's rights. When the protagonist was a child, she got beaten by her father just because he lost money from his quail fight. She married her husband who was "the hero, who fought on every front" (20), but he did not attend the wedding ceremony because he was doing hero's job. She had to spend three years without him but with her husband's family sleeping with her mother-in-law. She was not allowed to see her parents and even her friends because "it was not considered proper for a young married virgin" (59) to meet them. She was beaten by her husband just because she was in her period and because her blood made him dirty. She was threatened by her mother-in-law to have a second wife because she did not get pregnant for years. So, she was forced to have intercourse with an unknown man and to have babies. It keeps telling us about the absence of women's self-assurance, autonomy, voice, and control of their own lives.

Memoirs of a Woman Doctor by Nawal el Saadawi

Why wasn't there a greater understanding of truth and justice? Why didn't mothers recognize that daughters were like sons, or men acknowledge women as equals and partners? Why didn't society recognize a woman's right to lead a normal life using her mind as well as her body? Why did they make me waste my life in these confrontations? (Saadawi)

She throws several sharp questions regarding the deep roots of sexism. Since she was young, she had complaints and questions about the discriminatory treatment between men and women. And, she has asked herself why she has to face and confront with the difficulties and problems just because she is a woman. She is a person who wants to be herself, not a woman who has to follow the gender roles which have created by culture and society. However, confrontation seems tough and exhausting, so that she momentarily contemplates whether she should comply with it. Looking at some words from the passage such as “fight,” “battle,” and “drown in my own sweat,” you can see that confrontation against the gender roles is tough. However, even though it is the difficult process, she strongly appeals that she will fight for it to be herself as an independent woman and a doctor.

I grew up in an environment similar to hers which is depicted in this book. So, while reading, I was able to relate to this book more than other books. Korea is one of the conservative Asian countries. And, there was a notion of preferring a son to a daughter for a long time. My mother had my sister and me. But, she had to have a son as well because my grandmother claimed to have a son rather than a girl. When I met my grandmother, I do not remember any specific thing or conversation with her, but I remember that I felt she did not like my sister and me. She loved my male cousin only. The notion has vanished as I grew up; rather, young people these days tend to prefer a girl. However, there still is discrimination against women.

Women face deep-rooted problems. When I was a kid, my parents and other adults such as older relatives had taught me how to behave like a girl. Whenever I behave like a boy, they told me, “Girls do not do that. You should behave like a girl.” I was a very active and rough child, so I did not comply. Because I had felt that boys could do whatever they do, but girls cannot do whatever the boys do in some situations, I thought it was unfair. I ignored the girl's thing and did whatever I wanted, and it resulted in many troubles.

Honestly, I was not clearly aware that people, especially adults, had treated women differently just because they are women. Even though I grew up behaving against

discrimination, I had found myself saying something gender discriminative and joking around with friends. For example, when I was the early 20s, I was talking with my friend about a female friend who speaks too loud and curses a lot. Shamefully, I had said, 'How could a girl's voice sound like that?,' 'when she curses, It makes me embarrassed,' and 'She should speak more like a woman!' I am very embarrassed to expose my shameful behavior, but I think it is important to reflect on myself from time to time. At the moment, I did not even realize that it was sexist comments. After a while, I gradually came to learn about the discrimination against women which is prevalent in everyday life. And, I came to realize that I also contributed to sexism. Most importantly, I was shocked by the influence of culture and environment. Whether you like or dislike, you are born in a certain culture. Ever since you are an infant, everything and everyone around you teach you how to see, hear, think, speak, and behave. And, often, you take for granted, especially when you are young.

During adolescence, I was getting more aware that people treat women differently from men, and I was not happy with it. I acted like a boy from time to time because I didn't like the notion that girls have to behave like a girl. One day, when I was in middle school, I had a close male friend and we had a bet on who was going to get a higher grade on an exam. And, I won. I felt so great because of the fact that I was smarter than a man at that point. It was a silly thought. But, this story may represent a little bit my early life struggling to fight for the different treatment between men and women. Like the woman doctor in the book, I have learned that men and women have little differences. Obviously, physical differences exist. But, from a psychological perspective, there are more equalities than differences. There are differences between individuals, not between men and women. I also had a boyfriend who was kind of sexist. And, it ended up breaking up. I understand that gender roles and sexism are deeply pervaded in society. So, it may not purely individuals' faults. It is more like a social problem. I was really glad that I had an opportunity to read this book. I felt like I was not the only one who struggled regarding this issue.

Kim Ji Young Born in 1982 by Nam Joo Cho

After reading *The Patience Stone* and *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor*, I reminded of women's rights in Korean society. According to OECD data, Korea's gender wage gap is the highest in the

OECD. The US is 8th highest, and Japan is the 3rd. Thankfully, the feminist movement has been going on since a few years ago. The time finally came that Korean women notice and acknowledge the pervasive discrimination and inequality and raise their voices.

As many countries are struggling with women's rights, I have thought about a book that can represent women's rights in the country where I was born. I have started to read a few feminist books a couple of years ago. And, I decided to re-read one of the books and write about it for this class.

Kim Ji Young Born in 1982 by Nam Joo Cho is a feminist novel published in South Korea in 2016. This book, through the voice of Ji Young Kim's psychiatrist, tells and accuses of the inequalities and discrimination faced by women in Korean society through Ji Young Kim's grandmother's life, her mother and her own life. It also shows the general perception of society which is the deeply rooted son preference of Korea.

In my mother's generation, inequality and discrimination against women were more severe than the present. The preference for boys was deeply rooted in society as a whole and in everyone. It was the time when women should sacrifice for men because a man represents a family and the man must succeed to think that the family is successful. This notion also appears in this book. The passage that I cited above shows that a woman was considered to be a person and a mother who supports a man, children, and her husband. At the time, it was very common that women do not go to college, but men go to college. Women worked in factories so that men could receive higher education. It was a depressing reality that a woman is hard to chase and achieve her dream.

Ji Young Kim's mother used to have a dream to be a teacher. However, after finishing elementary school, she helped with the family farming and went to the capital city, Seoul, to make money at the factory at her age of 15. Since she became a mother, she had to earn money to raise her children by doing difficult work. Her entire life was not for her own, but for her brothers and for her children.

As a Korean and as a Korean woman, it was a sad thing to have a lot of sympathies while reading this book. What made me more heartbroken was not inequalities and discrimination itself, but the fact that I have lived without even noticing the unfair discrimination. I was so accustomed to such discrimination so that I've never questioned whether it is right or wrong. Thank to this book and the author. It made me open my eyes more than before.

Throughout the book, the author points out many hardships Korean women have. As other feminist books mention, menstruation is something shameful and secretive in Korea as well. A woman should not wear too short skirts or shirts which expose too much breasts because it makes you look like a easy girl. Women have limited opportunities for employment and promotion compared to men because women tend to quit their jobs after marriage and pregnancy. In public transport such as subways and buses and in public restrooms, there are many hidden camera which is installed to take pictures and videos of women. The victims of the hidden camera get psychological damages, but the society says women should be more careful with it. When a woman becomes a full-time housewife after marriage and the woman drinks a cup of coffee at a cafe, strangers treat the woman as a “mother-worm” (Cho 116) who eats her husbands’ money.

Ji Young Kim has experienced all of them which I described above. Regarding the “mother-worm” (116), she tell her husband, “That coffee was 1500 won (about \$1). They would have known the price because they had same coffee. Do I not deserve a cup of coffee worth 1500 won” (116)? I want to ask a question. Do women deserve discrimination just because of gender?

Please Look After Mom by Kyung-Sook Shin

May is ‘Family Month’ in Korea, and May 8th is parents’ day. As I celebrate the parents’ day, I would like to introduce a Korean book called *Please Look After Mom* by Kyung-Sook Shin.

Please Look After Mom, which is written in 2008, is about a mother in South Korea. ‘Mom,’ who is 69 years old, comes to Seoul with her husband to visit their children. But, in a crowded subway station, she gets separated from her husband who always walks ahead of her, and she goes missing. This book contains five chapters with different perspectives of her daughter, son, husband, and herself. Through different family member’s perspectives, the mother’s life is described. She sacrifices and loves for her children, her husband, and her family as the name of the mother.



As I read this book, the mother in the book became my mother, and the daughter who lost her mother became me. The hardships and sacrifices that the mother had turned into the hardships

and sacrifices that my mother went through.

It is no exaggeration to say that mothers, especially my mother's generation and before generations, in Korea live for their children, for their husbands, and for their family. When a woman marries, she becomes a 'wife' and a 'daughter-in-law'. After giving birth to a child, she becomes a 'mother.' This means that the self that she had been living with until she gets married disappears. It is no longer a person or an individual, but a 'mother.' Now, she reborns as a 'mother.' And, mothers have important roles. She makes her husband comfortable, raises her children by herself, prepares three warm meals a day, does laundry, cleans the home, and makes money by doing hard work if it is necessary, but even though she works for a living, she still needs to do the chores.

Like the 'mom' in the book, many mothers spent most time sacrificing and leaving behind her childhood, her dreams, and her own life. Mothers should protect the family almost no matter what. Even though her husband treats her badly, curses her, beats her, or cheats on her, mothers should stay at home for her children. In the book, her husband used to leave home for months and cheat on her repeatedly. When he "think about her, it was to ask her to do something, or to blame her or ignore her" (Shin 128). And, he "acted as if it had been decreed that you couldn't speak politely to your wife" (128).

Mothers had to be the strongest one to support their children and family. However, ironically, mothers were the weakest one at the same time. They had to keep their voice down, and their opinions should have concealed because fathers should be the one who takes controls over everything.

It is not strange that the children think "of Mom as Mom her entire life" (235) because the mother had abandoned most thing that is related to herself since she became the mother, and they had grown up watching their mother as mother. These are the reason that this book evokes complex emotions and feelings about mothers. We know that we have own lives and dreams. But, we have missed that mothers are the same as us. Mothers have given up many things for children and family. Now, our mothers are getting older and older. This makes even sadder.

I have truly enjoyed reading *The Patience Stone* by Rahimi, *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor* by Saadawi, *Kim Ji Young Born in 1982* by Nam Joo Cho, *Please Look After Mom* by Kyung-Sook Shin. As I read four different feminist books in different cultures, I have found some commonalities and differences in terms of contexts and writing styles.

They have a common theme which is women's rights. They talk about the hardships and difficulties of women's lives through the lives of the female main characters in their novels to raise awareness and to improve women's rights as the ultimate goal. Overall, women in these books lacked the determination and control of their lives by the existing gender roles and by historically unequal women's rights. In particular, women always seem to be considered to be inferior and subordinate to men. For example, their marriages as women are considered something very important and their roles as women and wives are apparent. All of the women in these three books are sacrificing something in their marriages. When it comes to sacrificing something, women always give up before men. Also, women in these books have similar experiences with menstruation. Women's menstruation is thought to be hidden, embarrassing, and impure.

Each of them includes distinct cultures, societies, and time periods, and the writing styles are different. In Rahimi's book, it tells the life of a woman living in a Muslim country in the middle of the war. Rahimi's book covers a more conservative culture compared to other writers. So, the main character of this book does not have a very active attitude like the main character of Saadawi's book. Compared to Saadawi, Rahimi carefully approaches in a passive way by telling her unconscious husband her experiences that comes from oppression and oppression as a woman. By doing so, she seems to gain more freedom and confidence. However, even though I just depicted it has somehow passive attitude, it does not mean that the woman is weak or so. Rather, the contents and the life of the woman include more violent and intense mistreatment of Muslim women than other women in other books.

In addition, from time to time, she blames herself and she thinks she is a demon or the demon is inside her. For example:

She kisses his chest. "Can you forgive me? She looks at him tenderly. "I left the house, hidden beneath my chador, and wandered the streets of this deaf, blind city in tears. Like a madwoman! When I went back to my aunt's house in the evening, everyone thought I was ill. I went straight to my room to collapse into my distress, my guilt. I didn't sleep all night. I was sure I was a monster, a proper demon! I was terrorized. Had I lost my mind, become a criminal?" (Rahami 72)

As shown in this example above, I think the author tries to point out something very important: women consider themselves as they are crazy, sick, or possessed by a demon if they have doubts about illogical and unequal gender discrimination in particular cultures where have deep and

strong norms that a man is superior to a woman and that a woman has to serve a man. At the end, her husband becomes conscious and starts to beat her madly. Through this ending, I assume that the author tries to accuse that the life of Muslim women still remains tragic as before. Also, throughout the book, the author describes the tensions, fears, and violence caused by war:

Sitting on the floor, her wails of “my children ...” reach no one, drowned out by the dull rumblings of a tank. Bent double, she makes her way to the window. Peeks outside, through the holes in the curtain, and is filled with despair. A tear-soaked cry bursts from her chest, “Protect us, God!” (81)

This seems to have an effect to enlarge the oppression and discrimination she has experienced.

In Saadawi's book, it refers to the inequalities and discrimination faced by women through the life of a young Egyptian woman. I think this book has a more progressive voice and story and active attitude by showing her struggling against stereotypes and prejudices about women. Unlike the Muslim woman, she recognizes discrimination between men and women and acts against it since childhood. And, she keeps facing and refusing the customary gender roles in order to overcome the injustice, discrimination, and difficulties. In her early life, she rejected her femininity: “I hated my femininity, resented my nature and knew nothing about my body. All that was left for me was reject, to challenge, to resist” (Saadawi)! Later on, she came to realize that:

I'd become acquainted with my self: I no longer needed to cling so strongly to it that I was cut off from life. Life, the essence of which I'd gathered from the earth like a pigeon picking up grain in its beak; life, which I'd begun to love with every cell of my being, body and soul, and which I felt an overwhelming desire to hold on to. (Saadawi)

It starts from the hatred of herself as a woman to understanding that love and embracement are the answer instead of hating. To sum up, the author shows the processes and the journey against gender discrimination with love, which could be a good stimulus for the readers and to arouse their attention to the reality women have.

Compared to Rahami and Cho, Saadawi asks lots of questions that make the readers think through the main character's voice. For example: “Why had society always tried to convince me that manhood was a distinction and an honour, and womanhood a weakness and a disgrace” (Saadawi)?

If she really loved me and wanted my happiness above her own, then why did her demands and desires always work against my happiness? How could she possibly love me when she put chains on my arms and legs and round my neck every day? (Saadawi)

Why wasn't there a greater understanding of truth and justice? Why didn't mothers recognize that daughters were like sons, or men acknowledge women as equals and partners? Why didn't society recognize a woman's right to lead a normal life using her mind as well as her body? (Saadawi)

In addition, the author seems to try to emphasize that there is little difference between men and women by saying:

Why should I lower my eyes when they looked at me, bow my head while they were lifting theirs, stumble along while they walked with a proud and confident step? I was the same as them, or better. (Saadawi)

Science proved to me that women were like men and men like animals. A woman had a heart, a nervous system and a brain exactly like a man's, and an animal had a heart, a nervous system and a brain exactly like a human being's. There were no essential differences between them! A woman contained a man inside her and a man concealed a woman in his depths. A woman had male organs, some apparent and some hidden, and a man had female hormones in his blood. (Saadawi)

In Cho's book, it depicts the unequal right and life of a Korean woman. Compared with women's discrimination in other cultures, gender discrimination in Korea seems to have improved in certain degree. In the case of Korea, women's rights have developed rapidly in the last 30 years. It has become natural for women to receive higher education. Women can have dreams and make the dreams come true. However, still, whether it is consciously or unconsciously, there remains inequality, prejudice, and discrimination against women. In a term of writing style, the most distinguished feature is the relatively objective approach probably because the life of women in Korea is told by Ji Young Kim's psychiatrist.

Cho does not specifically address the inner thoughts and feelings of the main character in the book. However, she explains what she experienced in more detail, allowing the reader to feel what Ji Young Kim would have felt. For example, "Since then, I've had a lot of interviews, often heard vulgar jokes about my appearance or attire, sneaky looks toward specific body parts, and unnecessary physical contact. I could not get a job" (Cho 74). In this passage, she does not reveal her feeling or how humiliating and embarrassing it was. Instead, the readers and I could feel it.

Also, Cho uses several statistical data which increases the credibility:

In 2014, when Kim Ji Young left the company, one out of five married Korean women quit because of marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, childcare and education of young children. The participation rate of Korean women is significantly lower before and after the birth. 63.8 percent of women aged 20-29 participate in economic activities, drop to 58 percent at age 30-39, and increase to 55.7 percent at age 40. (104)

There are also similarities with the writers of other feminist books. Like Saadawi, Cho talks about what kind of discrimination little girls experience during childhood. And, that discrimination has a similar context: A girl must behave like a girl, cannot leave home without permission, and should not play outside late. Cho and Rahami do not have positive ending in their books. At the end of *Kim Ji Young Born in 1982*, a psychiatrist says, “no matter how good a person is, if the person has a problem with childcare, it is difficult issue. I have to find a staff who is a single” (124). The psychiatrist knows how Ji Young Kim has been discriminated as a woman, and he understands the inequality women always experience. However, the male psychiatrist still remains as a person who contributes to gender discrimination. In *The Patience Stone*, even though the ending can be interpreted depending on the readers, the Muslim woman is hit by her husband and ends with her scarlet blood.

Comparing between *Kim Ji Young Born in 1982* by Nam Joo Cho and *Please Look After Mom* by Kyung-Sook Shin, these two books have the same background of place, Korea, and also tell about Korean women, especially both talk about women as mothers. Furthermore, it includes a critical perspective on women rights. But the differences are different time period. *Kim Ji Young Born in 1982* is published recently and covers more contemporary stories and uses only one perspective. Whereas, *Please Look After Mom* covers my grandmother’s generation. In addition, it uses four different perspectives to tell the mother’s story. Especially, the husband’s perspective is interesting that he comes to realize her wife’s sacrifice and devotion and to regret what he has done to her.

To sum up the analysis of feminist books, in these three different cultures and at different times, each woman experiences different hardships and discrimination. Also, the authors approaches the readers in different ways with different writing styles and structures. Because everyone’s culture has different histories and experiences, it can be more severe in some aspects and less severe in other aspects. However, all these books inform the readers and

the world about the reality of women's rights through the lives of main female characters, which many people do not want to speak out loud.

In addition, to compare the writers and poets of racism books and poems with feminist book writers, all of them have a common ground which is oppression. Considering Saadawi and Baldwin, both seem to emphasize the importance of love and warm feelings. In *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor*, in the beginning, I could not find any sense of love from the woman, but anger and denial. She rejects men and mother as well. She becomes independent and self-assured. However, as the book heads to the end, she found her emotion, warm heart, and love. The finding of love brightens and broadens her life better than before. Baldwin, also, emphasizes the importance of love between black and white people instead of hatred and revenge. Comparing Saadawi and Coates, I have felt that both of them have a similar voice and vocabulary. Even though Coates seems to have a stronger voice, Saadawi also has a strong and determined voice, which conveys their messages and thoughts very clearly. Overall, all writers pinch a core aspect of discrimination, the long history and culture of racism, sexism, discrimination, and oppression.

Let's say there is a tree that is called discrimination. Racism is one of the many branches of the tree. Sexism is also one of many branches. Where are the truth, justice, racial and sexual equality, and their fundamental right? Why do people and society not understand the right of women and black people? I may answer these questions: sexist-related and racist-related cultures, customs, and norms are very influential factors in shaping your perception and your life. Racism and sexism which root in culture, tradition, and norm are the ideas that have built for a long period of time. It is not easy to change or break in a short time. However, by getting aware of the problems and by raising your voice, I think there will be a brighter future where less discrimination exists.

Last Words



Here is what I think. The place of America has had a characteristic which is both attractive and confusing. It is a place where various races, cultures, values, and prejudices collide, and where each clash is harmonized in its own form. And, the form becomes America's unique cultures. However, it is no longer the characteristic of the United States. Many other countries, including Korea, are now becoming multinational. That is to say, historically, we are now facing a new phase in terms of a global phenomenon. We are learning how to coexist with diverse cultures, races, and values. Some people will argue that their values are right and others' are wrong in this process. Conflicts seem to be inevitable.

Through this class, I read many books, mainly thinking and writing about discrimination and oppression. I wanted to know the answer. So, is there an answer? Is there an accurate solution? Is there a way for a world without discrimination and contradiction? As I write several essays, I thought I could find the answer. But what I realize now is that trying to find the answer is not the point. The direction I have to pursue is not toward the answer but toward questions. I have to ask questions constantly. I have to throw endless question marks

and ask everything that seems normal and abnormal because what it seems to be normal could be abnormal and vice versa.

Adichie says:

Don't say "Oh, it's not really race, it's class. Oh, it's not race, it's gender. Oh, it's not race, it's the cookie monster." You see, American Blacks actually don't WANT it to be race. They would rather not have racist shit happen. So maybe when they say something is about race, it's maybe because it actually is? Don't say "I'm color-blind," because if you are color-blind, then you need to see a doctor and it means that when a black man is shown on TV as a crime suspect in your neighborhood, all you see is a blurry purplish-grayish-creamish figure. Don't say "We're tired of talking about race" or "The only race is the human race." American Blacks, too, are tired of talking about race. They wish they didn't have to. But shit keeps happening. (403-404)

She points out the problem that people avoid the thing that they do not want to see and acknowledge. People do not want to see, hear, think, and talk out loud the negative aspect of life. However, if we truly want to change the world where there is less discrimination and oppression, the first thing we have to do is not to avoid but to face it. And, we should keep asking questions until we get closer to the answer. The second thing is that we need love rather than hatred as Baldwin and Saadawi say.

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